Communicating Sustainability from the Perspective of Indigenous Groups: The Kensiu People of Kampung Lubok Legong, Kedah, Malaysia

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Cover photograph: Two Kensiu boys walking along a forest trail
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Key to understanding the limited impact of development policies is that they have not attacked the structural causes underlying the marginalization of Indigenous peoples, causes that are directly linked to the failure to recognize, protect and guarantee observance of their individual and collective human rights…

Rodolfo Stavenhagen, 2007

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COAC	Centre for Orang Asli Concerns
CTM	Complementary and Traditional Medicines
EFA	Education for All
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
Ibid	*ibidem*
JAKOA	Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli (Formerly JHEOA)
JHEOA	Jabatan Hal-Ehwal Orang Asli (Department of Orang Asli Affairs)
JKKK	Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (Village Development and Security Committee)
KLIA	Kuala Lumpur International Airport
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
POASM	Persatuan Orang Asli Semenanjung Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia Orang Asli Association)
PLI	Poverty Line Index
RISDA	Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysian Certificate of Education)
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
BERNAMA	Berita Nasional Malaysia (Malaysian National News Agency)

Spelling and Writing Conventions

Being a member of the Mon-Khmer family of languages, words in the Kensiu language are transcribed in this study utilizing the orthography currently in use in Mon-Khmer linguistic studies. The approximate pronunciations for the symbols used are as listed below:

Symbols	Pronunciation
ɛ	as the *e* in English *let*
ŋ	as the *ng* in Malay *ngadap* or English *ringer*
c	as in *c* in Malay *curi* or the *ch* in English *chain*
o	as the *o* in Malay *tol* or the *oa* in English *moat*
ʔ	glottal stop, as in the *k* in Malay *nikmat*
a	as in Malay *telah* or the *u* in English *run*
ə	as the *e* in Malay *telur* or the *a* in English *abate*
ɔ	as the *au* in English *naught*, but shorter

(Adapted from Lye, 2005)

1: Introduction

1.1 Background of research

The concept of sustainability and sustainable development has gained much momentum since the Earth Summit of 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. Accordingly, governments across the world have taken conscious and calculated steps to integrate sustainability into their national development plans – including areas as diverse as health, the economy, education as well as other key areas as highlighted by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Starting from the mid 1970s through to the mid 1990s, Malaysia was already well into the shift that would take the policy of sound environmental management to the broader and more inclusive public policy goal of sustainable development through the Third, Fifth and Sixth Malaysia Plans (Larson, 2007) .

As a result of Malaysia's transition to a more industrial economy in the 1970s, as well as its prolific agricultural sector, the forests of Peninsular Malaysia were aggressively explored in order to meet the high demand for the raw materials so crucial to an industrializing economy as well as to create more space for agriculture (Rajeandran & Reich, (1981); Cheng & Le Clue, 2010). Nonetheless, Peninsular Malaysia still has a substantial amount of forest cover, totaling 5.9 million hectares (JOANGOHutan, 2006), which forms the habitat of one of the most diverse ecosystems on Earth. Sharing this ecosystem are the Orang Asli – generally interpreted as "original people" in Malay (Hui, 2007; Duncan, 2008; Keat, 2009; Gall, 2009) who have lived within Peninsular Malaysia's forests for many millennia.

The Orang Asli of Malaysia comprise of three main tribal groups; the Senoi, Semang and Aboriginal Malay. These three groups are then further divided into a number of sub-ethnic groups such as the Semai, Kensiu and Temuan (respectively). In contrast to the Senoi and Semang who inhabit the central and northern areas of the Peninsula, almost all Aboriginal Malays are located further to the south of the Malaysian Peninsula that is, in Johor, Terengganu and Negeri Sembilan. In spite of their diversity, all affairs concerning Orang Asli groups fall under the purview of one department; Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli (JAKOA, formerly Jabatan Hal-Ehwal Orang Asli, JHEOA). The Semang groups are often considered the first group of humans to have settled in Peninsular Malaysia, with estimates placing their arrival to the Peninsula approximately 25000 (Carey, 1976; Danda, 2004; Keat, 2009) years ago. The Semang are divided into six sub-ethnics: Jahai, Batek, Kintak, Lanoh, Mendrik and Kensiu (Ghani, 2010). This research focuses on the Kensiu, who live only in the village of Kampung Lubok Legong, approximately 12 kilometers from the town of Baling, Kedah.

As an Orang Asli group, the Kensiu are unique in that their population is not limited to Malaysia. The Kensiu, traditionally a forest-dwelling people, have historic ties spanning millennia with counterparts in Thailand, who are known as the Maniq or Mani; both the Kensiu of Malaysia and the Maniq of Thailand are a homogeneous population that is they are of the same ethnic group. Historically, (and to a much lesser extent today), both communities used to cross borders via forest pathways to meet with relatives, seek marriage partners and hunt. During the course of my fieldwork, I came across a number of Kensiu with roots in Thailand; some of them were even born there but have since been granted Malaysian citizenship. Many of the Kensiu in Kampung Lubok Legong are proficient in Thai and some still send their children to Thailand to receive primary education.

Not all of Malaysia's Orang Asli live in close proximity to the forest; for instance, Aboriginal Malay groups south of the Peninsula such as the Orang Seletar, are named after a river in Johor (Wink, 2004), Orang Kuala and Mah Meri both live close to rivermouths (as implied by their names) and are often associated with fishing (Schefold & Nas, 2009). This diversity among Orang Asli groups is a clear indicator of why developmental frameworks must factor in the many different socio-economic and cultural differences among the Orang Asli. While the forest may play a minimal role among coastal Orang Asli groups, the Orang Asli groups who live within forests regard the forest as their lifeline, as it provides them with shelter, subsistence and income (Duncan, 2008), as well as their socio-cultural

identity (Resurreccion & Elmhirst, 2008). Indeed, with the forest playing such critical roles in the life of forest-dwelling Indigenous groups, it is quite apparent that any dialogue or developmental agenda involving them which does not take into consideration their ties to the forest (World Bank, 2008), their unique needs and wants, and ways in which these Indigenous groups can contribute (Hecht & Cockburn, 2011), would be unable to address the sustainability issues facing them in their entirety. This is especially important as many of the sustainability issues facing modern societies, such as water scarcity, food security and land degradation are issues that transcend both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Working together with Indigenous communities would therefore contribute toward diversifying the body of sustainability knowledge and in seeking for solutions.

Sustainability is in itself a positive entity, concerned with the responsible use of natural resources as well as the notion of equitable development; that being said, it is a field that is governed by prevailing global ideas as to what constitutes responsible resource usage and how best to manage it. While this may not be of much consequence to most Malaysians, it is a problem when such a framework (as a macro-level structure) is placed upon the Orang Asli, who (akin to other Indigenous groups), have over generations developed their own understandings (micro-level structure) of their environment (McDowell, 1996; Cunningham, Cunningham & Cunningham, 2009) as well as ideas on ecological stewardship (Ross, Sherman, Snodgrass & Delcore, 2010). For instance, Malaysia's oil palm industry is often considered by the government as an example of sustainable agriculture, given that Malaysia is a member of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil group which was established in 2004 by palm oil producing and consuming countries. However, the forced relocation of the Orang Asli and the replacement of unique and diverse ecosystems with a monocrop plant is not something most Orang Asli would consider sustainable. As an entity that is almost akin to a global development agenda, prevailing notions of sustainable development make it difficult for such Indigenous populations to survive and maintain their notions of sustainability, due to the continuous pressure by the government and other stakeholders to abandon their belief systems and ways of life in favor of the more dominant sustainability discourse.

The phenomenon of sustainability often draws a distinction between the term sustainable development and its opposing duality, namely unsustainable development. This dualistic nature indicates that sustainable development as determined by popular discourse leaves no room for differing perceptions of sustainability, as perceptions that do not fit into the prevailing notion(s) of sustainability are by default regarded as unsustainable. This however creates a setting where an assumed supremacy exists, whereby the prevailing notion of sustainability, as entrenched in many models of sustainable development in mainstream society, presupposes that it is the best definition of sustainability, overriding other possible perceptions of sustainability. For instance the example discussed earlier, where sustainable palm oil plantations are regarded as sustainable whereas other sustainability arguments such as those belonging to the Orang Asli which take into consideration the health and integrity of the forest, its ecosystems and their way of life are often silenced.

1.2 Problem Statement

A rapidly developing country headed toward developed status, Malaysia is particularly unique due to its complex history and multiethnic population. Unlike the United States, where different cultures have fused into one veritable melting pot of culture, Malaysia's many ethnic groups have not merged into one unique identity, but instead maintain their separate cultures and traditions. Thus, the state must take into account the many different needs and wants of each ethnic group when devising its development plans; beside the three major ethnic groups within the country, namely the Malays, Chinese and Indians, numerous ethnic minorities such as the Kadazan-Dusun, Iban, Melanau and many other tribal ethnic groups exist, with the result that development plans are often complex by nature toward ensuring the socio-economic prosperity of the nation as a whole.

In the early years following independence, Malaysia placed much of its emphasis on the aggressive development of the nation and paid considerably less attention to its environment (Noorazuan,

Noorazuan & Rainis, 2003); some instances include the Jengka Triangle scheme between 1968 – 1980 which cleared 121,781 hectares of rainforest area (Dove, Sajise & Doolittle, 2011), and the fact that Malaysia had one of the most rapid deforestation rates in the developing world at the time (Shcmandt & Ward, 2000). Larson (2007) argues thus regarding early development in Malaysia: "In many of the early development projects, little or no consideration was given to environmental aspects." This changed dramatically with the realization that previous patterns of development were proving unsustainable as well as detrimental to the nation's environment as evidenced by the increasingly visible impacts of environmental degradation around the country (*Ibid*.).

Consequently, Malaysia incorporated sustainability as an integral component of national developmental plans in Malaysia since the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991-1995). Given sustainability's wide scope which encompasses education, health, the environment, water, energy, and other sectors, many developmental plans were put into place across the country in an attempt to steer Malaysia's growth toward a more sustainable path. The Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006–2010) includes specific paragraphs regarding environmental sustainability and resource management, with vast sums of money allocated toward this cause. However, such sustainability frameworks within the country are often based on understandings and perceptions of sustainability as found in popular sustainability discourse, specifically socio-economic sustainability measures based on the Brundtland Commission. Unfortunately, Malaysia's adoption and adaptation of the Brundtland Commission's sustainability agenda is incomplete; as the Commission also made valuable points with regard to the unique potential contributions of Indigenous communities as ecological stewards (Burrowes, 1996) and the extirpation of their way of life by insensitive development plans (Watters, 2004). Sustainability frameworks in Malaysia therefore tend to serve the interests of the mainstream society and do not completely encompass the various sustainability tenets of Indigenous groups for whom culture is a cornerstone entity (Dominelli, 2012). The factor being raised here is therefore a question of needs. Are the needs of the Orang Asli being met through such development initiatives? From a sustainability perspective, if the world and its inhabitants – including people are to endure, then all aspects of human living, including the economic, social and political must be able to be self-sustaining and compliant toward the attainment of basic needs (Carter, 2007). Consequently, governmental development plans concerning the Orang Asli often fail to thrive due to the lack of understanding of Orang Asli worldview and their needs.

Similar situations have also arisen with other ethnic minorities within the country, for instance with development projects among the Bidayuh, who are a tribal ethnic group in the Bornean state of Sarawak. A study by Novel (2010) discovered that while the federal government only had seven quality-of-life indicators with which they based their developmental projects among the Bidayuh, the Bidayuh themselves identified 23 quality-of-life indicators that they felt should have been used as indicators in development plans concerning them, thus illustrating the gap between the government's development agenda for the Bidayuh and development as desired by the Bidayuh community. Similarly, the curriculums of schools set up for Orang Asli children often contain themes that are relevant to an urban child but rather irrelevant to an Orang Asli child; and even when sent to a regular school, lack of understanding of the Orang Asli's worldview creates a chasm between teacher and student (Duncan, 2004). Thus, it is necessary that the understanding of Orang Asli people such as the Kensiu be communicated, toward facilitating an overall sustainable development framework that is inclusive in nature, and which will trickle down into the government's education, health and developmental initiatives for the Orang Asli.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study aims to communicate sustainability and development as it is interpreted by the Kensiu, which can contribute toward developmental plans that take into consideration their wants and needs as forest-dwelling Indigenous people. To this end, it is necessary:

1. To understand the perspectives and practices of the Kensiu with regard to the concept of sustainability[1] as it relates to their worldview.

2. To determine the stance of the Kensiu with regard to modernization and development occurring in their area.

1.4 Research Questions

The following questions will set the focus and direction of the research. As the methodology utilized is narrative analysis, these questions will be explored using "entry" questions and further questions will be formulated based on the answers given.

1. How do the Kensiu define sustainability?

The first set of questions will help determine the Kensiu's relationship to the forest. The forest is central to the life of the Kensiu and as such, forms the basis for ecological stewardship and sustainable resource use:

       i) What does the forest give you?

       ii) What does the forest mean to you?

2. What is the Kensiu understanding of development/modernization?

The following questions will be asked to determine the Kensiu understanding of modernization/development:

       i) Have your ways in dealing with the forest changed?

       ii) How do you feel about these changes?

       iii) What/who has caused these changes?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

When identifying reasons as to why it is important to communicate Kensiu understanding(s) of sustainability and development, it is first important to discuss the status quo of Orang Asli experiences with modernity and the perception that traditional society such as theirs are often seen as hindering development (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Stoeckl, 2008; Phillips, 1998). Furthermore, it must be recognized by the State that the inclusion of the Orang Asli into decision-making frameworks is pivotal to the success of not just the development model being used, but also of the Orang Asli. Modern sustainable developmental frameworks which take into account traditional ways of life do exist, such as the Satoyama cooperative in Japan where traditionally local ways of life are incorporated into the government's developmental agenda. The Satoyama Initiative[2] is a joint initiative by Japan's Ministry of Environment and the United Nations University which aspires to create societies in harmony with nature, comprising of human communities where the maintenance and development of socio-economic activities such as agriculture and forestry are synced with natural processes, primarily with regard to rice-terrace farming, which has been practiced by local communities for hundreds of years. The Satoyama three-fold approach consists of i) Consolidating wisdom on securing diverse ecosystem services and values, ii) Integrating traditional ecological knowledge and modern science to promote innovations and iii) Exploring new forms of co-management systems or evolving frameworks of "commons" while respecting traditional communal land tenure.

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1 The definition of sustainability used for this purpose pertains to the responsible use of natural resources as defined by the Sixth Malaysia Plan, i.e. the "Prudent management of natural resources and the ecology… to improve the quality of life for the present as well as future generations."

2 For further information on the Satoyama Initiative, visit http://satoyama-initiative.org/en/

1.5.1 Modernity

Modernization[3] is closely connected to an increase in democracy, autonomy and independence. The preeminent Indian nationalist leader Gandhi believed that autonomy and equality should be central to the idea of modernization (Terchek, 1998). Wagner (2012) argues that "Modernity is the belief in the freedom of the human being…" It is important to note that for modernization to occur, people must first be given the freedom and the prerogative to decide what it is they wish to modernize and how. The Orang Asli have stated numerous times that they are not anti-modernization or anti-development (Zawawi, 1996; Tvedt, Coopey & Oestigaard, 2006; West, 2010), rather, they want the freedom of choice to participate in development plans concerning them. Orang Asli are often denied opportunities to involve themselves in decision-making processes or in issues pertaining to their development; furthermore, the norm is that they are ordered to embrace state development plans instead of being asked for their opinion or points-of-view (Zawawi, 1996). It is important to note that modernization should not be thrust upon Indigenous groups via government development plans, instead, Indigenous groups should have the freedom to determine which aspects of modernization they wish to incorporate into their culture (Palmer, 2009). Zawawi (1996) suggests that certain measures should be taken toward empowering and facilitating decision-making among the Orang Asli; firstly, JHEOA (now JAKOA) should be staffed with the professional manpower necessary to assist the Orang Asli in their development initiatives, thus granting the Orang Asli a resource with whom they can discuss their developmental aspirations with; secondly, the state should increase its funding to JAKOA, as most state funding for the Orang Asli are utilized for the operational costs of JAKOA with little left that can be channeled toward the development needs of the Orang Asli; thirdly, due to their longstanding association with JAKOA, Orang Asli villages are often left out of important development projects that aim to increase basic infrastructures (water and electricity supplies and construction of roads) due to the assumption that JAKOA is the sole agency responsible for their development. The rectification of these issues are therefore crucial steps toward assisting the Orang Asli in attaining their development agenda and involving them in decision-making processes.

Although the earlier discussion suggests that modernity paves the way to increased freedom, modernity has instead brought about the opposite effect among the Orang Asli. Since Malaysia's independence in 1957, Orang Asli lands have been increasingly acquired and utilized for government development plans; consequently, Orang Asli are increasingly losing control of the forest and its natural resources (Dallos, 2011), leaving them without a source through which to meet their subsistence and economic needs. This loss of resource has resulted in a lessened demand for forest products as Orang Asli are no longer able to meet the demand of commercial entities resulting in tensions between traders from majority ethnic groups such as the Chinese and Malays, and the Orang Asli (Gomes, 2007). Additionally, the independence that the Orang Asli once enjoyed as a result of their indigenous knowledge and ability to gather forest products has since weakened, leaving them vulnerable, economically powerless and dependent on state institutions such as JAKOA in order to survive. This shift is particularly evident when a comparison is drawn between Malay-Orang Asli power relations in the past and today; previously Malay-Orang Asli relations were sporadic and defined by mutual interdependence (Malays desiring goods from the forest and Orang Asli desiring Malay goods), however, with the loss of importance in both forest goods and the role of the Orang Asli as purveyors of forest products, the resulting economic deprivation faced by the Orang Asli has resulted in them becoming the socio-economic inferior of the Malays, dependent on hand-outs and menial labor, thus effectively shifting power relations in the favor of the Malays.

Due to the lack of Orang Asli representation in the nation's political institutions (Verma, 2002; Chee & Barraclough, 2007) as well as in JAKOA (Magallanes & Hollick, 1998) and a lack in participatory approaches, the Kensiu and other Orang Asli groups are unable to sufficiently convey to the government the type of development that would best suit their needs or the injustices they face. Even when there are Orang Asli representatives in JAKOA, they are often pressured to obey and conform to

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3 For further readings on theories of modernization see Wagner, P. (2012), Inglehart, R. & Welzel, C. (2005) & Barker, C. (2005).

JAKOA's demands, or risk being termed uncooperative and replaced. Furthermore, the Aboriginal People's Act confers the government with the power to select Orang Asli leaders, who often represent the needs and wishes of the state, and not those of their people (Duncan, 2004). Consequently, the Orang Asli have taken it upon themselves to establish the *Persatuan Orang Asli Semenanjung Malaysia* (POASM), whose major interest – together with the NGO "Center for Orang Asli Concerns" (COAC) is the empowerment of the Orang Asli (Hefner, 2001). POASM also advocates equal opportunities for the Orang Asli thus championing an egalitarian means of development and modernity (*Ibid.*). In moving toward modernity, the group undergoing modernization should also move toward greater independence and commercial freedom. Unfortunately, the decades-long measures taken by JAKOA within Malaysia, for instance the conversion of ancestral Asli lands to rubber estates (Gomes, n.d.) or the designation of Orang Asli as "wards of the state" (Nicholas, 2000; Wessendorf & IWGIA, 2001; Gomes, 2007) have done the opposite, creating a climate of Orang Asli dependence on JAKOA (Duncan, 2008) and negatively affecting the competitive ability of Orang Asli groups by placing them at the mercy of the global economy as well as rendering them to the rural poverty of rubber smallholders (Duncan, 2008). As can be seen, the key to enabling positive Orang Asli development is embedded in understanding their specific development needs as Indigenous people and in granting them the freedom to be involved in their development plans.

1.5.2 Decision-making Framework

The inclusion of the Orang Asli into decision-making processes concerning their modernization and development does more than just benefit the Orang Asli socio-economically, it also empowers them. The Orang Asli are aware that their omission and lack of representation in decision-making processes disempowers them and they seek full citizenship participation as members of a minority (Hefner, 2001). In the late 1990s, the ability of decision-making processes to empower Indigenous populations was recognized by the United Nations, prompting it to set up a permanent Forum on Indigenous People with offices throughout the world (Banik, 2008).

Savory & Butterfield (1999) propose that a suitable framework for decision-making should take into consideration three primary interrelated factors, namely; i) quality of life, ii) forms of production and iii) future resource base. Quality of life takes into consideration the needs and wants of the community in question – including their hopes and aspirations for their future based on what they value most. The desire of the Orang Asli to have a hand in decisions that pertain to their development and modernization is a right that should be safeguarded by the government, especially as the Orang Asli know best the aspects of development compatible with their culture(s) thus ensuring that the development which occurs will truly contribute toward bettering their quality of life. As argued by Nussbaum (2008), it is the duty of a good political arrangement to ensure that each and every individual is provided with what they need in order to lead full, thriving lives. Forms of production relates to the manner in which said "quality of life" is achieved, that is, what is needed to enable the desired quality of life. In the case of the Orang Asli, it is primarily recognition of their status as Indigenous people in their entirety including (perhaps most importantly) their land rights. As explained in more detail in Chapter 2 under the subtheme Modernization and Development, the unlawful acquisition of Orang Asli lands is a recurring theme in the nation's development and modernization. In addition to establishing and honoring Orang Asli land reserves, Orang Asli representation should also be increased in JAKOA, as it is supposed to be a governmental body that represents them. Recognition of Asli lands and socio-political representation are both crucial first steps toward facilitating a better quality of life for the Orang Asli. The third factor, a future resource base, is concerned with ensuring the sustainability of the resource base in order to enable the forms of production specified to be sustained in the long run. In effect, a development body that serves the interest of the Orang Asli and not those of the state government or other entities. Administrative officials in JAKOA have, many times over the years, traded the interests of the Orang Asli in favor of the government's development plans and agendas (Nicholas, 2000; Benjamin & Chou, 2002; Gomes, 2007; Duncan, 2008; Dallos, 2011), for instance in relocating the Orang Asli and acquiring their lands

for the development of oil palm plantations and golf fields; or the agendas of local business seeking cheap labor from among the Orang Asli (Dallos, 2011). Such incidents should not happen, especially in an organization whose sole concern should be the welfare of the community it is supposed to protect. For instance, in cases where JAKOA has attempted to assist the Orang Asli, such assistance is usually delivered in the spirit of "paternalistic condescension", with little done to protect or assist Orang Asli from manipulation by entities seeking to abuse them, resulting in Orang Asli being cheated, abused and insulted by their employers (*Ibid.*)

Once in effect, all three interconnected factors should result in a holistic management form, which when managed by the Orang Asli, empowers them by granting them control over decision-making processes and ultimately, allows them to set and develop their own trajectory toward development and modernization. Empowerment of Orang Asli vis-à-vis development models within Malaysia can include efforts to increase their participation in eco-touristic ventures, for instance in Taman Negara Pahang, which receives almost 60, 000 tourists annually (Backhaus, 2005). Control of tourism decision-making, employment and training opportunities as well as increased business opportunities all contribute toward successful community-based ecotourism resulting in the empowerment of the community (Zeppel, 2006). In Bolivia, targeted reforms were taken to include marginalized Indigenous populations into the nation's decision-making processes, manifested in the forms of popular participation and administrative decentralization (Jacobsen & McNeish, 2006) – in other words, increased autonomy for Indigenous people. According to Fennel & Dowling (2003), the empowerment of Indigenous people involves, "Holding the will, resources and opportunity to make decisions within the community," all of which can only be made possible through the reorientation of existing policies pertaining to Orang Asli lands and resource use as well as a framework that facilitates and encourages Orang Asli decision-making.

1.6 Scope of Research

This research was carried out at Kampung Lubok Legong, a village in the northern Malaysian state of Kedah, located approximately 12 kilometers from the town of Baling. The district within which Baling town is located is also named Baling. Kampong Lubok Legong is the only village in which the Kensiu may be found within Malaysia, specifically within Lot No. 3623 in an area approximately 428 acres in size. The Kensiu were relocated to this Lot in 1957, prior to which they led a nomadic lifestyle within the areas of Lubok Legong to Parit Panjang, Bendang Man Sik, Celak River and Tiak, Kupang.

There are two factors as to why the Kensiu were chosen for this research: i) The first is that the Kensiu are the smallest ethnic within the Semang tribal group (approximately 3%) as well as the smallest Orang Asli community in comparison to the other Orang Asli groups in Peninsular Malaysia (numbering about 247 individuals in total) and are thus a minority within a minority. The diminutive number of certain minority groups and developmental policies that tend to overlook the needs of smaller minority groups (such as the Kensiu) within a larger group of minorities is a phenomenon that occurs in various parts of the world (Stein, 2000; World Bank, 2002; Lijphart, 2008); and ii) the second factor being that as a predominantly hunter-gatherer society, the Kensiu are (as with most other forest-dwelling Indigenous communities) heavily dependent on the forest for survival, and as development models developed for Orang Asli modernization often involve the exploitation and destruction of forests via monocrop cultivation such as rubber, oil palm, or other cash crops (Mohd. Tap, 1990; Duncan, 2008) this is an important opportunity to study the outcomes of such developmental projects on the Kensiu.

It should be mentioned here that this research project in no way claims to be able to form conclusions and generalizations on the perspectives of all Orang Asli groups within the Peninsula. The Orang Asli are a heterogeneous, not homogenous, group. This research only aims to explore the Kensiu perspective of sustainability and development vis-à-vis their worldview. Subsequently, any attempt to relate or apply this research to other Orang Asli groups must therefore be undertaken with relevant research conducted into the Orang Asli group(s) in question.

1.7 Conceptualization and Operationalization

Sustainability: The ability of Indigenous groups to sustainably manage the forest is mentioned in Principle 22 of the Rio Declaration (1992), which states that Indigenous communities have a dynamic role to play in the sustainable management of natural resources. Subsequently, sustainability from the perspective of the Kensiu refers to the perspectives and practices of the Kensiu in managing natural resources within the forest. Sustainability is also conceptualized at a wider framework level as defined by the Brundtland Commission (1987) to encompass state and administrative agency-related sustainable development policies.

Ecological Stewardship: Indigenous ecological knowledge and practices are the result of generations of firsthand Indigenous experience with the unique local environment(s) they live in (Ross, Sherman, Snodgrass & Delcore 2010). Consequently, ecological stewardship in this research refers to the sense of concern and guardianship the Kensiu have with regard to their natural environment as a result of their relationship with said environment which influences their knowledge, actions, points-of-views and decisions they make.

Development: Development of the Orang Asli is almost always "top-down" in approach and more concerned with the development goals of the government than those of the Orang Asli (Mohd. Tap, 1990; Dentan, 1997; Duncan, 2008). Development thus refers to development agendas from the point-of-view of state and/or administrative agencies such as federal/state governments and JAKOA, which are patterns of Orang Asli development conventionally associated with "top-down" approaches.

Modernization: Modernization brings with it socio-economic progress, changes in worldview, propagation of democracy and increasing autonomy (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). In this research, modernization refers to the effects of a transformational process resulting in the proliferation of entities such as the expansion of a capitalist economy, democracy, the burgeoning of a middle class and the growth of industries.

1.8 Significance of Study

Information on Orang Asli is abundant; however, the perception of sustainability and development among Orang Asli community is still largely unknown. This is especially true of smaller Semang groups located toward the north of the Peninsula, given the previous relative inaccessibility of the forests where they live, in comparison to central and south Peninsular Malaysia (Dallos, 2011). The Senoi and Aboriginal Malay groups have received more mainstream exposure as opposed to some members of the Semang tribes and much of the Indigenous movement therefore is in the interest of the Senoi and Aboriginal Malay and less so in the case of the Semang (*Ibid.*). However, even among the Semang, groups such as the Batek and Jahai have been studied more extensively than smaller groups such as the Kensiu and Kintak. This is evident in the gap in Semang literature where another Semang group, the Batek, have been extensively studied (Morrison & Junker, 2002), the same however cannot be said of the Kensiu. Sustainability communication among the Orang Asli however, is a little studied area, and it is hoped that this study will fill this gap in communicating Orang Asli sustainability practices and contribute toward further initiatives and research toward understanding sustainability from the perspectives of different Orang Asli groups.

Naturally, definitions of sustainability vary from one stakeholder group to another. Even within Malaysia, the government may interpret sustainability differently from an industry, while an NGO's definition of sustainability may differ from that of a corporate company. Nonetheless, when sustainable development policies (as defined by popular discourse) are put into place to modernize the country either with regard to the exploration and use of resource-rich areas inhabited by the Orang Asli, or the "development" of the Orang Asli themselves, Orang Asli interpretations of what may be sustainable is generally not taken into consideration. It is crucial that developmental goals aimed at meeting our needs run parallel to the limits of other entities seeking to meet their own needs (Fowler,

2009), thus creating a balance. Development that aims to meet the development goals of the State must ensure that its needs do not overshadow the needs of other populations, who may have needs different from those of the State. In other words, there is an equilibrium to be maintained between the needs of an industrializing State versus the limit to which it can develop without compromising the needs of other entities such as the Orang Asli, who may have developmental needs different from the State. As policy development and implementation in Malaysia is often "top-bottom" in its approach (Ai, Nik & Talib, 1984; Bhattacharyya, 2009; Hillier & Healey, 2010); understanding the Kensiu's perception of sustainability could therefore be an important step toward facilitating a more "bottom-up" approach toward sustainability.

If an inclusive and sustainable pattern of development is the main aim of the government, then the perception, and position, of the Orang Asli with regard to concepts such as sustainability, development and modernization must first be understood. Although Malaysia's development has contributed greatly toward improving the socio-economic status of its citizens, its developmental policies leave little space for Orang Asli perspectives on sustainability and development. It is only by understanding the perception of sustainability and development held by various groups (such as the Kensiu), can a truly inclusive model of development benefitting all citizens be constructed. This study aims to contribute toward a wider understanding of sustainability, specifically understandings of sustainability that differ from those available in popular discourse. Comprehending the Orang Asli perception of sustainability therefore will contribute toward a clearer understanding of their requirements and facilitate the construction of developmental patterns at the policy-making level which takes into consideration their wants and needs.

1.9 Limitations

1. This study lacks in-depth relevant discussions on power relations and the dynamics of land issues between the Orang Asli and the state, including issues such as abuse of power, corruption and cronyism among the elite. Such a discussion would contribute invaluably to understanding the dynamics of Orang Asli struggle for recognition of ownership of ancestral lands in light of state discrimination.

2. There is a lack of discussion on the historic relationships between the Orang Asli and the Malays, particularly slavery, which has contributed substantially to contemporary relationships between the two communities. This topic is especially important given that the history of slavery continues to shape the worldview of the Orang Asli with regard to the Malay community, as well as the predominance of Malay officials in JAKOA and the state government.

3. The length of my participant observation was fairly brief in comparison to standard observation periods for ethnographic studies. Consequently, seasonal nuances and aspects of Kensiu life and practices might have been missed, resulting in an overall perspective that may be incomplete.

4. Language was often a barrier; many Kensiu are not able to converse proficiently in Malay, and I am unable to converse in the Kensiu language. Consequently, a translator was often needed which may have resulted in translator bias or inaccurate translation.

2: Literature Review

This chapter comprises of the following three main topics: i) Sustainable Development; ii) Development and Modernization; and iii) Ecological Stewardship and Indigenous Knowledge.

2.1 Sustainable Development

The contemporary notion of sustainability as it exists in popular discourse is in itself not an entirely new phenomenon – in fact, there were British Victorian thinkers such as Darwin and Malthus who espoused the idea that the conservation of nature while simultaneously trying to improve the distribution of wealth was not a paradox but a moral obligation (Lumley and Armstrong, 2003). When broken down into its basic components, the word sustainability comprises of two words: i) sustain and ii) ability, ergo: *the ability to sustain*; with "sustain" deriving from the Latin *sustinere* (*sus*, up; *tenere*, to hold) (Onions, 1964). Chapter 8.7 of Agenda 21 states that the National Strategy for Sustainable Development "… should build upon and harmonize the various sectoral economic, social, and environmental policies and plans that are operating in the country," implying that sustainability should take into consideration the culture, worldview, practices and social contexts of various groups within a country. As members of a minority group within Malaysia, this should encompass the needs and development goals of the Orang Asli as well, whereby attempts should be made to harmonize the development goals of the country, with the needs of its minority populations.

Given the enormity of the sustainability agenda, attempts to define sustainability have often been arbitrary and a rather subjective matter (LaFond, 1995; Blowers & Glasbergen, 1996; Tacconi, 2000; Feitelson, 2004). As a holistic developmental agenda, sustainable development encompasses what is known as the three main "pillars" (Figure 1.1), consisting of the economy, society and the environment (George & Kirkpatrick, 2007; Strange & Bayley, 2008; McIntyre, 2009; Brebbia & Beriatos, 2011) – all three of which are considered indispensable toward a developmental model that will sustain current and future generations.
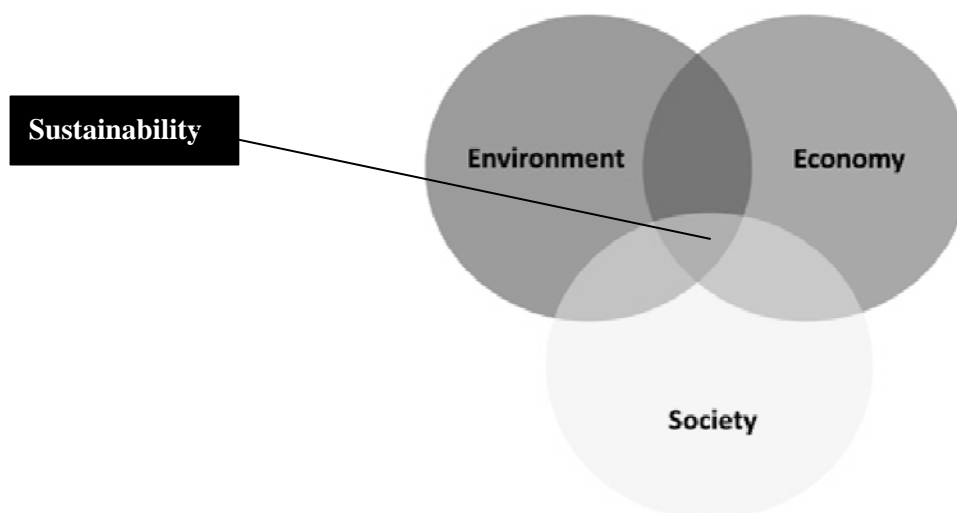

Figure 2.1: Venn diagram for Sustainable Development
Source: Adapted from United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2012

The subjective nature of sustainability aside, working definitions have been developed to define the goal(s) of sustainable development, primary of which is the definition given by the Brundtland

Commission in the document "Our Common Future" (also known as the Brundtland report). A number of key documents have also played a role in shaping public perception and discourse on sustainable development including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Agenda 21, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, Education for All (EFA), Global Compact and the Millennium Development Goals (Zainal Abidin, Steele, Khelghat-Doost, Govindran & Hafizah, 2011), all of which have resulted in an understanding of sustainability that transcends political and economic identity. In the Brundtland Report, sustainability is defined as "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," (Our Common Future, 1987). Other interpretations of sustainability exist, but almost all operationalize sustainability in a similar fashion to the Brundtland definition. Some examples are as follows:

> "Sustainability encompasses the simple principle of taking from the Earth only what it can provide indefinitely, thus leaving future generations no less than we have access to ourselves."

> (Friends of the Earth Scotland)

> "Prudent management of natural resources and the ecology as well as preservation of natural beauty and clean environment are important to improve the quality of life for the present as well as future generations."
>
> (Sixth Malaysia Plan, 1991)

Both interpretations of sustainable development given above have certain elements in common; the phrases "taking from the earth only what it can provide indefinitely" and "prudent management of natural resources" send a clear message; basically, we should only take as much as we *need* and not as we *want*. This is the ideology that the Orang Asli live by, that is, they take from the forest and the rivers only as much as they need, not want. On the other hand, a capitalist economy takes what it wants – because the goal of a capitalist institution is to maximize profits (Sherman, Hunt, Nesiba & Ohara, 2008; Raghavan, Vaithianathan & Murali, 2011). Another similarity between the two definitions is the consideration that future generations should not lack the ability to meet their own needs, as is evident in the phrases "leaving future generations no less than we have access to ourselves" and "improve the quality of life for the present as well as future generation" implying the need for unselfishness when meeting our needs.

The sustainability movement started gaining momentum in the late 70s/early 80s onward, and continued to become a buzzword in the 90s leading up to the present day. Global concerns on the need to ensure an equitable relationship between economic and social developments – both of which influence the natural environment and natural resources, saw the burgeoning of sustainable development movements in the 1980s (Dzulkifli, 2006) which was to set the stage for a new pattern of development that signaled a departure from a solely profit-making mentality, toward practices that accommodated environmental and social values (Tladi, 2007). The notion of sustainability within the context of the Malaysian government's developmental policies closely mirrors the definition of sustainable development as adopted by the Brundtland Commission. As mentioned earlier, the Brundtland definition of sustainability is among the most frequently cited when sustainability is defined – and while it is indeed holistic in its inclusion of the three pillars of sustainability: economy, society and the environment (Kates, Parris & Leiserowitz, 2005), especially within macro level developmental frameworks, this definition may not be as readily applicable to communities at the micro level. Furthermore, while there may be alternate *interpretations* on the definition of sustainability as proposed by the Brundtland Commission, they all share certain commonalities and function from a consensus as to what defines sustainable development (Müller-Christ, 2011), thus again leaving little space for alternate *understandings* of sustainability.

The extremely wide scope of sustainability itself bears testament to the difficulty in pigeon-holing sustainability. To illustrate the vastness of the sustainability agenda, note the following eight Millennium Development Goals as set out by the United Nations (www.un.org/millenniumgoals/):
- o   Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Hunger,
- o   Achieving Universal Primary Education,
- o   Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women,
- o   Reducing Child Mortality Rates,
- o   Improving Maternal Health,
- o   Combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and other Diseases,
- o   Ensuring Environmental Sustainability,
- o   Developing a Global Partnership for Development.

Important to note is that each of these goals is further broken down into its respective subthemes addressing the specific needs that lead up to the main goal. For instance, the goal of Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Hunger comprises of these three subthemes: *1.A) Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than $1 a day, 1.B) Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people and I.C) Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger* (www.un.org). Sustainability therefore transcends simplistic understandings of the issue at hand, and encompasses many aspects of daily life, including emerging areas such as sustainable design, cultural sustainability, sustainable travel, and so on. It is through such a holistic sustainability lens that aspects of Kensiu life, such as their hunting and foraging habits as well as culture, are examined.

Definitions notwithstanding, enabling sustainable development requires a "coordinated, participatory, iterative and cyclical process of thoughts and actions to achieve economic, environmental and social objectives in a balanced and integrated manner," (UNDESA, 2001). Participatory approaches are pivotal to the successful implementation of sustainability frameworks (Leite, 2000; Dalal-Clayton & Bass, 2002; FAO, 2005; Chai, 2009) and ensure concrete impact with regard to a community's empowerment (Pretty, 1995), developmental goals and objectives (Osteria & Okamura, 1986). However, participatory involvement of the Orang Asli into the design of policy frameworks concerning them is minimal (Duncan, 2004), with the Orang Asli often viewed as a community disinterested in development (Dentan, 1997; Nicholas, 2000) and in need of "protection" for their own best interests (Nicholas, 2000).

A blend of both "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches is desirable and the desired sustainability approach should be a conceptual framework that combines the best of both "top-down" and "bottom-up" mechanisms (Baker, 1997; Carley & Christie, 2000; Lafferty, 2004). Development frameworks implemented in Malaysia are often "top-down" in approach and are based on conventional macro-economic measures (Khoo, 2001); consequently, public stakeholders, which include the Orang Asli, do not have an avenue for providing input or consensus as to what they think should be their development goals. What this implies is that the Orang Asli are often not consulted prior to the development of frameworks which aim to "assist" the Orang Asli themselves, and neither is there a mechanism through which they may provide feedback or participate during the implementation of projects (Duncan, 2004). The Felcra models developed for the Orang Asli in the early and mid 90s for instance was rejected not because the Orang Asli were adverse to the idea of developmental frameworks, but because they did not feel that the Felcra developmental model was suitable with their idea of land use (Lim, 1997), primarily because such land use schemes involve the growing of cash crops that take a few years to mature, running contrary to the day-to-day harvesting of forest commodities carried out by the Orang Asli community for subsistence (Mohd. Tap, 1990). Furthermore, top-down sustainable development frameworks that do not take into consideration the interests of the target group concerned will result in developmental agendas that are often counterproductive and unsuccessful (Bartels & Nelissen, 2002; OECD, 2002; Bruckmeier & Tovey, 2009) and the same dynamics applies to frameworks concerning the Orang Asli.

This is not to say however, that a purely "bottom-up" approach alone is desirable; on the contrary, initiatives that are purely "bottom-up" with no federal or state-level support lack the coordination and financial resources (Gboku, Lekoko & McClellan, 2007) needed to thrive. Furthermore, "top-down"

planning provides resources (Lafferty, 2004), coherency and facilitates the "flow of information down the spatial scale" (Purvis & Grainger, 2004) thus enabling stakeholders at the community level to effectively mobilize developmental plans in a coordinated and efficient manner. In effect, although the "bottom-up" approach places its focus on specific problems (Purvis & Grainger, 2004), facilitates the participation of local communities (Auty & Brown, 1997) and ensures local commitment and relevance (International Institute for Environment and Development, 1995), "bottom-up" approaches do require top level support if they are to be sustainable in the long run (Kock, 2007; Gardner, Prugh & Starke, 2008). When such a participatory mechanism is put into place, it facilitates the building of trust between stakeholders at the community level with policy makers at the macro level (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2007) with the Orang Asli more inclined to trust developmental initiatives as serving their needs and developmental goals and not just those of the state or federal government.

2.2 Development and Modernization

Malaysia's transition from a commodities-based economy comprising of exports such as rubber, tin, and timber to an industrial economy was due to what many perceived as the country's economic (Kenkyūjo, 1998; Lockard, 2006) and political stability (Fong, 1986; Yusuf & Nabeshima, 2009) as well as well-developed infrastructure (Naidu & Lee, 1997; Felker, Jomo & Rajah Rasiah, 2002). The progress in Malaysia's economy subsequently trickled down and benefitted many Malaysians through a substantial increase in jobs (Jomo & Sundaram, 2007), a higher standard of living (Moore, 2001) and overall socio-economic prosperity (evidenced by a rising GDP). Prior to this however, Malaysia experienced several phases of small-scale industrialization that was driven primarily by the development of import substitution industries. In the 1970s, Malaysia began its transition toward industrialization by encouraging labor-intensive and export-oriented industries such as in the field of electronics and textile-manufacturing (EPU, 2007). Malaysia's industrialization was primarily spearheaded by Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad who during his 22-year leadership of the country often stated that as a multicultural country, Malaysia should develop according to its own capacity, agenda and needs; the former Prime Minister reiterated this statement in a recent interview with BERNAMA (the government's news agency), saying that Malaysia should not rely on Western development ideologies but instead focus on its own system (BERNAMA, 2012).

At the beginning of the 80s, Malaysia transitioned into the subsequent phase of its industrial journey with the implementation of the import substitution policy as well as expanded downstream resource-based industries, for instance petroleum and palm oil (Inter-American Development Bank, 1997) which were processed for distribution in the export market. The mid 80s also saw Malaysia's entry into the automobile industry with the production of its national car – the Proton Saga (Rosli, 2006). In the 1990s, Malaysia had attained "full-employment" status (O'Connor & Farsakh, 1997; Athukorala, 2001) and could therefore no longer sustain labor-intensive industries; consequently, a shift in the nation's industrialization strategy was made, whereby the government decided to attract industries that utilized high technologies, were capital-intensive, knowledge-based and high value added. This transition was made possible by the introduction of the Second Industrial Master Plan which was unveiled in 1996 (Lau, 2007).

The brief but detailed description above distinctly illustrates how Malaysia emulated a Western free-market approach with regard to its economic system. Following decolonization, the modernization theory was lauded by postcolonial and former colonizing nations alike as a desired goal and the solution to the economic, social and political woes of former colonies in Africa and Asia (Rappa & Wee, 2006; Bilimoria & Irvine, 2010). Akin to other developing states, Malaysia also sought to modernization and the attainment of socio-economic prosperity as rapidly as possible; however, in pursuing modernity, Malaysia adopted the Western line of thought that modernization and tradition were irreconcilable entities, with modernization equated with "progressiveness" while tradition was associated with the "Indigenous" (Lye, 2002); and that one cannot exist alongside the other. Consequently, traditional ways of life – such as those of the Orang Asli are viewed as impediments to

modernization and progress by the developmental mechanisms and administration of the country (Lye, 2002). Much Western rhetoric – in particular American, claimed that the reason developing nations were so left behind in their development was because traditional and Indigenous cultural traits and values stood in the way of progress (Tomlinson, 1991; Brohman, 1996). By and large, many developing states such as Chile, India and Malaysia viewed such entities as obstructions to development and modernization (Earle, 2007; Spivak & Morris, 2010). The proposed solution according to the Western theory of modernization was to do away with such Indigenous traits and replace them with Western ideals that were more compatible with modern developmental agendas (Hobart, 1993; Rappa & Wee, 2006).

This lack of recognition of Orang Asli culture and way of life was prevalent even during the time of the British (Nicholas & Baer, 2006). In colonial Malaya, Orang Asli were directly or indirectly denied and also deprived of any legal deed(s) to their traditional lands (Magallanes & Hollick, 1998). Unfortunately, this omission was carried over into the national policies of the Malaysian government following independence (Nicholas, 2000; Resurreccion & Elmhirst, 2008; Fennel, 2009), and with the advent of development capital ideology, Orang Asli lands were further reclaimed or acquired with little, if no, compensation (Leigh, 2000; Benjamin & Chou, 2002; Lee & Yeoh, 2005). Furthermore, decisions made regarding the developmental plans of forests were also done without much consideration for the traditional livelihoods and customary practices of the Orang Asli (*Ibid.*). Such ongoing disregard for the Orang Asli's way of life, culture and worldview as well as the imposition of a foreign developmental and modernization framework have all resulted in a counterproductive environment, with the Orang Asli resisting government efforts aimed at "developing/modernizing" them (Veeranggan, 2009) and the government growing increasingly frustrated with such resistance, sometimes resulting in a developmental "deadlock" – but usually with the government getting its way, especially with regard to land acquisition (Dentan, 1997; Verma, 2002; Vinding, 2003; Resurreccion & Imhirst, 2008) and Orang Asli relocation (McGregor, 2008; Fennel, 2010). This heralds the need for alternative modernization theories within Malaysia that do not seek to alienate peripheral communities such as the Orang Asli (who are in fact peripheral due to governmental policies) but instead aim to grant them the respect, freedom and legal rights to pursue their own developmental agendas. The fact of the matter is, current modernization policies by the State to bring the country into its 2020 goal of a developed nation is not inclusive of the needs of the nation's Indigenous groups (JOANGOHutan, 2006) and more often than not, completely disregards them. This marginalization of Orang Asli interests is evident: although the national poverty rate has been reduced to 5.6%, poverty rate for the Orang Asli is still at a high 76.9 % (Zainal Abidin, 2003) meaning that almost three quarters of all Orang Asli are still living in poverty. Additionally, the number of Orang Asli still living in the "hardcore poor" category is 25 times the national average of 1.4% (*Ibid.*). The Poverty Line Index (PLI) for West Malaysia is defined as RM 720 per month, whereas Hardcore PLI is defined as households with 60% (or less) of the PLI (Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006).

Power relations between the Orang Asli and the state has also always been fraught with inequality, heavy-handedness and injustice, with the Orang Asli being the subject of discriminative policies and excluded from decision-making frameworks (JOANGOHutan, 2006). The state, together with powerful corporations and politically-connected individuals often adopt the policy of "take what we want, when we want it," ignoring the repercussions of their actions on the physical livelihoods, health and overall ability of the Orang Asli to survive. Consequently, Orang Asli lack of political leverage and bargaining power is often used to the advantage of the state, which forcibly relocates, silences and abuses them (*Ibid.*).

Developmental agendas in recent years have seen major developmental agencies such as the United Nations calling for "larger freedom" in global developmental patterns which should be based on the tenets of greater equity, social justice and respect for human rights (Zakri, Zainal Abidin, Govindran, 2011). Such patterns of development are consistent with the development needs of the Orang Asli, whereby their land rights should be acknowledged and protected, and their unique identities recognized and incorporated into development plans and policy-making initiatives. Although Malaysia's GDP has consistently registered strong growth year after year since the 1970s (Khan, 2002; Oxford Business Group, 2007) (with the exception of the 1985 and 1997 crises), development as

defined by a higher GDP alone does not equate a higher quality of life, instead, as argued by the Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, quality of life has to do with the fulfillment of one's needs, therefore, one has quality of life when one's needs are met (Sen, 1993). An instance of Orang Asli needs *not* being met as a result of the government's development plan was the forced relocation of two Temuan communities to Kampung Gerachi in order to clear approximately 600 hectares of Orang Asli forest land (JOANGOHutan, 2006) in order to construct the Sungai Selangor Dam (completed in 2002), in Selangor (Resurreccion & Imhirst, 2008). As a result of the relocation, the Temuans not only lost their ancestral lands, but were also unable to meet their basic subsistence needs due to the lack of forest cover. Consequently, although thousands of Selangor households are now able to reap the benefits of the dam, the Temuan are still at the losing end, having lost their ancestral lands, source of subsistence as well as spiritual ties to the land. Furthermore, the loss of the forest to the Temuan also presents the threat of them losing their Indigenous knowledge, as they are unable to continue their relationship with the forest and obtain the resources they use in traditional medicine and forest products. A similar pattern is seen now with the Kensiu, whereby their distance from the forest has resulted in Kensiu youth being unfamiliar with medicinal plants and forest relationships thus leading to degradation in their sustainability practices; as the culture of forest-dwelling Orang Asli is so closely tied to the forest, forest loss directly contributes to a loss in culture as well.

Furthermore, although GDP was traditionally viewed as an indicator of economic development and a nation's standard of living, it does not encompass all aspects of the quality of life; for instance, GDP does not address the aspect of distribution of wealth. Due to its averaging nature, it may award high marks for nations with massive inequalities where individuals at the top may be extremely wealthy resulting in a high average while many at the bottom lead appalling lives (Nussbaum, 2008). Malaysia has consistently recorded good growth in its GDP (with the exception of the major recession periods) but because GDP tends to quantify aspects of human life, it is unable to explicitly reveal how people such as the Orang Asli are faring in important areas of life such as political liberty, health and education; which are all areas in which the Orang Asli face serious deficiencies (Hefner, 2001; Dean & Levi; Duncan, 2008). Empirical studies have also revealed that areas such as political liberty, education, health, gender relations, and so on, do not necessarily correlate with an improvement in GDP (Nussbaum, 2008), meaning that the State has to do more than just facilitate economic development, it has to make certain that Orang Asli land rights are recognized while simultaneously ensuring that other relevant needs such as health and education, are met.

This takes us to the subject of alternative developmental models for developing nations such as Malaysia which must contain within them mechanisms that support independence, dignity and empowerment – all of which the Orang Asli desperately need more of due to the lack of political representation (Hefner, 2001; Nicholas & Baer, 2006; Gall, 2009), education (Dentan, 1997; Cheng, 2007; Duncan, 2008) and the absence of an effective political mechanism to further their agenda (Jumper, 1999). One such alternative approach is the Human Rights Approach to development. Developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Human Rights Approach seeks to promote human rights for all peoples, especially to those in developing and least developed countries, while doing away with inequalities as well as abuse of power, both of which obstruct positive development. Furthermore, it aims to minimize the reliance of local communities in a specific country by strengthening the capacity of the government to aid its people. The definition of the Human Rights Approach is as follows:

> "A human rights-based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyse inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress,"

(OHCHR, 2006)

The Human Rights Approach to development considers the interests of the rights bearer, duty bearer, people and the state (Hirst & Nutbrown, 2005; UN, 2008) in comparison to the conventional Basic Needs Approach, which is the model periodically practiced in Malaysia (Cho, 1990; Johari, 1991). The Human Rights Approach is therefore more effective because it identifies and tackles the root issue of the problem whereas the Basic Needs Approach is palliative, providing only temporary relief from symptoms of the root problem(s). An example of both in the context of the Kensiu is the teaching of new skills and capacity building via education (which is the Human Rights Approach); on the other hand, the giving of monetary relief is clearly a Basic Needs Approach to an issue as it does not resolve the root problem, lack of skills and education. Some characteristics of the Human Rights Approach are its function as a tool for analysis to determine why inequalities and discrimination exist which prevent people living in poverty from escaping the poverty trap (Häusermann 1999; Meenai, 2007), a developmental process centered on participatory, inclusive and multi-sectoral processes (Feyter, 2005; Meenai, 2007), and the empowerment of individuals (Banik, 2008; McInerney-Lankford, McInerney-Lankford & Sano, 2010) to realize their fullest potentials in becoming active contributors to society. As discussed earlier, all these characteristics address the core issues facing the Orang Asli in Malaysia today. Table 2.1 illustrates the differences between the Needs Based and Rights Based Approach to Development.

Basic Needs Approach	Human Rights Approach
Works toward outcome goals	Work towards outcome and process goals
Recognizes needs as valid claims	Recognizes that rights always implies obligations of the state
Empowerment is not necessary to meet all needs	Recognizes that rights can only be realized with empowerment
Accepts charity as the driving motivation for meeting needs	Regards charity as an insufficient motivation for meeting needs
Focuses on manifestations of problems and immediate causes of problems	Focuses on structural causes of problems as well as manifestations and immediate causes of problems
Focuses on the social context with little emphasis on policy	Focuses on social, cultural, economic, civil and political context and is policy oriented

Table 2.1 Differences between the Needs-based and Human-rights based approaches to development.
Source: Developed by Ljungman & M. C., (2005)

As can be seen in Table 2.1, the Human Rights Approach places its focal point not only on the end goals of development, but also the path taken to achieve it which is the processes involved in attaining the development objective, for instance, the attainment of human rights (Mikkelsen, 2005). Furthermore, the responsibilities of the state, and other associated duty-bearers of development are also taken into consideration, recognizing that the empowerment of a community is an effort involving participation from the government and institutions (Shaw, Greene & Mark, 2006). Additionally, it underlines the fact that charity is not the means by which this empowerment is to take place (Chong, 2010), highlighting the need to take into account the needs of the community by identifying the root cause of poverty, inequitable development and disempowerment vis-à-vis social, cultural, economic, civil and political contexts, structural deficiencies (Chong, 2010) and the rectification of these issues through policy-oriented approaches. Therefore, in contrast to the conventional Basic Needs Approach, the Human Rights Approach addresses the fundamental causes of developmental inequity while prescribing ways through which developmental mechanisms and policies can be rectified to enact positive and constructive change in the status quo.

It should be noted here other stakeholders involved in development may take an alternate view of the Human Rights Approach; many economists for instance, regard the economy as a sufficient instrument to meet developmental concerns such as health and education (Gauri, 2003), while arguing that adherents of the Human Rights Approach are more concerned with theoretical perceptions of human

rights and ethics (Seymour & Pincus, 2008) and not of the practical developmental agenda. Consequently, some economists and human rights theorists conclude that both fields are irreconcilable; however Seymour & Pincus also argue that at times, due to their lack of a suitable framework, economists must sometimes rely on Human Rights Approach advocates' development framework. For instance, although from an economic point of view the utilization of child labor provides cheap labor while promoting economic growth, it is nonetheless considered wrong, and Human Rights frameworks are in place to ensure that such incidences do not occur. Similarly, such Rights based frameworks are also necessary in the Orang Asli's development plans to ensure that exploitation of the Orang Asli does not occur.

2.3 Ecological Stewardship and Indigenous Knowledge

The concept of stewardship denotes the activity performed by a custodian or guardian and is defined as "the act of taking care of or managing something" (Oxford Dictionary, 2011). This conscious effort could be defined as a sense of concern, or "caring" (Berry, 2006) for what we value. Berry argues that underlying this sense of caring, is our relationship with the entity we value (Berry, 2006). Consequently, the concept of ecological stewardship denotes a conscious caring by Indigenous communities which recognizes their relationship with their natural environment(s). Understandably, given their considerably long histories with their environments, Indigenous people have established strong, deep relationships with their natural surroundings (Cederlöf & Sivaramakrishnan, 2006), making them stewards of such ecosystems.

Unlike the relative detachment of mainstream society from the natural world (Backes, 1997; Pretty, 2007; Walsh, 2011), Indigenous communities have strong unbroken traditions of cultural and spiritual familiarity in understanding the interdependence of the elements in their environment – both the biotic and abiotic (Zeppel, 2006), the importance of balance (Kronik & Verner, 2010), and of how all these elements are connected to one another in mutually sustaining relationships. It is this understanding that forms the basis of their relationship with their environments as well as their worldview, and is passed down from generation to generation. Indigenous practices are often viewed to be "inherently" sustainable in nature (Redclift, 1987; Tippins, Mueller, van Eijck, & Adams, 2010) encompassing traditional health practices, hunting-gathering activities or their overall interactions with the environment. That is not to say however, that Indigenous communities from different geographical locations share absolute universal belief systems or practices; different Indigenous communities have distinct ways through which they understand and interpret their natural world (Anaya, 2004; Shadian, 2006; Haller, 2007). While certain similarities may exist in the form of animistic religions or subsistence agricultural and hunting-gathering activities, the concept of ecological stewardship may very well vary considerably between Indigenous populations.

Each Orang Asli group has a vast repository of knowledge regarding the biodiversity within their respective environments. Such knowledge includes the ability to identify plants that can be used to treat specific illnesses, plants that can provide them with the toxin needed for hunting; for instance the utilization of the Ipoh tree (*Antiaris toxicaria*) sap for blowpipe hunting by the Temiar (Roseman, 1993; Zerner, 2003) as well as suitable places and strategies through which to hunt animals like deer, porcupine, pigs, monkeys and *siamang* (gibbon) for consumption (Kathirithamby-Wells, 2005; Lye, 2005). Furthermore, the Orang Asli are also familiar with the seasonal bounties of the forest, knowing when to harvest seasonal fruits and honey (Lye, 2005).

As stewards of the environments within which they have lived for millennia, ecological stewardship and respect form significant components of their existence – unlike the capitalist perception of the natural world as a dominion (Ross, Sherman, Snodgrass & Delcore, 2010). In other words, Indigenous communities have long been leading sustainable lifestyles with regard to their practices due to their extensive knowledge and understanding of the natural environment (Board, 2004; Haller, 2007). Furthermore, the ties that Indigenous communities have with the forest are not purely for subsistence, cultural, and spiritual reasons alone, but also for economic purposes (Büchi, 1997). The Orang Asli for instance, obtained from the forest the goods they needed for trade with neighboring Indigenous

communities as well as non-Indigenous communities (Kathirithamby-Wells, 2005; Haspelmath & Tadmor, 2009) – although trade activities are not as prolific as they once used to be.

To many Indigenous forest groups around the world, the forest they live in is a "mother-like" figure (Merchant, 1992; Léger, 1994; Achard, 2009) that is, the forest and them are entwined on an almost umbilical level – akin to that of *provider* and *dependent,* and inseparable, illustrated best as a mother/child relationship. Conversely, in other Indigenous communities, the forest is viewed as an entity that requires guardianship; in the Batek belief system, it is their role to *jaga² həp* (guard the forest), and it is the explicit duty of those who live within the forest to perform this duty – not those outside of it (Lye, 2005). This active role of forest guardianship runs parallel to the idea of ecological stewardship and should be incorporated into developmental plans concerning the Orang Asli, thus combining both traditional worldview and contemporary development policies in an approach that would be participatory in nature. It is implausible to discuss development in the context of the Orang Asli without taking into consideration their relationship with the forests and lands they inhabit. Equally important to note therefore, is the fact that sustainable development to Indigenous peoples is not just about the environment and development, but also the survival of their people (Higgins, 1999) and way of life. As argued by Haller (2007), common ownership of territories is a fundamental aspect of the Indigenous belief system, whereby the "property" is passed on from one generation to the next without being transferred to outsiders, as this would signify "alienation" of the land.

The United Nations concurs that the knowledge and understanding of local communities with regard to their natural and cultural environments is undeniably superior to those of external 'experts,' which is why the blueprint for sustainable development (known as Agenda 21) which was agreed at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, promotes a participatory approach involving local communities with regard to sustainable development initiatives (Purvis & Grainger, 2004). As stewards of their environments, Indigenous people have valuable knowledge to contribute to sustainable developmental efforts and problems concerning their lands and their livelihoods (Wood, 1992), which is a resource that must be tapped into. However, the participatory approach of balancing Indigenous Knowledge, developmental policies and scientific knowledge is a complex task that must first be necessitated by proper communication (Sillitoe, Bicker & Pottier, 2002). By opening up communication channels through which Indigenous communities can participate in the formulation of development frameworks, developmental agencies recognize the right and legitimacy of Indigenous ownership of the land on which development is to take place – thus making development not only participatory, but also rights-based (WorldBank, 2008), resulting in the empowerment of the Indigene (Nadasdy, 2005). Furthermore, combining mainstream developmental frameworks with Indigenous Knowledge at the inter-/intra-community level will

3: Methods and Procedures

3.1 Data Collection

Data was collected for this research using two ethnographic data collection methods i) narrative inquiry and ii) participant observation, lasting approximately 2 weeks. Narrative inquiry between the researcher and representatives from the Kensiu community was carried out with the explicit motive of understanding sustainability and development from the perspective of the Kensiu; whereas participant observation was conducted in order to identify sustainability practices of the Kensiu. Prior to beginning my participant observation, I had the opportunity to introduce myself at an introductory meeting with the Kensiu people in attendance where I was able to explain my study to the Kensiu, granting them an opportunity to understand my reason for staying with them.

3.2 Sampling

The Kensiu are the smallest ethnic within the Semang tribal group (approximately 3%) as well as the smallest Orang Asli community in comparison to the other Orang Asli groups in Peninsular Malaysia, numbering about 247 individuals in total. The diminutive number of the Kensiu, the historically inaccessible location(s) of their habitations within the forest and the relatively poor socio-economic conditions of the region (Dallos, 2011) are all factors as to why Semang groups were – or are, less studied than other Orang Asli groups. In the case of the Kensiu however, their current sedentary lifestyle facilitates the studying of their way of life, although ironically, it also symbolizes the end of what was once a fully hunter-gatherer community. The reasons for selecting the Kensiu as my study group are explained in further detail in Chapter 1 of this paper. The sampling process used is homogenous sampling, as this study is specific in its aim to understand/describe the Kensiu. Given that the population size of the Kensiu is 247, and 0.1 (10 per cent) was selected as the sampling size, the number of respondents chosen was 30.

$$\frac{10 \ (0.1) \ \text{x} \ 247 \ (\text{Kensiu community})}{100} = 24.7 \text{ respondents (rounded up to 30)}$$

A combination non-probability method consisting of snowball sampling and random sampling was used for research sampling selection.

3.3 Narrative Inquiry

The focus of the narrative inquiry was to identify how the Kensiu view sustainability and development vis-à-vis their roles as ecological stewards of the forest. In this method, conversations between the researcher and the Kensiu will be recorded on an audio recorder, contingent on the approval of the individual being spoken to. When audio recording was not possible – due to discomfort on the part of the Kensiu, points from the narrative was written down on a notepad, to be transcribed as soon as was possible at a later time.

As a substantial number of the Kensiu do not converse fluently in Malay, the researcher was assisted during the sessions with the respondents by the chairman of the JKKK, or Village Committee *(Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung)* who is also an ethnic Kensiu, Mr. Razali. In order to ensure that information was not lost in the translation process, cross-examination of respondent replies were carried out with the translator via triangulation to ensure accuracy. This was

done by repeatedly checking respondent replies with the translator. Otherwise, the coding, analysis of the data and other research activities was carried out individually by the researcher.

The categorical themes utilized for scientific construct are participation, empowerment, relationship between the forest and the Kensiu, and, resources and the environment. Given the shy nature of the villagers – often referred to as *"segan"* by members of the community, it was crucial to create a comfortable and conducive environment for the Kensiu to narrate their perception of sustainability and development; therefore, an informal environment centered on leisurely storytelling was deemed necessary. It was important to the success of the study that the Kensiu did not feel that they were being pressured or forced to participate in the study, but were instead doing it at their own pace and volition. Data collection and coding were done simultaneously during the narration.

Follow-up questions, based on the categories developed for the narrative session was asked to gain further insight and information on the topic being discussed. As the narrative process was also a learning process for the researcher, it was natural that certain topics discussed or brought up during the narrative process were expanded. A total of 30 respondents from the Kensiu community were selected for both narrative sessions, with the same individuals participating in both sessions. As the total number of Kensiu at Kampung Lubok Legong number 247, this would constitute a little over 10 percent of the population.

3.4 Participant Observation

Participant observation with the Kensiu granted me the opportunity to observe how the Kensiu react with their environment as well as their relationship to it, and between each other. Additionally, the interrelation between Kensiu to Kensiu and Kensiu to forest is important in my attempt to understand the Kensiu worldview – albeit at a preliminary level. Furthermore, participant observation was a critical tool in facilitating my observation of their lifestyles and symbols and was also necessary in ensuring smooth implementation of narrative inquiry.

Furthermore, living with the Kensiu provided opportunities for me to discover certain aspects of Kensiu relationship with the forest that I did not consider during the preparation of my research questions, thus granting me a new source of questions. I also observed what they did in their daily routines and why they did them, especially in the areas of subsistence, culture, and society, and if there were any deviations from their daily routines, and the reason(s) for it. Furthermore, my experience as participant was not only limited to observation at the Kensiu settlement, but also in their everyday activities as well as their hunting and gathering expeditions, which form a crucial part of their interactions with their environment.

In keeping with DeMunck & Sobo's (1998) suggestion, I maintained two notebooks to record information when conducting my participant observation – one to write down interview notes and observations as the respondent narrates, and the second to note down casual comments, personal musings and miscellaneous notes.

3.5 Data Analysis

The two methods employed in analyzing my data are narrative analysis and sequence-of-action. All data resulting from the narrative analysis will be transcribed in order to create categories and index data. As the data were in the form of transcripts, the identification of patterns were done by developing categories and coding the documents, followed by data sorting. Analysis of data was done in the following manner:

i), repeated listening (at least twice) of recorded material from sessions with the respondents, ii) narrative analysis with respondents were documented and translated into transcripts, iii) following transcription, each transcript was studied and sorted in order to produce a brief synthesis of Kensiu

perception of sustainability and development/modernization, iv) storage of data in separate files and finally v) the management of data according to categorical processes. In doing so, I will develop a matrix as a means to document my research findings in an organized manner.

The preset themes for this research are participation and empowerment, the relationship between the forest and the Kensiu (hunting/fishing/gathering/traditional medicine), modernization (development/education) and, socio-culture. Each of these preset themes is accompanied by its respective subthemes, which were developed during the course of the research. Data reliability was achieved through triangulation; that is, I reread the transcriptions from the respondents and made comparisons between the two data collection methods of participant observation and narrative inquiry. Presentation of data is done through the use of tables and thick description; thick description provides the reader not only with the details of Kensiu behavior and practices, but also allows the reader to understand the context within which such activity was carried out, thus facilitating reader understanding of Kensiu activities.

3.6 Consideration of Research Ethics

The issue of research ethics is of paramount importance to any research initiative. Accordingly, and in keeping with this practice, I informed Kensiu respondents of my status as a researcher, the study's research scope, objectives and my intention to observe and document their daily practices as well as perspectives during the narrative exercise. Prior to initiating my study, it was important to me that I obtained their permission to conduct my study at their settlement – which was granted. Furthermore, respondents were also given the liberty to withdraw from the research if they felt uncomfortable at any given time during the research. Respondents were also informed of certain conditions pertaining to their status as respondents such as: i) timeframe needed for the study, ii) compensation involved should they agree to become respondents for the study, iii) sharing of findings with the respondents.

Additionally, respondents were informed at the beginning of the research that their participation as respondents was completely voluntary and that their withdrawal from the study at any time is possible with no forfeit or penalties. Interviews were also carried out with certain non-Kensiu respondents who were living alongside the Kensiu; given the complex nature of the Orang Asli in the context of Malaysia politics and risks for complications with regards to the disclosure of sensitive information, these respondents were assured that their names would not be disclosed or included in the research, and that their anonymity is guaranteed.

4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two primary sections: i) Relationship with the Forest and ii) Development and Modernization, as well as their corresponding subthemes. My respondents consisted of 30 individuals from varying age groups. Table 4.1 shows an analysis of my respondents.

	Age	Female	Male
Adolescent	13 – 17	5	3
Adult	18 – 54	9	5
Senior Citizen	55 – 80	4	4
Total		18	12
Total Respondents		30	

Table 4.1 Respondents' Age and Gender

Table 4.1 shows the age and gender of the respondents. Throughout my narrative inquiry, I found that women were more receptive to being approached while men were more reserved. Adolescent boys were often too shy; interestingly, adolescent girls were more open to being interviewed. The largest difference in the number of respondents occurs in the "adult" age group (18 – 54). This correlates with my observation that most Kensiu men of working age periodically travel out of the village for work; such trips may last days or even months depending on the work they are employed for, often as manual labor at oil palm estates, sea ports and plantations. Consequently, female respondents formed the bulk of my respondents in the adult age bracket.

Table 4.2 illustrates my findings using the Narrative Inquiry table pertaining to Kensiu Relationship to the Forest and Development and Modernization; it shows the changes that have occurred with the Kensiu from the Past to the Present, as well as Future projections. Note that this is a summarized table, and that each respondent has their respective table. The information contained in this table is therefore a summary demonstrating the themes that recurred the most during the Narrative Inquiry sessions. The discussion of the findings in Chapter 4 including the major themes and their respective subthemes are based on Table 4.2.

Period	Changes in forest	Hunting & Fishing	Gathering & Traditional medicine	Socio-culture	Education	Socio-economic
Past	- Forest cover was dense and closer to the Kensiu village	- Game was plentiful as were fish populations	- Kensiu were more familiar with traditional herbs and plants used for medicine and consumption	- Social problems were virtually non-existent - Cultural elements such as *sewang* was widely known - Knowledge of tribe's stories widespread	- Most Kensiu did not have primary education	- Agriculture and cash crops were virtually non-existent - Practiced an exclusively hunter-gatherer lifestyle with no major economic links with the outside world save for periodic trade with Malays
Present	- Forest cover has receded substantially due to logging - Kensiu have to travel further to reach the forest	- Both game and fish populations have reduced significantly due to poaching, logging and illegal fishing methods	- Majority of Kensiu youth are unfamiliar with traditional medicinal plants and seek medical assistance from clinics	- A large portion of Kensiu youth – especially young men, have an alcohol or drug problem - Most youth do not know *sewang* or stories of their tribe	- A large number of Kensiu children now attend kindergarten - Most Kensiu youth have received education at least up to Primary 3 - A small number of Kensiu (all female) completed education until the Fifth form	- Most Kensiu are now employed in plantations with some men working in Pekan Baling as well as other towns in the region - Some Kensiu plant rubber trees provided by RISDA
Future	- The forest will lose its importance for two reasons: i) fragmentation of forest cover and ii) reduced economic dependence due to higher reliance on the nation's economy	- Kensiu will become more reliant on poultry, fish and vegetables purchased from traders and less reliant on dwindling forest goods	- Kensiu youth will become increasingly detached from Indigenous Knowledge of ancestors	- Cultural components such as *sewang* will be forgotten as most Kensiu youth interviewed are uninterested in learning about them	- Most Kensiu respondents express desire for their children to receive education signaling potential rise in education levels	- Kensiu increasingly involved in nation's socio-economic sectors especially cash crops

Table 4.2 Changing Dynamics of Kensiu Relationship to the Forest, and Development and Modernization

4.2 Sustainability Practices and Relationship with the Forest

4.2.1 Giving Up a Life in the Forest

Prior to the 1950s, the Kensiu were a nomadic hunter-gatherer community, similar to other Semang groups like the Batek, Kintak and Jahai. That being said, as mentioned earlier in this study it is important to note that the Orang Asli are not a homogeneous group, and even among sub-ethnics under a given tribe, there exist concrete differences in culture, language, lifestyle and socio-economic conditions. For instance, unlike their related tribal counterparts the Batek, the Kensiu no longer live within the forest, but on settlements provided by the government. I was told by the Chairman of the Village Committee that in the 1950s, representatives from the government succeeded in persuading the *Tok Batin* (tribe chief) of the Kensiu that it was in the Kensiu's best interest to adopt a sedentary lifestyle instead of a nomadic one in the forest, as the government would be better able to assist the Kensiu in improving their quality of life and include them in the nation's developmental policies. The *Tok Batin* was persuaded, and because the Kensiu people (as all other Orang Asli communities) place great regard on the words of the *Tok Batin*, the Kensiu population settled down and gave up forest living. Almost 50-odd years have since passed, and the Kensiu remain a poor community, with little education and deplorable living standards (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Typical Kensiu resettlement habitation

Although the Kensiu (unlike other Semang such as the Jahai or Batek) no longer live within the forest – they nonetheless maintain a close association to it. The forest provides the Kensiu with the goods they need for trade and remains an integral part of their life. The Kensiu rely on the forest for food – both meat and vegetables, for gathering forest products to sell and for building materials for their homes. Furthermore, the forest also gives the Kensiu a sense of belonging and of security, evident from the number of respondents who prefer living closer to the forest instead of the nearby town. Nonetheless, as stated in Table 4.2, the forest may gradually lose its importance to the Kensiu due to forest fragmentation and greater Kensiu dependence on sectors of the nation's economy (such as rubber and palm oil).

4.2.2 Religion

Approximately 80% of the Kensiu are Muslims, with the remaining 20% still clinging on to the animistic beliefs of their ancestors. There is one mosque in the Kensiu settlement and two religious teachers – an *ustaz* and an *ustazah* who are both from the Malay community. Kensiu who practice animism today do not appear to carry out animistic religious practices per se, but they do believe in the *semangat* (spirit) of trees, animals, rivers, hills, and other biotic and abiotic entities around them and have specific funeral rites for the departed. There are six individuals who are regarded as *bomohs* (shamans) in the Kensiu settlement and they are respected by Muslim and non-Muslim Kensiu alike. Location-wise, Kensiu habitations are divided, with Muslim Kensiu living in quarters by the main road *Jalan Weng* (K702) while those that practice animism live across the road from the Muslims on a nearby hill. Both the animist and Muslim habitations are therefore separated by the only main road in the village, which connects the village to Pekan Baling, located 12 kilometers (approximately 15 minutes) away. Nonetheless, from what I am told, and from my personal observations, no real cultural divide exists between the two groups except for certain dietary as well as funeral practices.

To elaborate, dietary practices appear to be one of the more tangible differentiating factors among the Kensiu, with the Muslim Kensiu having given up the consumption of traditionally-consumed meats such as wild boar meat, as well as squirrels and tortoises. They do still hunt and consume other game animals such as deer, chevrotain and birds. The practice of wearing headscarves among women is not prevalent, and most Kensiu women do not cover their hair – unless attending an event organized by JAKOA or the Islamic Council. The usual attire for women is a *sarong* coupled with a simple blouse while men are usually in long pants and t-shirts.

Figure 4.2: Animist grave

While Muslim Kensiu practice burial customs similar to the Malay community, animist Kensiu still practice ancient Kensiu burial and post-funeral practices (see Figure 4.2). When a member of the Kensiu animist community passes on, the family of the departed initiates burial proceedings by first digging out a hole in the ground in which to lay the body. After the hole is dug, "walls" of bamboo are placed within the cavity in the ground, with the bamboo canes lining the entire four lengths of the hole. Following this, the body is placed within the cavity but unlike Muslim burials, the body is neither washed nor wrapped in cloth. Interestingly, while Muslim burial dictates that the body of the departed should be facing the *Qiblah* when buried, animist Kensiu bury their dead with the head facing the East – toward the rising sun. The belief for this practice is that as the sun rises, the Sun takes with it the soul of the departed and as it sets in the West, it transports the soul into the sea. The following day, the soul repeats its journey with the sun to the sea. This lasts for seven days and on the final day, the soul does not return to the burial site. I was told that among animist Kensiu, the sea

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represents the afterlife, where the departed are reunited with their ancestors. Subsequently, after the family has buried the body, a fire is kept lit lasting seven days and nights by the burial site in order to keep the soul warm; additionally, food and drinks are also placed by the burial site for the entire duration. Finally, after the seven days have passed, any kind of flowering plant is planted at the head of the grave as a final offering. The gravesite is then visited only once a year with new food offerings placed upon it.

Ironically, it is a Muslim Kensiu (Chairman of the Village Committee) who presides over the burial of non-Muslim Kensiu; this is because of the dying-out of cultural knowledge among the Kensiu. There are no Kensiu left who are familiar with the rituals for an animist burial and because the Chairman is familiar with it, he assists them during burials. This loss in Kensiu culture is stated under the present Socio-culture theme in Table 4.2, and it is very possible based on my interviews and future projections, that more elements of Kensiu knowledge may be lost in the future.

4.2.2.1 Sewang

Sewang in the Kensiu language is *pə neŋ lɔn,* and traditionally, it was carried out once a year by the Kensiu people prior to living in resettlements. Today, *sewang* is only performed for the benefit of visiting ministers, members of royalty and cultural shows (see Figure 4.3). The themes of most *sewang* songs are of the moon, fruits and love and *sewang* skills consist of either knowing how to sing, dance or play the bamboo instruments. Before conversion, *sewang* was performed bare-chested by both women and men who would dress themselves up in leaves woven into sashes with their heads decorated with leaves and flowers. Following conversion to Islam however, they no longer performed in this manner, and instead wear their sashes and other decorative materials over t-shirts. As stated in Table 4.2, presently, lack of interest among Kensiu youth and the dwindling number of elders proficient in the knowledge of sewang are the two primary threats to the survival of *sewang*. The possible extinction of *pə neŋ lɔn* should be a cause for grave concern especially with regard to the sustainability of Kensiu culture, and must also be given due attention in Kensiu development plans.

Figure 4.3: Kensiu women performing *sewang*

From my observation and interviews, virtually none of the Kensiu adolescents or adults were able to sing any of the *sewang* songs, and only a handful of them still remember how to dance. Both singers and musicians consisted of individuals in their late 50s.

4.2.3 Hunting

Hunting forms a major component of Kensiu life – although presently, as stated in Table 4.2, its importance has lessened somewhat with the advent of sedentary living and poaching by outsiders. However, it is still a major contributor to their socio-economic security; meaning that animals are still caught both for consumption (and more importantly) for sale. Because most Kensiu are not permanently employed, in that they are often odd-job laborers, hunting for the intention of sale is a major source of income. Animals that are caught for sale include the wild boar and *tenggiling* (pangolin), both for the Chinese market. Tracking is the most widely used method for hunting pangolins (see Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: Pangolin holes used by hunters to track pangolins

Although the Kensiu themselves do not consume pangolin meat, it fetches a high price on the Chinese market due to misperceived medicinal properties. Although the pangolin is a protected animal and a ban is placed on their capture and sale, they are tracked and captured live by Kensiu men and sold to brokers. Some of these pangolins even end up travelling as far as Hong Kong – becoming a part of the international wildlife trafficking cycle.

Hunting is carried out at most thrice a week, often, it is twice. Hunting is an exclusively male activity; only the men go into the forest to hunt and they are also the ones who are responsible for the fashioning of hunting paraphernalia such as blowpipes and darts. Even the procurement and processing of the poison from the Ipoh tree (*Antiaris toxicaria*) used to lace the tip of the dart is done by the men. The two primary methods used by the Kensiu men to hunt are using blowpipes (see Figure 4.5) and setting snares, while wooden spears are used to hunt smaller game, particularly soft-shelled turtles. A hunting excursion is often a full day event. Hunters leave at approximately seven in the morning and return just after dark; on a lengthy hunting trip, hunters may even settle down in the forest for a night or two, returning only after the target game animal has been caught.

4.2.3.1 Blowpipe Hunting

Blowpipes are the primary hunting tool of the Kensiu. They are used in the hunting of smaller game such as squirrels, treeshrews, monkeys and birds for personal consumption. Blowpipes are fashioned out of slim bamboo culms while the darts are made from de-leafed and sharpened *Bertam* fronds (see Figure 4.6) which are then dipped into the poison collected from the Ipoh tree.

Figure 4.5: Polishing a new blowpipe

Figure 4.6: Fashioning blowpipe darts from *Bertam* fronds

Bird-hunting with blowpipes begins with hunters mimicking the song or whistle of a bird and then waiting for a response. Once a particular bird responds, the hunter moves closer to identify the location of the bird; and once it is spotted, it is darted and collected. Bird-hunting is one of the first few animals Kensiu children learn to hunt, before they move on to larger prey.

4.2.3.2 Snare Setting

Snare-setting is another widely used method for procuring meat for personal consumption. However, game caught using this method is much larger and the meat is used to feed several households. While blowpipe hunting involves small game such as squirrels, birds and monkeys, the Kensiu utilize snares to entrap game such as the Malayan Sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor equina*), Lesser Mouse-deer (*Tragulus kanchil*), Sumatran Serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*) and the Malaysian subspecies of the Indian Muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak peninsulae*), among others. Snare-setting is a team effort, and it

requires cooperation if it is to be carried out successfully. The snare-setters start by encircling a hill with twigs, branches and leaves, thus constructing a "wall" around the hill preventing game from leaving. Next, they select strategic parts of the wall to create a number of "exits." As the rest of the hill is obstructed by the foliage placed by the snare-setters, game animals use these exits in order to move out of the hill. It is at these exits that the snares are laid (see Figure 4.7); the snares consist of a loop of vine (size of loop depending on the game being hunted) tied to a twig or branch.

Figure 4.7: Setting up a snare. Note the looped vine in the background

Once the animal walks through the exit and steps onto the loop, the branch jerks up and the animal is trapped. The device is rigged in such a way that the more the animal struggles, the tighter the loop becomes, thus entrapping the animal even further. The effectiveness of snares aside, the Kensiu tell me that snares are not suitable for all creatures; animals such as bears for instance, or *musang* (civets) will attempt escape by chewing of the limb caught in the snare, and snare-setters have encountered empty snares with nothing but a bear paw. Furthermore, game not collected soon enough often fall prey to predators such as the Malayan tiger (*Panthera tigris jacksoni*) and other wild cats. Snares are made by snare-setters en route to the forest, using sturdy vines and twigs they encounter as they walk through the forest.

4.2.4 Gathering (forest products, traditional medicine, herbs)

Similar to hunting, gathering constitutes an integral part of the Kensiu's socio-economic integrity. The Kensiu still gather many types of fruits and wild plants for personal consumption as well as herbs for medicinal purposes.

Figure 4.8: The vegetable truck which arrives every morning selling fish
and vegetables

Fruits most often collected for consumption include *petai* (*Parkia speciosa*), *kerdas* (*Archidendron bubalinum*) and *tapis* (a wild jackfruit), among others. Some subsistence agriculture is carried out by the Kensiu, particularly yam and *kangkong* (*Ipomoea aquatica*). The Kensiu also obtain vegetables from a vegetable-seller who drives into the village every morning selling fish and vegetables (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.9: *Maŋkəl* – a type of yam

Some vegetables however are still taken from the forest such as *pucuk paku* and varies types of yams (genus *Dioscorea*) for instance *maŋkəl* or *ubi pedang* in Malay (see Figure 4.9), and *saɔt*. I was told by my respondents that prior to giving up their life in the forest, yams were the primary source of carbohydrates for the Kensiu, except when it was available via trade with Malays; now however, rice is a staple with many Kensiu and yam has somewhat lost the importance it once had.

Figure 4.10: Roots of *helik tɔwak* used for treating asthma

There are also plants used for spiritual purposes, such as *tom empai* (*Dendrocnide stimulans*) or *jelatang gajah* in Malay, which is placed at doorways to ward off evil spirits. Some of the medicinal plants used by the Kensiu include *keliwai* for treating hemorrhoids and *helik tɔwak* (see Figure 4.10) for therapeutic inhalation and asthma. Most Kensiu youth are unfamiliar with the traditional plants and herbs used by their predecessors for medicinal purposes, except for plants that have commercial value such as *Eurycoma longifolia* known locally as *Tongkat ali* and *Labisa pumila* otherwise known as *Kacip fatimah*. Some of these herbs travel substantial distances to satisfy local demands; according to some of my respondents, the herbs they collect are taken as far as Batu Gajah and Sg. Petani to meet the local herb market. Table 4.3 is a summary of the medicinal plants most often collected by my respondents.

Figure 4.11: *Gaharu*

Another important plant group is the genus *Aquilaria* including the trees *Aquilaria malaccensis, Aquilaria brachyantha* and *Aquilaria rostrata*, which produce the resinous heartwood "agarwood" known as *gaharu* (see Figure 4.11) used in the production of perfumes and incense. The agarwood is extremely sought after due to its increased rarity and market demand, fetching as much as MYR 47, 000/per kilogram.

Plant	Respondent										
	R[1]	R[4]	R[12]	R[13]	R[16]	R[17]	R[25]	R[26]	R[27]	R[28]	R[30]
Kacip Fatimah	●		●	●		●		●	●		●
Tongkat ali	●	●		●	●	●	●				●
Akar suntok		●									
Gajah beranak	●		●						●		
Ma²mok				●							
Pokok luəh				●							
Misai kucing					●						
Ubi jaga²						●					
Pokok lema							●				
Kantan bukit							●				
Ubok bayah								●			
Pokok hop										●	
Pokok keliwai										●	●
Can can besi						●					
Helik təwak											●
Tom meni alang											●

Table 4.3 List of medicinal plants collected by the Kensiu

Only 11 of my 30 respondents were familiar with traditional herbs and medicines and from that number, five participants were female and six male. As can be seen from the table, the herbs with the greatest familiarity among the respondents are *Tongkat ali* and *Kacip fatimah*. Both herbs are highly sought after in the Malay traditional medicine market and are also in high demand by industries which include these herbs in their products. It may be for this reason that a relatively large number of my

respondents who gather forest products are familiar with both herbs given their high commercial value. The third most well-known herb is *gajah beranak*, which is used by pregnant women, lactating mothers and post-delivery treatment. Most of the other herbs in the list are used exclusively by the Kensiu in their Complementary and Traditional Medicines (CTM) practices.

The palm *Eugeissona tristis* (known locally as *pokok Bertam*), is an important plant to the Kensiu. Prior to adopting a sedentary lifestyle, the Kensiu utilized the palm fronds for roof-thatching when constructing their habitations in the forest, known as "lean-tos." The two species of Bertam most often used for roof-thatching are known in Kensiu as *cen bƐk* and *cem com*. The walls of the lean-tos were built using bamboo. As mentioned earlier, de-leafed fronds are also employed in the making of the darts used for blowpipe hunting. Although the palm no longer plays the central role it used to with regard to everyday Kensiu life, it retains its importance in hunting activities and roof-thatching. Rattan is also harvested and used extensively in construction as well as in the making of darts and *bubu*.
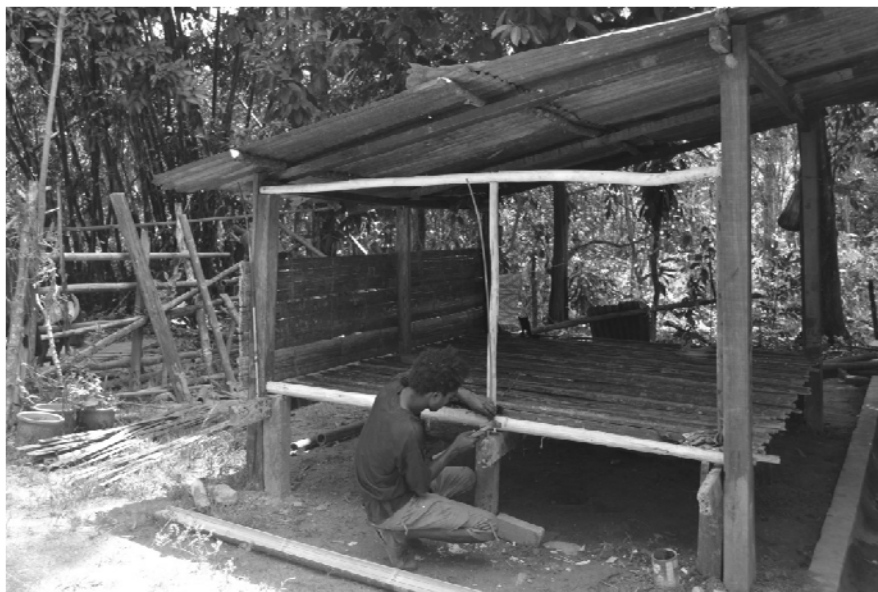
Figure 4.12: Bamboo being used for construction

Arguably, the most important plant to the Kensiu for cultural, socio-economic and practical reasons is the bamboo. Although it is no longer used in the construction of lean-tos, the bamboo still remains a very relevant part of Kensiu life. Its pivotal importance is reflected in everyday Kensiu life; ranging from construction of home walls (see Figure 4.12) and chicken coops, making of *bubu* (a fish trap made of bamboo and rattan), transportation of fish caught from rivers, cooking of rice, as well as for funeral rites (among animist Kensiu) and as instruments for *sewang* music. From an economic point of view, bamboo is also an important commodity that the Kensiu gather and sell to people from neighboring villages with different grades of bamboo fetching different prices on the market. Table 4.4 analyzes different types of bamboos and their usage in the Kensiu community.

Type of Bamboo		Uses
Name in Kensiu	**Name in Malay**	
Lebih liang	*Buluh semeliang*	Culms are filled with rice or fish then cooked. Used to make *bubu* and blowpipes
Lebih nakil	-	Culms used in construction of habitations. Culms also used to transport fish caught from rivers back to village
Lebih betŋ	*Buluh beting*	Shoots are eaten, culms used to construct habitation walls and graveyard lining in animist burials. Also as trade item for sale
Lebih bertegŋ	*Buluh betong*	Culms used as house pillars. Also as trade item for sale

Table 4.4 Sample of types of bamboo used by the Kensiu

Figure 4.13: Villager selecting bamboo culms

As with other Indigenous groups around the region, bamboo is indispensable to the Kensiu. Table 4.4 documents the four types of bamboo species most often used by the Kensiu in everyday life. Each type of bamboo has distinct characteristics that make it suitable for a particular purpose; however, as the table above indicates, bamboo – regardless of type, is most often utilized in construction. It should be

noted that the list of bamboo types is not exhaustive; I was told by my respondents that several other types of bamboo with different uses exist but that those bamboos out had to be sought in the forest (see Figure 4.13). While most of the time bamboo culms can be used as soon as they are harvested, some usage of bamboo requires that the bamboo culm be treated first to enable pliability. For instance, in *bubu*-making, the bamboo culms must first be soaked in mud for one week followed by another week of being soaked in river water before they become flexible enough for their intended use.

In addition to gathering plants and herbs, the Kensiu also gather honey during the months it is available. According to my respondents, honey is only collected from the month of February to April with wild honey supplies dwindling by May. The beehives from where honey is most often collected are located in the trees *kulit biawak* and *tom sohdi*.

4.2.5 Fishing

Unlike hunting, fishing is an activity that involves both men and women. Previously, fishing was critically important to the Kensiu as freshwater fish constituted their sole source of protein. Chicken meat is a relatively new addition to the Kensiu diet, and most Kensiu do not even rear them; the same rule applies to beef. Unlike hunting however, fishing is not carried out regularly, perhaps once a month. I was told by my forest guide that the reason for this is to allow the fish to mature and breed thus ensuring sustainability of fish stocks. If the fish catchers decide that fish in a particular stretch of river are too small, they abandon the expedition and wait a further 3-4 months before returning to that particular stretch. The most widely used technique for catching fish by the Kensiu is with their hands (see Figure 4.14). However, they also utilize *bubu* and darts.

Figure 4.14: Kensiu boy with a fish he caught by hand

As mentioned, freshwater fish was one of the Kensiu's primary sources of protein; this however has changed with the consumption of chicken meat as well as the opportunity to purchase marine fish from the vegetable seller who drives into the Kensiu village every morning. Kensiu respondents have told me however that river fish population has drastically decreased due to several reasons – all of which

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involve the *hamɛʔ* [4] from surrounding villages. Table 4.5 reflects the reasons given by my respondents for the decrease in fish populations.

Factors for decline	Respondent																	
	R1	R2	R3	R6	R9	R10	R11	R13	R15	R16	R17	R18	R21	R23	R26	R27	R28	R30
Electrocution by *hamɛʔ*	●	●		●	●	●			●		●						●	●
Poisoned by *hamɛʔ*									●	●					●	●		●
Unknown reasons			●				●					●	●	●				
Rivers drying up	●							●	●		●			●	●			

Table 4.5 Factors for decrease in river fish populations

18 of my 30 respondents engaged in fishing activities and are thus intimately familiar with the many rivers and streams located within the forest. I was able to participate with them on one of their monthly fishing expeditions as it coincided with the period of my fieldwork. The trek through the forest lasted approximately 4 hours before we reached the river where they were to fish. Along the way we had passed at least 9 other rivers, most of which we waded through; my respondents informed me that almost all the rivers we passed through had very few fish left due to unsustainable fishing practices carried out by the *hamɛʔ*, however, the river we were at was still unknown to outsiders and thus still had a healthy fish population.

As can be seen from the table above, electrocution was the primary method utilized by outsiders when fishing in these rivers. Outsiders from surrounding villagers construct dams made of small rocks at intersections of the river, after which they insert probes connected to a generator into the river. When the generator is turned on it releases a powerful electrical current into the water stunning or killing the fish which collect at these "dams" and are then collected. Consequently, (as mentioned in Table 4.2), fish populations have drastically decreased causing the Kensiu to become even more dependent on fish sold by outside traders. My respondents tell me that the electricity kills all the fish in a particular part of the river, even fish fry, thus destroying entire generations of fish resulting in a fish population that cannot recuperate to original numbers. Poison is also widely used and has a similar end result to electrocution, in that all fish (regardless if they are fit for consumption or not) die; resulting in mass decrease in fish populations. This affects not only the fragile balance of the river ecosystem and forest animals that depend on these fish for survival but also deprives the Kensiu of an important source of protein.

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[4] The Kensiu word for an outsider. From my observation, the term is only applied to non-Orang Asli individuals. Other Orang Asli groups with whom the Kensiu have contact with such as the Jahai and Kintak, are not referred to by this term.

4.3 Development and Modernization

Most members of the Kensiu community are without jobs; the Kensiu in Kampung Lubok Legong number approximately 274 of which 72 are married couples and only about one-third of them are employed. Those that are employed, leave for work between 7.30 to 8.30 in the morning and return at about 5.30 in the evening, depending on the type of job. While most Kensiu work in plantations, or plantation-related jobs, there are some who work odd jobs and even those whose sole means of income is gathering and selling forest products.

Figure 4.15: Kensiu women doing their laundry at the river

Women who are not employed and who do not go into the forest are usually at the river either washing utensils or laundry (see Figure 4.15). Commonly, Kensiu children can also be found alongside their mothers playing in the river during the afternoons, as most Kensiu children do not go to school or to the kindergarten located in the vicinity of the village.

4.3.1 Education

A large number of the population has not been formally educated. There is one *tadika* (kindergarten) called Tadika Lubok Legong located right within the Kensiu community and a primary school approximately 3 kilometers away, known as *Sekolah Kebangsaan Siong*. The kindergarten has three staff, comprising of the teacher, an assistant and the cook. The kindergarten begins at 8 in the morning and lasts for four hours, ending at 12 in the afternoon. At present, there are seven Malay children and 23 Kensiu children, numbering 30 in total.

Figure 4.16: Kensiu children at the *tadika*

As shown under the heading 'Education" in Table 4.2, a larger number of Kensiu children regularly attend classes at the kindergarten. The teacher, who has been teaching there for 19 years, tells me that attendance among Kensiu children is more constant (see Figure 4.16) in comparison to 10 years ago, at which time there were only 2 – 3 Kensiu children who attended kindergarten regularly.

In her opinion, the increase in Kensiu attendance is most likely due to increasing awareness among Kensiu parents on the importance of basic education. She also noted that from her experience teaching Kensiu children, there exists a high degree of altruism among them, particularly in sharing food and assisting one another. This sort of selflessness has been noted in a number of Indigenous groups from around the world (Das, 2001; Canaan & Shumar, 2008) – perhaps as a result of forest living.

Post pre-school education, Kensiu enrollment in the primary school *S.K. Siong* is low. According to the village *ustazah* who has been in the community for approximately 12 years, the average attendance of Kensiu children at primary school is 11 students per month; and of that number, approximately 60-70% drop out by the time they reach Primary Three (*Darjah Tiga*). The primary reasons for this are lack of parental intervention as well as bullying and name-calling at school. Parental indifference due to glue-sniffing is also a major factor. She adds that although some parents want their children to receive education, they do not pressure their children to attend school if they do not want to. At secondary education level, Kensiu enrollment is negligible, with only 3 Kensiu youths (all female) having attended Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Siong; and of the three, only one fully completing her Fifth form and Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examinations. Unlike several other Orang Asli groups, there has been no Kensiu enrollment at any institution of higher learning – public or private.

4.3.2 Socio-Economic Dynamics

A number of development projects have been carried out among the Kensiu. Most are small test-projects by Universiti Utara Malaysia, for instance a catfish aquaculture project as well as a chicken-

rearing initiative, both of which met with limited success. However, larger projects have also been attempted, namely the development of rubber plantations by RISDA (currently in its third phase). Although the plantations were supposed to grant the Kensiu financial independence via a steady source of income, mismanagement and corruption has caused both projects to fail in their objectives. This is illustrated in Table 4.6, where the "Complicating Action" occurs as a result of poor legal representation for the Kensiu, a lack of transparency in development projects, lack of information conveyed to the Kensiu, and mismanagement of money and aid by the village's upper management and JKKK. Due to the inability of many Kensiu to either read or write, they are often swindled out of their money by unscrupulous individuals including members of their own community within the JKKK, JAKOA as well as outsiders keen on acquiring Kensiu lands. Documents are also often signed by the Kensiu with many of them not knowing what it is they are agreeing to. I have loosely applied William Labov's (1972) framework for oral narrative for the table below to describe this issue. Table 4.6 is an analysis of an informal interview granted to me by a non-Kensiu respondent on the mismanagement of the RISDA rubber plantation project.

	Setting	Abstract	Complicating action	Resolution
Past	Kensiu settlement	Ancestral Kensiu lands were to be logged and the Kensiu promised RM 40,000 per family	Kensiu only received RM 4,000 per family. The rest of the money unaccounted for.	Unresolved
Present	Kensiu settlement	Rubber saplings (Phases 1 & 2) provided by RISDA for Kensiu to plant. RISDA was to provide them with fertilizers and insecticides at no cost. The fertilizers and insecticides were placed under the care of the village head.	Village head refused to give the Kensiu the fertilizers and insecticides provided by RISDA and instead wanted to sell them to the Kensiu. Because the Kensiu were unable to afford the items, they were then sold to outside farmers at below market price. Ultimately, the rubber saplings started to die.	Rubber saplings and lands were pawned to a local businessman who is a friend of the village head. He now profits from the plantations.
Future	Kensiu settlement	RISDA has hinted that it will discontinue rubber saplings initiative	Kensiu disillusioned with development initiatives	Unknown

Table 4.6 Mismanagement of the RISDA rubber plantation initiative

Prior to planting the rubber saplings, Kensiu lands (which contained valuable timber) had to first be cleared. Kensiu villagers were asked to sell the timber from these lands and were promised RM 40, 000 ringgit per family. However, after the timber was logged and sold, the villagers were only given RM 4000 per family. Although the Kensiu families were upset, they nonetheless decided to accept the money.

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RISDA's rubber initiative entailed providing the Kensiu villagers with rubber saplings as well as fertilizers and insecticides to care for the saplings. These items were left in the care of the village head. However, once the saplings were planted and the fertilizer and insecticides handed to the village head, he attempted to sell them to the Kensiu instead of giving it to them without cost as he was supposed to. The Kensiu, having no financial resources with which to purchase the fertilizer and insecticide, subsequently abandoned the rubber plantation and dying saplings. The village head then proceeded to sell the fertilizers and insecticides to outside farmers for below market price and also pawned the plantations (Phases 1 & 2) for a period of 30 years to a local businessman using fake fingerprints to impersonate Kensiu landowners – even using fingerprints of Kensiu who were dead. Both the village head and the businessman eventually amassed a lot of wealth from the entire operation. A member of the village has the actual paperwork implicating the village head in this scam and proving that he fabricated the agreement; however when a police report was lodged, the headman threatened to sue, threatening the villager with his political connections at JAKOA. Subsequently, the villager then withdrew the report. I was told by this very same villager that although JAKOA acknowledged the fabrication of the agreement, no action was taken against the village head. RISDA's rubber plantation phases and the sale of forest products aside, there is little other socio-economic activity that happens among the Kensiu apart from the odd jobs they are hired to do. Their socio-economic condition will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

4.3.3 Social Problems

The two most widespread social problems among the Kensiu are glue-sniffing and alcoholism with a substantial number of villagers addicted to either one or the other. Many of my Kensiu respondents tell me that glue-sniffing starts from as young as five years of age, to adults who are in their fifties also addicted to the practice. During my stay at the village, I observed groups of adolescents and adult men sitting in groups of 3-4 and sniffing glue at night; sometimes, there was also the adolescent male walking around in the middle of the day while sniffing glue in a plastic bag. Many of these young Kensiu are without education or stable jobs, and turn to glue-sniffing as a means to while their time. Additionally, I was also told that drug-pushers from Baling come into the Kensiu village periodically and hand out synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine (crystal meth) to Kensiu youth for free, in order to build up their addiction to drugs. Once the youth are addicted, drug pushers stop handing out the drugs and start charging for them; drug-addicted Kensiu youth will then try to find the financial means to start buying the drugs they need from these pushers.

Glue-sniffing (which is the more common form of drug abuse at the village), is categorized as a form of inhalant abuse, where the user places a plastic bag containing the vapor-producing substance (see Figure 4.17) and places the bag over their face. It is important to note that Indigenous populations from many parts of the world face similar inhalant abuse issues including Indigenous Australians, Native American, Inuit, and Indigenous groups in South America. The commonality between these Indigenous groups is their shared history of colonialism; according to Aggleton & Ball (2006), researchers have found that the shared history of colonialism on these Indigenous groups all resulted in extremely negative repercussions on their health due to socio-economic marginalization, restricted access to healthcare and institutionalized and personal racism. The Orang Asli within Malaysia would appear to be suffering from the same causal factors as these other Indigenous groups, only in this case, the colonial power is not Western, but local. The many injustices that the Orang Asli have suffered over the decades from the state (including forced relocation, land acquisition, socio-economic marginalization and institutionalized racism) has resulted in them losing a sense of identity, and of not knowing their place in the world. These factors might be valid reasons as to why the Kensiu, and other Orang Asli groups experience drug-related issues.

Figure 4.17: A villager holding an empty can of
industrial glue used by inhalant abusers

Alcoholism is more prevalent among the older generation, with 6-7 deaths attributed to the consumption of cheap spirits bought from the *towkays* in Pekan Baling. During my session with respondents, I detected the scent of alcohol from a good half of my interviewees and during the course of my stay, I also observed individuals who were quite inebriated walking around the village. Alcohol consumption appears to be a practice that transcends religious affiliations, and I have personally come across a number of Kensiu – both Muslim and non-Muslim, who consume alcohol. Most Kensiu I spoke to are of the opinion that the relocation of the Kensiu from the forest interior to locations closer to the town is the reason for such alterations in their way of life, especially with regard to an increase in their exposure to negative elements such as glue-sniffing and alcoholism. Many of the elders I spoke to were of similar opinions, telling me that the Kensiu never had a problem with alcoholism and glue-sniffing until they were moved closer to the town of Baling and were exposed to such practices; these statements were corroborated by the village *ustazah*.

My findings show that there are indeed inherently sustainable practices among the Kensiu with regard to their relationship to the forest, while revealing the impact(s) of modernization and development on their lives as Indigenous people. The implications of these findings and aspects such as socio-economic growth and problems will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

5: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Kensiu Relationship to the Forest

In understanding the sustainability practices of the Kensiu, it is equally important to understand the ramifications of the loss of such practices to the culture and livelihood of the Kensiu. As the findings in Chapter 4 show, subsistence activities such as hunting, fishing and gathering hold great importance to the Kensiu's way of life – especially so in the absence of significant socio-economic activities. The Kensiu and their relationships to the forest therefore, transcends those of ecological stewards, in that it is not just the Kensiu who ensure the sustainability of the forest via their relationship with the forest, but also the forest which guarantees their survival as a people of the forest.

Understanding the sustainability practices of the Kensiu is one of the objectives of this research, however, it is only by first understanding their sustainability practices that the second objective, which is Kensiu development and modernization, can then be achieved. This was seen under the "Modernity" heading (1.5.1) in Chapter 1, which discussed the utilization of Asli lands for rubber development projects, an initiative that has often been carried out by the state without first comprehending the relationship of the Orang Asli to their forests. This then takes us to the next issue of Asli development, which is the lack of decision-making processes among the Orang Asli; the rubber initiative maintains its relevance here. When certain Asli groups voice out their concerns regarding their disagreement on transforming their lands into rubber estates, they are labeled as anti-development and anti-modernization. This is why they must be granted the opportunity to be involved in decision-making processes regarding their development, so that they may choose the path to development that they wish to follow instead of having development projects forced upon them.

The Narrative Inquiry table (table 4.2) illustrates the modifications that have occurred in the Kensiu's way of life over the years following resettlement by the government, relaying changes from the Past to the Present, as well as Future projections. The subheadings "Changes in Forest," "Hunting and Fishing," and "Gathering and Traditional Medicine" all relate to the Kensiu's relationship to the forest whereas "Socio-culture," "Education" and "Socio-economic" pertains to the impact of modernization and development on the Kensiu. The findings of Kensiu relationship to the forest will first be discussed. The forest provides forest-people with everything they need including sustenance, shelter, a cultural reference point and a sense of community and history (Lye, 2005). As of such, depriving the Kensiu of their relationship with the forest unleashes repercussions that affect them on many levels. Issues such as food security, cultural extinction, loss of indigenous knowledge and moral decay are therefore all related to the phenomenon of forest degradation. From my observations and findings with regard to the forest, the Kensiu have noted a large difference in the *proximity* of the forest in the last 10 - 20 years, in other words, there exists a great disparity between the *then* of Kensiu life, and the *now*. Kensiu life in the "then" was hallmarked by plentiful resources, including game and forest products and Kensiu closeness to the forest; Kensiu life in the "now" however, is the opposite, with major reductions in game, inability to obtain forest products and a receding forest. One of the most common descriptions of the forest brought up during our narrative sessions was of how the forest is now *jauh* (distant), and that previously, it was *dekat* (close). As mentioned earlier in the study, the Kensiu, originally being a forest-dwelling people, were relocated to the exterior of the forest and adopted a sedentary lifestyle; however, they were still in close proximity to the forest. Following a second relocation (due to the setting up of rubber plantations in their first settlement), the Kensiu were settled in their current location (Kampung Lubok Legong) which at the time of resettlement, was still relatively close to the forest; this however was soon to change with the granting of logging concessions to timber companies. Logging is undoubtedly one of the primary contributors to the breakdown in Kensiu-forest relations. Logging not only devastates the complex ecosystem(s) of the rainforest due to the harvesting of old-growth trees but also unleashes a host of adverse, sometimes irreversible, effects such as species extinction and substantial siltation of rivers and streams. Secondary effects from the logging industry such as the construction of roads through forest areas for

the transportation of timber and soil compaction from the use of heavy machinery also result in major imbalances within the forests' ecological structure. My respondents were quick to point out that issues such as receding forest cover, decrease in fish populations, and reduction in forest game were largely due to logging activity in the area.

5.1.1 Hunting and Gathering

During my trips into the forest with the Kensiu, it was a rarity to locate a tree large enough to be considered old growth, in fact there were a number of "gaps" in the forest cover which were inconsistent with tropical rainforest and more consistent with the removal of large trees. Periodically, my guides stopped me during our forest trip and pointed out locations where large trees used to stand, spreading their arms wide to illustrate just how large the trees were. The Kensiu noted that they have to move further into the forest in order to carry out subsistence activities. Continued and indiscriminate logging will invariably lead to further fragmentation of the forest, and will irrevocably affect the Kensiu way of life, as they will no longer be able to depend on the forest for their subsistence needs, forcing them to move into towns permanently. The decrease in game hunted by the Kensiu is attributed to two factors, logging and poaching. In relation to the relative quiet of the Malaysian rainforest, logging is an incredibly noise-intensive activity. The sound of logging machinery can be heard for great distances throughout the rainforest and given their instincts, animals would naturally move deeper into the forest to escape what seems to be a perceived threat. Furthermore, the logging of trees contributes significantly to the loss in animal habitats, and in order to survive, they must move further into the recesses of the rainforest. While logging indirectly causes a reduction in the number of animal populations, poaching is an activity that has more direct consequences. The hunting practices of the Kensiu were illustrated in chapter 4 and their primary modes of hunting consist of blowpipe and snare-setting. The Kensiu tell me that the *hamɛʔ* from neighboring villages often use guns to hunt the same animals that the Kensiu hunt which consist of the various deer species and other small to medium-sized mammals in the forest. The utilization of blowpipes and snares fit into the sustainability framework of the Kensiu and their relationship with the forest as even on a good day, the number of animals caught may number a maximum of three to four, and animals have the advantage of escaping hunters before they are in blowpipe distance. Using a gun however, heavily places the odds in the hunter's favor and gives the hunter the advantage of shooting the animal before the animal can see or smell the hunter.

Kensiu respondents have told me that previously, snares were also an effective way of capturing game animals but that this too has changed. For instance, of the 10 or so snares set today, only three or four might bring game, whereas prior to rampant shooting by outsiders, seven or eight snares would have contained game. Hunting has become such a cost-intensive activity with poor returns due to forest recede (hunters sometimes walking 4-5 hours into the forest) and lack of game, that a number of Kensiu men have abandoned it altogether in favor of working odd jobs in towns and plantations. With the forest losing its significance to the Kensiu, more and more of them are talking of moving into towns and giving up their ties to the forest altogether. My respondents told me that approximately 70% of Kensiu men hunt now, while the percentage was 100% in years past. In fact, some of the younger men I interviewed did not even know how to hunt, and expressed a lack of interest in doing so. The cessation of hunting signals the end of a way of life for the Kensiu. Unlike the outsiders who hunt in the forest and sell the game they catch, hunting to the Kensiu is more than simple economics, it is a practice forged by thousands of years of transgenerational teaching and collective knowledge. There is cultural significance to hunting among the Kensiu, and the process of teaching Kensiu boys how to hunt is an important part of father-son bonding and of community living. Community living is enforced by the trust required where hunting is concerned, especially in the forest where danger from wildlife or accidents is a real possibility. The cessation of hunting therefore radiates its effects into the community structure of the Kensiu, as told to me by an elderly Kensiu man,

"Sebab duduk dalam hutan ni, budi bahasa kita pun lain… budak-budak sekarang ni, dia ikut cara dia lah. Dia kurang hormat… dia tak hormat lah. Pasal tu saya kata tak sama macam dulu lah. Pasal peribadi dia tu salah…"

Translation:

"When we lived in the forest, our characters where different… kids today do as they wish. There is a lack of respect… In fact, no respect. This is why I say things are not as they used to be. Because their personalities are wrong…"

This same respondent felt that Kensiu children of today have changed, and that they do not hold the same degree of respect they once had for their elders. In addition to the cultural value of hunting, it is also critical for the development of foraging skills among Kensiu children and grants them the opportunities they need to familiarize themselves with the forest's terrain, landmarks and inhabitants.

Gathering of forest products for medical use has also steadily declined, as was relayed to me by an elderly Kensiu respondent,

"Dulu senang cari pokok ubat pasal orang tak cuci lagi bukit. Sekarang ini payah… Jauh!"

Translation:

"It was easier to find medicinal plants before because the hills (forest) had not yet been washed (cleared). Now it's difficult. It's far!"

Large scale clearing of forest areas for logging and palm oil plantations has resulted in the Kensiu losing their traditional CTM practices, and as stated in Table 4.2 (with the exception of economically valuable plants) this is now evident among Kensiu youth who are increasingly unfamiliar with Kensiu medicinal plants and practices**.**

5.1.2 Fishing

The same exploitation that befell hunting has also befallen fishing. As mentioned in Chapter 4, electrocution is rampant at the rivers where the Kensiu used to fish and numbers now have dwindled considerably. Some of my respondents reminisce of a time when fish as large as their arms could be found in the forest's rivers but that now they only average the size of their palms. Chapter 4 details how the Kensiu catch their fish – including granting rivers the period to recuperate so fish populations can grow back, releasing small fish and using their hands or *bubu*. These practices are sustainable, as they ensure the integrity of the river and the sustainability of fish stocks. In comparison, electrocution and poisoning carried out by outsiders run contrary to the Kensiu's idea of sustainability. The respondents that I joined on a fishing expedition were clear to point out to me that when fishing, they consider the health of fish stocks, and recognize that other animals of the forest also need to feed on the rivers' fish and argue that the attitude of outsiders in making quick gains is selfish and shortsighted.

Fishing expeditions are more than an opportunity to find food, to the Kensiu, they are also a matter of great festivity; there is much excitement and expectation as a fishing expedition sets out into the forest. Even while seeking fish under boulders and massive tree roots (see Figure 5.1), there is much shrieking, laughter and exclamations. This is reminiscent of Endicott and Bellwood's (1991) observation of yam-digging among the Batek of Taman Negara (another Semang group), "The laughter and conversation that mark their digging expeditions suggest that they do get some enjoyment and satisfaction out of the effort." In order to make the most of their time, "fish seekers" travel a little

ahead of the group during the upriver walk and let out periodic hoots signaling that a certain part of the river is rich in fish.

Figure 5.1: Kensiu villagers seeking fish under tree roots

During the fishing expedition, two Kensiu children caught Black Marsh turtles (*Siebenrockiella crassicollis*) from between tree roots (see Figure 5.2) which they keep as pets. Due to Muslim dietary law, they do not consume them. I was constantly told by my respondents of how they respect the balance of the forest, making sure that fish stocks stay sustainable and that animals are not hunted in excess. It is my observation that the Kensiu only take what they need when they need it, thus allowing fish stocks, plants and animal populations to stay viable for the future.

Figure 5.2: Kensiu boy with a Marsh turtle

5. 2 Modernization and Development amongst the Kensiu

5.2.1 Health

Development and modernization has left tangible effects on the Kensiu; however, these effects have been primarily counterproductive to Kensiu wellbeing due to issues such as a lack of understanding of Kensiu culture by the implementers of developmental frameworks consisting of JAKOA and the state, as well as mismanagement and corruption. Some of the effects of modernization, such as the introduction of conventional medicine into the community is ambiguous; for instance, because the Kensiu can now seek professional medical assistance from qualified doctors for their ailments, this has led to a sharp decrease in the use of complementary and traditional medicines (CTM) among them – especially so among the younger Kensiu. Most of my younger respondents were unfamiliar with the types of plants used to treat illnesses and expressed preference for modern medication over traditional healing practices, as they were of the opinion that modern medication is more effective in its application and effects as opposed to CTM practices. Furthermore, the relatively small number of Kensiu elders in relative to the overall Kensiu population results in a situation where there are simply not enough elders left to pass on CTM knowledge to Kensiu youth, who are themselves rather uninterested in learning CTM. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Kensiu youth are only familiar with medicinal plants that have commercial value such as *tongkat ali* and *kacip fatimah*. The lack of knowledge coupled with the continuous distancing of the forest from everyday Kensiu life (discussed earlier) presents the threat of knowledge extinction with regard to the CTM of the Kensiu. However, modern medicine is a facet of development that is crucially needed in the lives of the Kensiu; I was told by a respondent of how a Kensiu couple lost both of their children to tuberculosis due to their insistence of treating the disease with spells and traditional remedies; by the time they agreed to approach a clinic, the disease had progressed too far and both children died.

The health track records of the Orang Asli are terrible; for instance, the Orang Asli have one of the worst rates for the prevalence of infectious diseases among all Malaysians, including diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria and dysentery (Jeyakumar, 1999). Most of these diseases are caused by the resettlement of Orang Asli groups such as the Kensiu from their forest homes and into poorly constructed habitations with improper sanitation (Gomes, 2007). Their inability to have access to the forest also compounds the problem, as traditional diets, rich in vegetables and natural sources of protein are no longer available. This has also led to an increase in lifestyle diseases – such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart illnesses; all of which are commonly associated with an increasingly affluent society (*Ibid.*). The irony in this however, is that the Orang Asli remain among the poorest of Malaysians. Malnutrition is another grave cause for concern; during my fieldwork, there were quite a few Kensiu children with distended stomachs – which might be a sign of kwashiorkor, a form of childhood protein-energy malnutrition, or of severe hookworm infestation due to unsanitary living conditions.

5.2.2 Education

With few exceptions, most of my respondents were of the opinion that the quality of life of the Kensiu was better when they still maintained a close relationship with the forest, prior to resettlement and the exploitation of Kensiu lands by logging companies and outsiders. Nonetheless, they do welcome development, as was evident by their willingness to accept RISDA's rubber program and other similar socio-economic initiatives. Furthermore, they want their children to receive education and this was a recurring theme during my interviews. Many Kensiu parents, and even some grandparents, were supportive of their children receiving primary and secondary education, believing that education is the foundation toward a more financially secure and comfortable future. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, the Kensiu children have a poor track record of attending schools. There are a few reasons for this,

including a syllabus ill-suited to the worldview of Orang Asli children, bullying and name-calling at schools, drug-abuse by both children and their parents, and the dynamics of family life, where parents do not pressure their children to attend school if they do not wish to. Syllabus content is an issue of particular importance; having grown up in close proximity to the forest, Orang Asli children have an altogether different worldview in comparison to non-Orang Asli children. Unlike their urban or rural counterparts, Orang Asli children learn valuable hunting and foraging skills in the forest, and have an understanding of the world different from our own. The forest world in particular is of extreme interest, as it is within this environment that these children base their reality and come to understand their place in the world. Mainstream educational frameworks are therefore ineffective at maintaining the interest of Orang Asli children; furthermore, they are also not effective in imparting education relevant to the lives of Asli children.

The notion that education models should consider the perspectives, languages and history of Indigenous groups is not a new one, for instance in the 1970s and 1980s, there were movements in Australia that not only fought for Aboriginal rights to land and better living standards, but also for the inclusion of Australian Aboriginal culture and language into the education system (Nee-Benham, Nee-Benham & E. Cooper, 2000). In the mid-1990s, New Zealand started seeing schools that were operated by and run for Maoris while in Latin America during the same period, schools were developed with an Indigenous cultural dimension incorporated within them which did not perpetuate the view that Indigenous lifestyles were stagnant and incompatible with development, instead, it emphasized that the Indigenous worldview was open to elements and knowledge from other cultures, thus facilitating a "universal culture" (Dasen & Akkari, 2008). It can therefore be seen that Indigenous children can still receive mainstream education with their relationship to their forests and lands as well as their unique culture and language acknowledged and included into the education system. As discussed in Chapter 2, Indigenous groups such as the Kensiu have vast repositories of knowledge due to their role as ecological stewards; therefore, recognizing this knowledge by incorporating it into the syllabus is an effective way of not only acknowledging the importance of Kensiu culture and wisdom, but also of ensuring that such knowledge is not lost. Many Kensiu parents relayed during our sessions that although they desire for their children to be educated in government schools, they do not wish for them to lose their Kensiu ties to the forest. The excerpt below from a young mother is one such example:

> "Mereka pergi sekolah tu baiklah, tapi dalam masa cuti tu mereka mesti masuk hutan. Contohnya anak saya tu masa cuti kalau saya pergi tangkap ikan saya bawa sekali, masuk bukit. Cari rotan pun kami bawa budak-budak tu sekali masuk hutan tidur."

Translation:

> "It's good that they attend school, but during school break they must enter the forest. For instance, during my son's school break, I take him into the forest to fish. We also bring the children into the forest to camp overnight when we look for rattan."

5.2.3 Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Drug abuse is a major factor disengaging Asli children from attending schools. During my session with the kindergarten teacher, I was told that some of the children attending classes keep looking for opportunities when they can slip out to sniff glue during classes. The practice is learnt at a young age, as Kensiu parents engage in the act at home, and in full view of their children. It is important to note however that inhalant abuse such as glue-sniffing is more a symptom of an underlying problem than the actual problem itself. Glue-sniffers are often associated with depression, a feeling of helplessness and demoralization, all of which may be the result of decades of forced resettlement, improper development models, loss of culture and identity, and deprivation of land rights. Case studies in Australia, New Zealand and Canada illustrate how drug abuse and alcoholism is a recurring theme

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among Indigenous groups in those countries (Saggers & Gray, 1998) due to the reasons discussed in chapter 4, specifically the socio-economic marginalization and institutionalized racism faced by these communities. The colonialists of Australia, New Zealand and Canada set the precedent for the marginalization of their Indigenous communities, carrying out practices that are today still practiced within Malaysia, for instance the illegal acquisition of Indigenous lands and the forced relocation of the Indigene. Subsequently, similar social and health profiles have appeared between the Orang Asli here, and the Indigenous groups in those countries.

5.2.4 Resettlement and JAKOA

The lack of structural conditions such as economic assets, political power and representation, and aggravated social marginalization, are all a result of British colonialism and systematic deprivation of Indigenous people (*Ibid.*). Unfortunately, these practices have been carried over into modern Malaysia following independence due to the nation's ethnically-inclined political movements. Undeniably, no discussion concerning the Orang Asli is complete, or even relevant, if their land right issues are not included; indeed, resettlement and forced acquisition by the state of their ancestral lands may have been the most traumatic incident to have occurred in the lives of many Orang Asli individuals. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the government announced its plans to resettle Orang Asli groups for the purpose of providing basic healthcare, education and job opportunities (Winzeler, 2010); the truth of the matter however, was that the government was resettling the Orang Asli groups in order to fulfill their own agendas – primarily logging Asli lands of valuable timber, the development of oil palm and rubber estates, land schemes for politically-connected Malays, development of golf courses, dams, and other goals that served the interests of the government (Gomes, 2007). Consequently, not only did the Orang Asli lose their lands – an integral part of their identity and culture, but they were also deprived of the possibility of returning to their traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyle, due to the rampant clearing of forest area.

In fact, the very institution that is responsible for their welfare, JAKOA, more often than not serves the welfare of the government, and pressures Orang Asli groups to accept government propositions instead of looking into the Orang Asli's best interests (Duncan, 2004). Controlling the Orang Asli and their lands has often been a part of the government's agenda (Kathirithamby-Wells, 2005; Duncan, 2008; Dallos, 2011), and JAKOA is the machinery it utilizes to do so (Bisht & Bankoti, 2004). Consequently, and after years of experience, the Orang Asli have grown skeptical of JAKOA officials, particularly administrative and development officers, as well as of other Kensiu who work with JAKOA; additionally, there is also generally a sense of distrust with regard to JAKOA's propositions (Dean & Levi, 2005). The interference of the government into Orang Asli affairs has even resulted in the degradation of their social dynamics, with the government now selecting headmen (*tok batin*) and leaders or even having the authority to remove them via the Aboriginal Peoples Act (Duncan, 2004). As a result, some Orang Asli groups, such as the Kensiu, view their headman as an extension of the government, intent on pushing the government's agenda on them instead of voicing out Orang Asli concerns to the government.

As with all development affairs concerning Orang Asli, JAKOA is the government's primary vehicle in implementing its developmental frameworks for the Kensiu. As has been discussed in Chapter 2, participatory frameworks are crucial in determining the wants and needs of the Indigenous groups with regard to development and modernization policies. This however has to start with a foundation of respect; respect for the culture of the Indigenous group in which development is to take place, and respect of their rights to their land. It is clear that in the case of the latter, the government does not respect the land rights of the Orang Asli; however, there is also very little – if any consultation taking place with the Orang Asli regarding the type of development they want. JAKOA adopts a primarily paternalistic attitude with the Orang Asli in general, one saturated with authority, and at times, even condescending. Many of the Orang Asli's practices for instance, are viewed as backward, unprogressive and incompatible with Malaysia's modernization policies (Nicholas, n.d.). Patterns of rural-urban development in countries like Japan for instance, shows that a traditional lifestyle such as

the Satoyama initiative, where hillside farmers grow rice terraces alongside the peripheries of forest, may actually fit in quite comfortably with a developed nation. As a developing state, Malaysia certainly has the potential and capabilities to incorporate the Orang Asli's traditional way of life into its developmental policies.

5.2.5 Land Acquisition and Dependency

The non-involvement of the Kensiu in decision-making processes, top-down implementation of modernization and development plans and lack of understanding on Kensiu needs have left them (and other Orang Asli groups), reliant on the government for all their needs, even the most basic ones. Increasingly, the Kensiu have become more dependent on the government and JAKOA, and less dependent on the forests they used to call home (Nicholas, n.d.; Levellen, 2002; Dean & Levi, 2003; Duncan, 2008). For instance, the decision to relocate a large number of Kensiu into settlements (usually much smaller than the original territories of the Kensiu), will undoubtedly create a strain on the carrying capacity of the area and exhaust available resources, thus making this form of development not only inherently unsustainable, but oppressive, as the Kensiu are less able to carry out traditional hunter-gatherer practices to meet their subsistence needs. Furthermore, the introduction of the Kensiu to the global economy via rubber ownership, resettlement and their inability to gather forest products due to forest degradation as well as poorly implemented development programs further contributes to this culture of dependence on the government. This inability to lead an independent and productive life leads to a loss of dignity and disempowerment among the Kensiu and other Orang Asli groups in general.

Although state development authorities know little about the culture and sustainability practices of the Orang Asli, most decisions concerning Orang Asli development are still made without involving the Orang Asli or acquiring their consent. Consequently, it is only to be expected that such projects may not receive widespread support among members of the community, as they run contrary to the way the Orang Asli manage their natural resources. Accordingly, certain Orang Asli groups have protested against some of the developmental frameworks placed upon them, however, they are often viewed by the state as communities who are against development and modernization (IWGIA, 1999). Keeping in mind the decision-making framework discussed in Chapter 1, it is important to reflect on whether development can be carried out in the interests of a particular group without i) holding a dialogue to inquire what their particular development wants and needs are, and ii) implementing a developmental framework by force without acquiring Orang Asli consent. It is clear to see that developmental initiatives implemented by the state government which does not take into consideration the specific needs of the Kensiu, or other Orang Asli groups, are counterproductive; and at most, meet the developmental agenda of the government at the expense of the Orang Asli. As has been discussed earlier, the Orang Asli are not only affected by development plans concerning them, but also by the government's development plans in general; the issue[5] that arose from the proposed construction of the link road between Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and Kuala Lumpur provides a somber reminder of how capriciously the federal government views Orang Asli ownership of land and how little they value sustainable resource use. In 1996, the federal government state's forest development plans dictated that the Temuan (an Orang Asli group), were to be removed from their ancestral lands and compensation given to them for the loss of their homes and crops; but not their ancestral lands. The Land Code was utilized as the mechanism to facilitate the acquisition of Temuan lands and the Temuan were given no choice, nor were they consulted on the matter. The Temuan ultimately took the case to the High Court and fortunately, won, with the High Court recognizing that such treatment of the Temuan was unacceptable given their ownership and historical ties to the land (Fennel, 2010).

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5 The Sangong-Tasi case, which brought attention to the issue of Indigenous land rights and its annulment by the federal legal system.

Unlike the Temuan who number between 8000 - 10, 000, the Kensiu are a much smaller group (approximately 247) who lack the sheer numerical representation of other Orang Asli groups. Consequently, not much is known about them, their sustainability practices, or their land-right struggles, and they are often eclipsed by other Orang Asli groups. As a result, not only have their lands been taken from them and their way of life in danger of extinction, they are also faced with developmental plans that pave little, if any positive change into their lives. Policymakers and departments such as JAKOA should ensure that the relationship between the Kensiu and the government is not one grounded in paternalism, rendering the Orang Asli as "wardens-of-state" (Nicholas, n.d.) and the government or JAKOA as their caretakers. Instead, their relationship with the Orang Asli should be based on equitable development, respect and a deep understanding as to the needs and wants of the Orang Asli.

The RISDA rubber initiative among the Kensiu of Lubok Legong which was discussed in Chapter 4 provides an example of what might have been a potential capacity-building initiative were it not for the mismanagement of resources, greed and corruption. Furthermore, that the Kensiu were open to the development of rubber estates on their lands is indicative of their willingness to accept government development plans; however, the lack of transparency in the dealings of those in the village's upper management and the pervasive corruption among them resulted in the failure of the project. From my conversations with my respondents, many of them expressed distrust after having been swindled countless times by the upper management of the village, who also has friends in JAKOA. The Kensiu have been cheated from the sale of timber from their lands, of the fertilizers and pesticides given by RISDA, and of the land itself by the village headman (see Table 4.6). Such abuse of power and repetitive exploitation causes the Kensiu to distrust and completely disengage from further developmental initiatives, which only hampers development and modernization of the Kensiu. Furthermore, this degradation of trust between the state and the Kensiu disallows the forming of stable, equitable relationships as the Kensiu view the state as an entity that seeks to exploit them. Thus, even if a developmental framework that takes into account the development needs of the Kensiu is formulated, it will take time for the Kensiu to regain their trust and confidence in the state. It is therefore important to ensure that the inequitable history of development among the Kensiu is rectified, and that future development initiatives incorporate greater Kensiu involvement, especially in the area of decision-making, as well as greater recognition and protection of Kensiu ancestral lands.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Socio-economic and Socio-culture

This study shows that the lack of socio-economic opportunities for the Kensiu is widely evident and a critical problem. As discussed, most Kensiu rely on the odd jobs they are hired for; jobs that are high-risk and which return little, if any usable skills. They are often accused of being opposed to the state's development initiatives; however, as shown in this study, it is often mismanagement and a misled idea about what the Orang Asli want on the part of the state that has led to the failure of the state's development initiatives. It is clear that the Orang Asli are not anti-development; and in anything, are very welcoming of it. There is however a critical lack in job security, which radiates into serious deficiencies in the areas of food and health security. This should be rectified not by the granting of financial assistance but by utilizing the Human Rights approach, whereby capacity and skills are developed among the Orang Asli and resources readily available to them tapped into. Furthermore, the Human Rights approach is also concerned with developing pride, independence and dignity in the target community; recipients of financial assistance on the other hand are deprived of their pride, as they are rendered dependent on the state and powerless to assist themselves.

As discussed earlier, bamboo is an available resource for the Kensiu and the plant is already familiar to them due to its versatility and history in many areas of Kensiu life. The Phu An Bamboo Village (*Bambou Village de Phu An*) in Vietnam is a prime example of how a widely-available resource like

bamboo can advance a community's socio-economic strength and increase empowerment. According to the information on their site, this initiative was awarded the 2010 Equator Prize[6] by the UNDP and has benefitted 64 low-income households from sustainable bamboo cultivation. Furthermore, profits from the initiative directly alleviates poverty among the people of Phu An and has made key criteria for community advancement such as education and healthcare, more available to them. The project is self-sustaining and does not require complicated machinery or specific labor skills, which makes such projects very practical and easily implementable. The key impacts of the Phu An Bamboo Village are illustrated in Table 5.1

Biodiversity	Socio-economic	Policy	Replication
i) Conservation of over 300 species of bamboo, providing the community with an important genetic resource base from which it can produce plants and ensure sustainable management ii) Bamboo and other natural resources in the community are used for household consumption, food, medication, and construction materials, as well as for commercial fair trade markets iii) Collaborative research with groups in Cambodia and Laos on bamboo and biodiversity conservation, including on the use of bamboo in the treatment of unclean water and polluted soil	i) Sixty-four low-income families have benefited from sustainable bamboo cultivation ii) Sixteen landless youths trained in bamboo arts and crafts iii) Awareness raising activities, targeting both local farmers and school children have improved local understanding on the value of conservation activities, drinking water hygiene, waste management, etc. iv) The Eco-Museum of Bamboo and Botanical Conservancy has resulted in revenues of VND 10,500,000 (RM 1600) to each beneficiary community (equivalent to a ten month salary for standard labor); this has resulted in diminished levels of urbanization, as more rural villagers are electing to remain in their villages	i) The group has provided bamboo saplings to the National Park of Cat Tien, as a contribution to their biodiversity conservation and education activities	i) The initiative model has been shared with other regions, Cat Tien National Park, conservation centers, and private plantations

Table 5.1 Key Impacts of the Phu An Bamboo Village on the Village of Phu An

Source: Adapted from
http://www.equatorinitiative.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=599%3Abambo uvillagedephuan&catid=175&Itemid=689

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6 Award granted to communities that make exceptional efforts in reducing poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

favorable out comes for the people of Phu An especially in the area of socio-economic integrity and empowerment. Furthermore, it simultaneously meets the aims of sustainable development, with a local natural resource being managed sustainably to ensure the long-term survival of not just the Phu An people, but also of the various types of bamboo found in the region. Such a developmental framework might also be applied to the Kensiu, using their in-depth knowledge of the bamboo species found in their area and familiarity with the bamboo and its many uses. Furthermore, as a native species, cultivating bamboo would have lesser ecological repercussions than the clearing of forests to plant a foreign species such as rubber or oil palm; and will also require lesser use of pesticides and fertilizers. Aside from the mismanagement and corruption, much of the problem faced by the Kensiu with regard to rubber initiatives stemmed from their unfamiliarity with the plant and its specific needs, causing many of the Kensiu to abandon rubber plantations set up by RISDA. Such an issue would not arise with bamboo, as the Kensiu are already intimately familiar with the plant.

Cultural practices of the Kensiu such as *sewang* and mat-weaving (see Figure 5.3) are also areas that should be looked into – especially because they hold potential of not only ensuring the survival of Kensiu culture (which is in danger of extinction), but also of increasing their incomes. For instance, mat-weaving can be carried out by the Kensiu and finished products sold to art shops, akin to pottery made by tribes in Sarawak which are sold at high-end gift shops; similarly, the making of mats can also contribute toward the Kensiu's socio-economic progress, especially with the growing interest in ethnic goods and natural design. Tourism can also ensure that the Kensiu culture does not die out.

Figure 5.3: Kensiu women weaving mats

As discussed in my findings, many Kensiu youth are unfamiliar with *sewang* dances and songs; however, should there be a market for tourism into their village, the Kensiu could perform their traditional songs and dances which would serve the dual purpose of contributing toward their economic betterment as well as the survival of their cultural heritage. It is important however to ensure that such touristic activities are equitable and adopt a community-based approach to tourism. Community-based tourism is differentiated from conventional tourism in that the host community (in this case the Kensiu) is the core concern of the planning and maintaining in community tourism development (Beeton, 2006). While this pattern of tourism is a good start toward equitable socio-economic development of the Kensiu, care should be taken to ensure that it contributes directly toward transformative community development and empowerment. This can be done by ensuring that the Kensiu are in control of the development of tourism in their village, deciding what and how much they wish to share with tourists, and making sure that tourist money goes directly to the Kensiu as service providers. In other words, tourism carried out with the Kensiu must not be exploitative, and must

ensure growth of independence and self-sufficiency among the Kensiu within the suitable sustainable development framework they choose.

Although tourism can bring about changes to the socio-economic welfare of the Kensiu, it may also cause undesired repercussions to the Kensiu as the destination community; for instance the commercialization of Kensiu culture and its gradual decay. As tourists enter the Indigenous villages with their expectations, there might be pressure on Indigenous people to not disappoint such expectations (Black & Crabtree, 2007). Similarly, this may result in modifications in Kensiu lifestyles and culture, leading to alterations that may degrade Kensiu culture, including traditional Kensiu values. Furthermore, donor-dependency may become a real problem should the number of tourists be insufficient to provide a steady source of income to the Kensiu, with the Kensiu then relying on the state to provide financial assistance. This would naturally be counterproductive to the goal of self-sufficiency and empowerment.

5.3.2 Decision-making Framework

Indigenous stewardship practices should be incorporated into governmental sustainability policy frameworks because of their many sustainable features and mode of implementation. However, in order to enable policy reforms which recognize the effectiveness of Indigenous practices and facilitate the acceptance and recognition of these practices, Indigenous land rights should first be upheld and respected. As discussed in this study, the Kensiu – and all Orang Asli for that matter, are deeply tied to their lands for various important reasons, and any mode of development or development negotiations must start with the recognition of their land rights and the special relationship they share with their lands. This argument however, is not a new one, the Orang Asli and a number of individuals and NGOs have been fighting for Asli lands for decades; unfortunately, change has been painstakingly Recognizing Orang Asli ownership of their lands would be the first crucial step toward garnering Asli support for government development plans, followed by participatory decision-making processes.

The ownership of their lands and their inclusion in decision-making processes are both empowering to the Orang Asli and constructive toward state-Orang Asli cooperation and relations. Greater inclusion of all Orang Asli tribes into JAKOA is also pivotal in line with their diversity as a heterogeneous group; currently all Orang Asli come under the same administrative model and are expected to adapt themselves to the same standard model of development regardless of their differences. Policy makers may make better strides if they were to base their development models on this basic acknowledgement of the diversity among the Orang Asli and devise different developmental frameworks for different Asli groups based on participatory consultation processes. As discussed earlier, there is also a serious lack of representation of the Orang Asli among JAKOA officials, thus hampering communication between the Orang Asli and JAKOA and creating an environment that does not facilitate participatory decision-making frameworks.

5.3.3 Suggestions for Future Research

1. This research was focused on the Kensiu of Kampung Lubok Legong. Further studies on the perspectives of the Jahai, Lanoh, Mah Meri and other Orang Asli groups regarding sustainability should be carried out in order to form a deeper understanding of their sustainability practices and of how these practices can be synchronized with developmental plans for each Orang Asli group. The categories and themes utilized in this study could be used as a guide toward formulating more comprehensive assessment tools to this end. Furthermore, such information could be used by NGOs and Orang Asli associations such as POASM to further the Orang Asli cause and contribute toward changing the dynamics of the state's development policies with regard to the Orang Asli.

2. Further studies are needed to understand the wants and needs of the Kensiu, as well as their historical connections with the state. Often, smaller Asli groups such as the Kensiu and Kintak do not receive the academic or anthropological attention granted to their larger cousins like the Batek and

Temuan. This is especially important, as in-depth and organized studies on the smaller Asli groups are still lacking, and the impact of development and modernization on their way of life less studied.

3. Efforts must be made to increase the ability of the Orang Asli to communicate their concerns and aspirations to the government and the public. Often times, the Orang Asli lack the necessary channels to convey their wants and needs and instead rely on journalists, reporters as well as JAKOA to relay their messages. Unfortunately, these stakeholders lack the essential background knowledge of the Orang Asli and their complex histories; it is crucial therefore that further research be done on how the Orang Asli can empower themselves in the field of communication, and the avenues available to them to do so.

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