TOURISTS AND INDIGENOUS TOUR GUIDES: AN
EXPLORATION OF ROLES, RELATIONSHIPS, AND
INTERCULTURAL INTERACTIONS

A Dissertation in
Leisure Studies

by
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The aim of this study was to examine tourist-tour guide interactions. Specifically, I sought to understand tourist and tour guide perceptions of their interactions with each other, and to discover factors that influence their interactions. This was accomplished by exploring interactions between indigenous tour guides and foreign tourists in an ecotourism setting, and accounting for the perspectives of both tour guides and tourists.

I conducted a qualitative, naturalistic inquiry using participant observation and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with indigenous tour guides and foreign tourists in the Talamanca region of Costa Rica. To help focus the study, I utilized a conceptual framework based on the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1979) and on tourism impact literature to examine factors that influence interactions between indigenous tour guides and foreign tourists. Data analysis revealed two distinct overarching themes. The first focused on tourist and guide descriptions of the roles and relationships they experienced in their interactions; the second encompassed factors that influenced their interactions.

Based on the results relating to roles and relationships, I proposed extensions and amendments to Cohen’s (1985), Weiler and Davis’ (1993), and Howard et al.’s (2001) models of guide roles to account for modified and additional roles experienced by indigenous ecotourism guides, and to encapsulate a tourist’s role in the interaction. I also extended the model to capture relationship roles enacted and experienced by tourists and guides.

Results pertaining to factors that influence tourist-guide interactions supported some aspects of previous literature, but revealed complexities that challenge the practice
of simply labeling a factor as a facilitator or impediment. Results also challenged previous assumptions of cultural dissimilarity as an impediment; the findings indicated that cultural differences *can* be a basis for, and facilitator of, guide-tourist interactions. Hence, I proposed extensions and amendments to the Contact Hypothesis for use in a tourism setting to better capture interactions between indigenous tour guides and foreign tourists, and to reflect the complexities of such interactions.

In addition, I offered practical implications for guide training and for tourist education and preparation. I also suggested for future research to examine the effects of third-party guides and of site accessibility on indigenous guide-tourist interactions. Finally, I recommended longitudinal research to investigate longer-term effects of guide-tourist interactions.

Keywords: Tourist-host interactions, tour guides, social and cultural impacts, indigenous tourism, sustainable tourism, Contact Hypothesis, intercultural relations
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List Of Figures .............................................................................................................. vii  
List Of Tables .............................................................................................................. viii  
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ ix  
Chapter 1: Introduction ................................................................................................... 1  
  Literature Review and Theoretical Framework .......................................................... 3  
  Social and Cultural Impacts .................................................................................... 3  
  Models and Frameworks ......................................................................................... 6  
  Resident Responses/Adjustment to Tourism ........................................................ 10  
  Tour Guides .......................................................................................................... 13  
  Summary of Tourism Impact and the Tour Guide Literature ............................... 17  
  Contact Hypothesis ............................................................................................... 17  
  Contact Hypothesis and Tourism .......................................................................... 23  
  Conclusion ............................................................................................................ 26  
  Study Purpose and Research Questions ................................................................ 28  
  Broader Impacts of the Proposed Research ........................................................ 28  
  Definition of Terms ............................................................................................... 29  
Research Design and Methods .................................................................................. 29  
  Setting and Sample ............................................................................................... 30  
  Design and Instrumentation .................................................................................. 40  
  Data Collection ..................................................................................................... 43  
  Data Analysis ........................................................................................................ 44  
  Positionality and Reflexivity ................................................................................. 45  
References .................................................................................................................... 47  
Orientation to Chapter 2 ............................................................................................ 57  
Chapter 2: Tourists And Indigenous Tour Guides: An Exploration Of Roles And  
  Relationships .............................................................................................. 58  
Introduction ............................................................................................................... 58  
Study Purpose and Research Questions .................................................................... 61  
Methods .................................................................................................................... 62  
  Setting and Sample ............................................................................................... 63  
  Data Collection ..................................................................................................... 65  
  Data Analysis ........................................................................................................ 66  
Results and Interpretation ......................................................................................... 67  
  Guides as Caretakers and Access Providers ......................................................... 68  
  Teacher/Student Roles .......................................................................................... 70  
  Friendship/Family ................................................................................................. 85  
  Enabler, Motivator ................................................................................................ 93  
  Guides as Conservation Advocates; Tourists as Supporters ................................. 98  
Conclusion and Implications ................................................................................... 101  
References .............................................................................................................. 108  
Orientation to Chapter 3 .......................................................................................... 111
| Chapter 3: Tourists And Indigenous Tour Guides: Factors That Influence Interactions | 112 |
| Introduction | 112 |
| Tourist-Host Interactions | 113 |
| Contact Hypothesis Framework | 118 |
| Study Purpose and Research Questions | 126 |
| Methods | 126 |
| Setting and Sample | 128 |
| Data Collection | 130 |
| Data Analysis | 130 |
| Results and Interpretation | 132 |
| Tour Characteristics | 133 |
| Tourist and Guide Characteristics | 145 |
| Image and Cultural Differences | 153 |
| Supportive Environment | 158 |
| Status Equality | 162 |
| Communication and Language | 164 |
| Conclusion and Implications | 168 |
| References | 175 |

| Chapter 4: Summary And Conclusions | 181 |
| Summary of Key Findings | 181 |
| Implications | 186 |
| Limitations | 189 |
| Future Research Directions | 190 |
| References | 195 |

| Appendix A: Tourism System In Talamanca | 198 |

| Appendix B: Interview Scripts And Questions | 202 |
| Participant Observation Informed Consent Script | 203 |
| Guide Interview Verbal Script (English) | 204 |
| Tourist Interview Verbal Script (English) | 205 |

| Appendix C: Account Of Research Process | 209 |
| Appendix D: Self-Reflections Of Personal Biases And Perspectives | 231 |
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of Limón Province and Talamanca region ........................................... 31
Figure 2: Overview of Indigenous Reserves in Talamanca ....................................... 32
Figure 3: Close-up of data collection sites................................................................. 36
## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of the Conceptual Framework for Exploring Tourist-Guide Interactions ........................................................................................................... 27

Table 2: Roles of Indigenous Ecotourism Guides and Foreign Tourists .................. 104

Table 3: Summary of the Conceptual Framework for Exploring Tourist-Guide Interactions ........................................................................................................ 125

Table 4: Extended Contact Theory for Indigenous Guide-Tourist Interactions ......... 174
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Tourism is widely recognized as one of the largest industries in the world, as a major player in international trade, and as a main source of income for many communities. Tourism also brings people (i.e., tourists and hosts) from different cultures and backgrounds into direct and often close contact with each other (Chambers, 2000), potentially resulting in peace between different cultures (D’Amore, 1988; Poyya moli, 2003). Many researchers have focused on positive and negative impacts of tourist-host contact on local communities and individuals. For example, tourism can be a welcome means of sharing knowledge between cultures (Baez, 1996; Beeftink, 2004; Greathouse-Amador, 2005; Guerrón-Montero, 2006; Wearing & Larsen, 1996), and positive interactions with tourists can lead to an increase in self-esteem and cultural pride for hosts (Beeftink, 2004; Stevens, 1991). Conversely, hosts may feel objectified by tourists (Cohen, 1983; Mowforth & Munt, 1998), or contact with tourists may result in unwanted changes in local beliefs or cultural norms (Chambers, 2000; Wearing & Larsen, 1996).

Local people and outsiders might view impacts of tourist-host contact differently (Chamber, 2000; Stevens, 1991). And, hosts (e.g., tour guides) and tourists may have different goals and expectations of their interaction, resulting in different perceptions of impacts. For example, tour agencies commonly market cultural aspects of tours to accentuate differences between indigenous peoples and tourists, often representing the indigenous as primitive and naive (Bruner & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2005). Consequently, tourists may expect or desire to gaze upon or encounter indigenous peoples as the
“Other,” as part of the scenery, and/or as something to be viewed and photographed (Bruner & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2005; Cohen, 1983; Mowforth & Munt, 1998; Urry, 1992; 2002). Indigenous tour guides, on the other hand, may wish to dispel inaccurate images and educate tourists on current realities of their lives (Howard, Thwaites, & Smith, 2001). Thus, in order to gain a broader understanding of tourist-guide interactions, I focused this study on both tourist and tour guide perceptions of their interactions with each other.

Different types of tourism may result in various types and amounts of impacts. Ecotourism, defined as: “Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people” (The International Ecotourism Society, 1990), has often been promoted as an environmentally and culturally sensitive form of tourism. Because it tends to be small-scale, it also may allow for greater opportunities for more intimate contact between tourists and hosts. On the positive side, this enhances the potential for increasing both tourist and host knowledge and understanding of the “other” (Cohen, 1972; Smith, 1997). However, although the intent is for ecotourists to be more respectful of the host culture, some researchers argue that tourists’ value systems may be incompatible with indigenous customs and cause tourist-host conflict (Weaver, 2002).

Efforts to improve tourist-host interactions have implications not only for successful tourism operations, but also for intercultural understanding as a whole (Reisinger, 1997). Benefits of positive interactions may include: increased understanding, appreciation, and pride for one’s own and others’ cultures; improved communication understanding and skills; enhanced opportunities for developing friendships with
culturally-different individuals; decreased stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination; increased (host) job satisfaction; and increased economic, social, and cultural benefits to host communities (Reisinger, 1997). However, research which focuses on understanding both tourists’ and hosts’ perspectives of the tourism experience in general (Pearce, 1982b; Stronza, 2001), of the structure and meaning of host-tourist intercultural interactions (Yoo & Sohn, 2003), and of what constitutes and contributes to a positive interaction is limited. Tour guides, in this setting, are members of the culture they are representing; therefore, they also act as, and for the purpose of this study, are considered, hosts.

The purpose of this study is to explore indigenous tour guides’ and foreign tourists’ perceptions of their interactions with each other in small-scale ecotourism programs. Particular attention is paid to their descriptions of their interactions, and to the factors they feel may facilitate or impede their interactions.

**Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

The following review examines literature pertaining to social and cultural impacts of tourism, resident adjustment or responses to tourism, and tour guides. The Contact Hypothesis is then explored and recommended as part of a conceptual framework from which to examine tourist-host interactions.

**Social and Cultural Impacts**

Fox (1975) describes social and cultural impacts as “the ways in which the people believe tourism is changing such things as their value systems, individual behavior, collective life styles, family relationships, creative expression, traditional ceremonies,
community organization and the quality of island life in general” (p. 27). Some impacts can be considered positive such as a resurgence of traditional arts (Baez, 1996; Greathouse-Amador, 2005; Mathieson & Wall, 1982); new amenities for rural peoples (Beeftink, 2004; Greathouse-Amador, 2005); increased educational opportunities and sharing of knowledge between cultures (Baez, 1996; Beeftink, 2004; Greathouse-Amador, 2005; Guerrón-Montero, 2006; Wearing & Larsen, 1996); increased empowerment of indigenous peoples (Greathouse-Amador, 2005); increased cultural pride (Greathouse-Amador, 2005; Stevens, 1991); and, greater gender equity/increased confidence levels for women (Lama, 1999). However, impacts can also result in undesirable changes to communities involved in tourism. Negative impacts include increased crime rates (Jud, 1975; McPheters & Stronge, 1974; Wearing & Larsen, 1996); increased prostitution (Hall, 1992); increased drug and/or alcohol usage (Wearing & Larsen, 1996); a decrease or disruption of traditional activities (Chambers, 2000; Wearing & Larsen, 1996); decreased authenticity in cultural ceremonies and handicrafts (Harrison, 1994; Minerbi, 1999; Pearce, 1994); loss or change of traditional values (Wearing & Larsen, 1996); the marginalization or loss of cultural identity of minority groups (Chambers, 2000; Cohen, 1983; MacCannell, 1984; Minerbi, 1999; Mowforth & Munt, 1998); and displacement of indigenous peoples from native lands (McLaren, 1999; Mowforth & Munt, 1998).

While negative and positive impacts can result from indirect contact with tourists (Pearce, 1994), this study will focus on impacts related to direct contact with tourists. Demonstration effects are one means by which direct contact with tourists may negatively influence residents of host communities. Tourists often have vastly different value systems and worldviews than residents of host communities. As a result of their
encounters with tourists, residents may adopt the ways and views of the tourists (i.e., the demonstration effect), which could ultimately bring about changes in their cultural values and norms. For example, due to tourists’ violation of social and religious norms, the Akha of Northern Thailand may have altered their local beliefs (Chambers, 2000). In addition, residents may try to imitate foreigners; the youth may copy the bad habits of tourists, and tourists may set a bad example (Wearing & Larsen, 1996). However, although demonstration effects may result in cultural changes from direct contact with tourists and are generally considered a negative impact of this interaction, it is important to recognize that the tourist-host interactions themselves may not necessarily be perceived as negative.

Nevertheless, there are documented cases of negative interactions between tourists and hosts. For instance, hosts may feel objectified or condescended by visitors; a phenomenon which Mowforth and Munt (1998) termed “zooification” when applied to tribal peoples. Cohen (1983) documented this phenomenon in his examination of two different types of tourism in the hill tribe region of Thailand—a “Tribal Village Tour,” a shorter (i.e., one hour), higher amenity tour to less remote villages, and a “Jungle Tour,” a longer (i.e., overnight) tour to more remote villages. Interactions between tourists and hosts on both types of tours were limited, but Cohen found that Tribal Village Tours were more superficial and also led to more objectified interactions with tourists. That is, tourists viewed villagers as part of the scenery: they observed and took photographs, but did not engage in two-way interactions with villagers. Consequently, Cohen argued, villagers experienced a loss of personal dignity.

Alternatively, tourist-host interactions can be viewed positively by hosts. In
examining tourist-host relations in the Khumbu region of Nepal, Stevens (1991) noted that, as opposed to experiencing negative interactions which result in loss of dignity (Cohen, 1983), Sherpas received a boost to their self-esteem. Stevens maintains that this is largely due to the Sherpas international renown as mountaineering guides. As tourists display their admiration and respect for sirdars and the Sherpa culture in general, they further reinforce Sherpa cultural pride and self-confidence, which in turn contributes to their ability to maintain cultural continuity. Fijian whitewater guides reported a similar experience: interactions with tourists were not only a highlight of their job, but positive interactions also led to increases in self-esteem and cultural pride (Beeftink, 2004).

Furthermore, Guerrón -Montero (2006) found that the Afro-Antilleans in Panama consider interactions with tourists to be a positive aspect of tourism. These interactions enable them “to ‘meet new people’, ‘learn about the world’, and ‘learn interesting things’” (p. 77), which, if they find them appropriate, they can incorporate into their lives.

Models and Frameworks

Several models and frameworks have been developed from which to address social and cultural impacts of tourism on host communities. Doxey’s (1975) irritation index outlines stages of local irritation with tourists as tourist numbers increase: from euphoria, to apathy, to annoyance and, finally, antagonism. Doxey suggested that cultural compatibility between the tourists and the hosts may be a factor in irritation levels, even though his model did not account for this. The Irritation Index implies a continued growth in number of tourists in a region; therefore, it is useful for exploring perceptions of impacts as tourism develops over time, but may be less helpful in
examining impacts at a single juncture in tourism development. The Index also takes into account the prevailing attitude of the community as a whole, and is thus perhaps limited for exploring individual perceptions.

Cohen (1972), Prosser (1994), and Smith (1997) each developed a tourist typology to explore social and cultural impacts of tourism based on tourists' desired level of novelty or familiarity and their degree of adaptation with local norms. For example, Cohen categorized tourists into: the organized mass tourist (desiring the most familiarity and integrating the least), the individual mass tourist, the explorer, and the drifter (desiring the most novelty and integrating with locals the most). Cohen recognized that the potential for tourism to increase intercultural appreciation and understanding may be limited in more mass forms of tourism. According to Smith, the basic uniformity required by mass tourists may result in more routine interactions between tourists and hosts (e.g., hosts asked the same questions routinely by tourists). Such routine may negatively impact hosts' interest in their job and their ability to see tourists as individuals. In turn, as hosts become more impersonal in their interactions, tourists will likewise see them only as the “other.” On the other hand, smaller-scale forms of tourism, which often attract "explorers" and "drifters" and enable one-on-one interactions, may have more potential for cross-cultural understanding between tourists and hosts (Cohen, 1972; Smith, 1997).

Prosser (1994) noted limitations to cross-cultural understanding regardless of tourist type. He suggested that the expectation for tourists to behave in responsible and sensitive ways is contrary to the experience itself, in which individuals pay for the experience and therefore may feel a sense of entitlement. While Prosser does not explore
the repercussions expectations may have on tourist-host interactions, it is feasible to suggest that such interactions may not be viewed positively by hosts.

Heuman (2005) found that specific parameters of the host-guest relationship appear to influence tourist behavior. For example, “working” (or service-based) tourism models that place less emphasis on financial transactions and are more in line with traditional hospitality exchanges had positive influences. Specifically, “working” tourists, i.e. individuals who volunteer their time and energy to work alongside local residents on community projects, were found to express concern over the potential impact of behaving inappropriately and made considerable attempts to behave in accordance with local wishes and expectations. Heuman noted that the host-guest relationship may level the power dynamic between tourists and locals; that is, although tourists clearly are dominant in terms of financial resources, locals control knowledge, networks, and the extent to which they make tourists feel welcome. A similar outcome of the host-guest relationship was found with backpacking tourists in Turkey (Tucker, 2001). Since backpacker interactions are not mediated by a tour guide, the tourist-host relationship is more closely aligned with that of hosts and guests as described by Heuman. Thus, if locals feel a tourist is not behaving in an appropriate manner, they can choose not to act as hosts (Tucker, 2001). While Heuman and Tucker looked at very specific types of tourism and focused mainly on the repercussions for hosts, Pearce (1982a, 1994) considered a broader approach that included impacts on both hosts and tourists.

Based on a review of tourist-host contact literature, Pearce (1982a, 1994) developed a framework for researching and discussing social-cultural and psychological impacts. He distinguished between direct and indirect contact effects, and considered the
role of technological advancement and socio-economic conditions of the host community in tourism impacts, concluding that smaller, more isolated, and less technologically advanced communities tend to experience greater impacts. In addition to examining impacts on hosts, Pearce explored effects of intercultural contact on the tourists as well; both in terms of their perceptions of the host community and of their own culture. He concluded that a tourist’s motivation to travel, the strength of a tourist’s pre-contact beliefs, and the level of intimacy of contact should be considered in relation to attitude change regarding the host community. Although differences do exist, one can see parallels between this line of thought and the development of tourist typologies (Cohen, 1972; Prosser, 1994; Smith, 1997) as a tool for examining social-cultural impacts. However, while the typologies consider solely the effects of tourists on hosts, Pearce’s framework also encompassed aspects of the host area’s social context (i.e., level of isolation and technological sophistication), as well as impacts on the tourists. Based on these findings, if examining intercultural contact from both host and tourist perspectives, it may be fruitful to consider the host’s motivation for involvement in tourism in addition to the tourist’s motivation.

In summary, the studies reviewed in this section focused on either describing ways in which tourism has impacted the social-cultural environments of host communities and/or tourists, or particular tourist types or contexts that may affect the type and/or amount of impacts. Less emphasis has been placed on the ways in which local communities respond or adjust to tourism and its impacts. The following section addresses these issues.
Resident Responses/Adjustment to Tourism

In a review of the socio-cultural impacts of international tourism, Dogan (1989) proposed that communities may adopt several strategies to adjust to tourism—resistance, retreat, boundary maintenance, revitalization, and adoption—and that these responses, which are often dynamic and changing, may be distributed differently within the community depending on the degree to which a particular segment benefits from tourism. According to Dogan, residents who perceive tourism impacts positively are more accepting of socio-cultural changes and those who perceive impacts negatively are more resistant. In addition, Dogan drew parallels between tourist typologies and resident forms of adjustment. For example, communities which received Cohen’s (1972) “drifter” and “explorer” types of tourists were likely to utilize resident strategies of adoption or boundary maintenance while those receiving the individual and organized mass types were more likely to adopt strategies of retreatism or resistance. Thus, the type or quality of a guide’s interactions with tourists may also affect his or her adjustment to tourism.

Goering (1990) described an alternative form of adjustment amongst the people of the Indian state of Ladakh to tourism’s negative environmental, social, and cultural impacts. He documented that local responses to negative impacts included the founding of non-profit organizations—i.e., the Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDEG), the Students’ Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL), and the Gompa Association—aimed at promoting sustainable development which reflects Ladakhi culture, increasing education, and preserving Ladakhi culture; and the support of tour operators through donations and distribution of educational materials. Although these responses entail some aspects of the “revitalization” of traditions discussed by Dogan
(1989), there are major differences. Dogan’s “revitalization” refers to the renewal or reenactment of traditional forms of culture largely due to tourist demand. On the other hand, the Ladakhi response strategies entail a revitalization of culture despite tourist demand. Nevertheless, revitalization has been used by other communities, particularly through the development of behavioral guidelines and educational materials for tourists (Petry, 1999; Smith, 1999). Attempts to improve communication between tourists and hosts have been aimed at improving tourist-host interactions, at increasing intercultural understanding, and ultimately at creating a form of tourism that can be economically, physically, and culturally sustained (Goering, 1990).

Whereas the Ladakhis’ response to tourism entailed formal strategies and organizations, Tucker’s (2001) description of backpacker tourism in Turkey highlights a more informal and interactive approach to negotiating the cultural identity of local people. Tucker posited that both backpackers and local people engage in a mutual negotiation of their encounter. This negotiation is two-fold—that of the villagers’ traditional identities and way of life and of the tourists’ quest and experience—and is enacted dynamically through interactions. The tourist realm, in this case, allows local villagers to step outside of their normal life, enabling them not only to experiment with their own identities, but also to participate with tourists in fun. Moreover, locals often used humor and irony to play to touristic representations of “caveman” identity (Tucker, 2001); a strategy similar to one used by Native Americans in Santa Fe, New Mexico (Evans-Pritchard, 1989). However, since the Turkish villagers’ interactions were with backpacker types of tourists (traveling independently and staying multiple days), they were able to re-negotiate and redirect these “traditional” representations within the interaction. In contrast, the Native
Americans had a very limited amount of time with individual tourists, and tended to use these strategies more to poke fun at tourists and to retain their dignity (Evans-Pritchard, 1989). They also used stereotypes of tourists in addition to stereotypes of themselves to shape interactions with tourists, thus maintaining aspects of control during the encounter; and used jokes, parodies, and creative storytelling to expose and confront these stereotypes and to “educate” the tourist on inappropriate behaviors (Evans-Pritchard, 1989). Although this tactic may well serve its purpose of keeping control of the interaction in the hands of the indigenous, Evans-Pritchard (1989) also pointed out that this strategy may actually result in the self-fulfillment of stereotypes. However, Evans-Pritchard did not view this as negative. Rather, she argued that although tourist-host interactions may remain on a more superficial level, keeping control in the indigenous population’s hands can serve as an important agent of empowerment while not negating the potential for positive encounters for both parties.

Using social exchange theory as a framework for examining tourist-host interactions, Ap (1992) suggested that interactions were viewed positively if the individual or group perceived the exchange of resources is high (if power level is low) or roughly equivalent (if power level is high or balanced); and negatively if the exchange of resources was low in any power relation. Evans-Pritchard’s (1989) research, however, offered a different view. Despite often having a higher level of power in the exchange relationship and experiencing a fair exchange of resources, hosts did not necessarily view tourists positively. Instead, they were likely to continue embracing and perpetuating negative stereotypes of tourists. Both studies suggest that power or status is a factor which may influence tourist-host interactions. However, to fully understand its influence,
consideration should be given to its particular context.

**Tour Guides**

It is widely recognized that tour guides play an important role in a tour’s success and serve a variety of functions. Cohen (1985) developed a framework to encompass the various roles of a tour guide, and suggested that tour guides working in new, small-scale types of tourism engage in both leadership and mediatory roles. As group leaders, they provide direction and access, oversee the safety and security of tourists, facilitate group dynamics, and entertain. Guides also mediate between tourists and the local community and environment, providing organization, information, and interpretation. A similar finding was presented by McDonnell (2001) who found the mediatory role of tour guides in Australia, especially transferring cultural understanding of the host culture to tourists, to be particularly important. Focusing on the niche market of ecotourism, Weiler and Davis (1993) also examined the role of tour guides. They found two additional roles particular to ecotourism; that is, guides are motivators of environmentally responsible behavior on-site and they serve as environmental interpreters, encouraging tourists to develop a long-term environmental ethic.

Using participant observation and interviews with indigenous guides and park service members, Howard et al. (2001) specifically examined whether the guide roles developed by Cohen (1985) and Weiler and Davis (1993) were applicable to indigenous tour guides. Indeed, indigenous tour guides were found to engage in many of these roles, including providing organization, safety, and maintaining group cohesion and visitor interest in the tour through the use of humor. The mediatory roles, i.e. cultural interpreter
and teacher, were found to be particularly important for indigenous tour guides. In addition, indigenous tour guides exhibited resource management roles; they motivated visitors to reduce on-site impacts (e.g., reminded visitors to respect the site), and stressed the sacredness of the land and the importance of the site to the local culture. However, Howard et al. emphasized differences between ecotourism guides and indigenous guides. Indigenous guides focused on interpreting their cultural heritage and indigenous culture rather than a traditional model of environmental conservation. They also suggested that cultural exchange with tourists was an important aspect of tours for the guides because doing so helps to dispel misconceptions of indigenous culture.

Gurung, Simmons, and Devlin (1996) also considered roles of indigenous tour guides. They focused on identifying training needs of indigenous tour guides to minimize negative outcomes for both tourists and host communities, and considered the main duty of the tour guide “to create a social climate and environmental understanding under which both the visitor and the visited will benefit in the long term” (pp. 114-115). They found that tourists value not only the organizational and safety roles of guides, but also the more communicative and qualitative roles of interpreter and information provider; and recommended training to include elements of communication, social facilitation, cross-cultural understanding, and impacts of tourism, as well as management, leadership, and safety.

Pearce (1984) examined tourist-guide interactions in six different tour settings using a framework which focuses on social situations and their connections; including goals, rules, roles, the environmental setting, and language and speech. He found that the environmental setting was particularly important and suggested that future researchers
consider detailed contextual information in their analysis of interactions. In addition, Pearce revealed implications for guide's job satisfaction and for tourist's satisfaction. Specifically, guides who were given flexibility to develop their own presentations were more likely to remain motivated and interested in their jobs. And, although tourists recalled little detailed information from their interactions with guides, many nonetheless experienced significant emotional impacts which had a positive influence on their satisfaction. In addition, Pearce (1982b) noted that tourists' experience with a particular tour guide or service personnel may extend beyond their perception of that individual and influence their perception of the hosts in general.

However, an additional related element that perhaps should be considered is the role other group members may have in shaping interactions and satisfaction, particularly for longer tours. For example, in a study of European coach tours, Quiroga (1990) found that over 90% of participants valued “shared group experience,” and 16% felt it contributed to satisfaction. In addition, Gale and Beeftink (2004) found group dynamics to be a significant aspect of satisfaction with multi-day adventure trips for college student populations. Tour guides often facilitate group dynamics (Cohen, 1985; Gurung et al., 1996; Howard et al., 2001; Quiroga, 1990), but can also be considered as members of the group (Arnould & Price, 1993). Alternatively, in a group tour context, tourists may focus their attention on other members of the group rather than interacting with the host population (Anastasopoulos, 1992). Thus, including group dynamics in the analysis of guide-tourist interactions may provide additional insights.

Cohen (1983) also discussed the role of the regional tour guide and found the tour guide to be pivotal as a mediator between villagers and tourists, an educator of tourists on
local customs, and a source of regional or national news for villagers. One might expect that tourists who stay overnight, and thus spend more time and stay in close proximity with villagers, would have more direct interactions; however, Cohen found that they do not directly interact with villagers much more than those on the hour-long tours. He contributed this lack of direct interaction to a language barrier and suggested that this had positive outcomes for harmonious relationships between hosts and guests.

Tucker (2001) observed that tour groups mediated by a regional tour guide experienced “staged authenticity,” in which the guide presented an image of the “authentic” while negating the opportunity for any unstructured encounters to occur. She found that backpacker tourists engage in an entirely different level and type of contact with local villagers. Because they travel independently and stay longer, Tucker suggested that they have more prolonged interactions with villagers that allow for a wider array of encounters. While Cohen (1983) noted language barriers between tourists and local residents (and these were viewed positively), Tucker did not perceive language as a constraint (or a facilitator) to tourist-host interactions. Rather, she suggested that the non-local tour guides themselves were a barrier.

Beeftink (2004) studied the transition villagers experienced during the process of becoming and being a whitewater tour guide in the rural highlands of Fiji. She found that guides mediated potential cultural barriers by leading tourists through welcoming ceremonies and providing cultural and environmental interpretation. As documented in earlier studies, Beeftink found that tour guides perceived mainly positive interactions with tourists, including a decrease in tourists’ stereotypes and occasional continuing friendships, which contributed to their job satisfaction. She also suggested that the role
of the guide as an adventure trip leader, and the adventurous and cooperative nature of
the activity (whitewater rafting), may play a role in tourist-guide encounters; however,
these aspects are largely unexplored in the tourism literature. Howard et al. (2001)
highlighted the importance of the guide’s use of humor to break down perceived barriers
between different cultures. This is similar to the elements of play in whitewater trips that
Beeftink found to be a contributor to positive relationships between guides and tourists.

Summary of Tourism Impact and the Tour Guide Literature

A review of the literature related to social and cultural impacts of tourism,
resident responses to tourism, and tourist-host interactions indicates a number of factors
that may influence interactions between tourists and indigenous tour guides. Based on
this review, the following factors were included in the conceptual framework for this
study: (a) size of the tour group (Cohen, 1972; Smith, 1997); (b) length of the tour
(Beeftink, 2004; Cohen, 1983; Tucker, 2001); (c) type of activities in the tour (Arnould &
Price, 1993; Beeftink, 2004; Gale & Beeftink, 2004; Heuman, 2005); (d) tourist
motivation (Pearce, 1982a, 1994); (e) group dynamics (Anastasopoulos, 1992; Gale &
Beeftink, 2004; Quiroga, 1990); and (f) language barriers (Cohen, 1983; Tucker, 2001).
Guide motivation was also included to complement tourist motivation. In addition, the
Contact Hypothesis was reviewed for its potential to contribute to the conceptual
framework.

Contact Hypothesis

Developed by Allport (1979) to examine race relations in the U.S., the Contact
Hypothesis has since been utilized for a variety of contexts, including tourism. It is used in this study as part of a conceptual framework for exploring tourist-guide interactions (see Table 1 for a summary of the entire framework). The Contact Hypothesis outlines specific factors which influence interactions between ethnically and culturally different individuals and groups. Initially, four main factors were identified which may have a bearing on whether contact will result in amiable relations and/or reduced prejudice: (a) type of contact, (b) relative status between the individuals, (c) social sanctions, and (d) common goals (Allport, 1979). These have been tested or applied in several studies and various contexts.

Superficial contact, in which there is limited communication between two groups or individuals, may serve to merely reinforce pre-existing stereotypes (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Pettigrew, 1998). If these stereotypes are negative, prejudice is maintained. On the other hand, contact that allows for “true acquaintance” to form and knowledge about groups to be acquired may result in more accurate beliefs and positive attitudes (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998; Pettigrew, 1998). In some cases, individual interaction can be promoted by using ice-breaker and experiential learning activities (Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998). In a tourism context, the ability to experience deeper-level contacts between tourists and hosts, where not only knowledge is exchanged, but also acquaintances may be formed, may be an important factor in contributing to decreased stereotypes and prejudice and increased intercultural understanding.

Status levels between individuals or groups may also influence interactions (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998; Pettigrew, 1998). Through
examining occupational contact, Allport (1979) discussed how unequal status between individuals is “an active factor in creating and maintaining prejudice” (p. 274). Therefore, in order to reduce prejudice, it is important to come into contact with groups of equal or higher status. Yet, equal status relations are not necessarily the norm in tourist-host interactions, where hosts are generally in service positions. Exceptions may be hosts who are in recognizably skilled positions, such as the Sherpas in Nepal (Stevens, 1991); whitewater guides in Fiji (Beeftink, 2004); or guides of extended nature or adventure tours. Indeed, Arnould and Price (1993) found that during multi-day rafting trips, “the guides were fully integrated into the experience as members of the team” and “people report thinking of the guide, not in service provider terms, but as a friend” (p. 35).

Participating in an activity with a common goal and common interests may also influence interactions (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998; Wright et al., 1997). Citing an extreme example of White and Black soldiers fighting side-by-side for survival, Allport (1979) discussed the difference in favorable attitudes of White soldiers towards serving with Black soldiers. That is, those who had previous close associations in combat situations with Black soldiers were more likely to favor having divisions consisting of both White and Black platoons (Allport, 1979). However, one must also consider that most contacts (including those in a tourist context) that involve participating in an activity together do not involve life and death situations; therefore, the need to address this factor in other contexts such as tourism is warranted.

Another factor, social context, may be affected through laws, customs, as well as the general atmosphere of level of acceptance (Allport, 1979; Wittig & Grant-Thompson,
1998). For example, teachers and other role models can play a key role by establishing norms and expectations for interactions (Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998). In a tourism context, this may be facilitated through tourist codes of conduct, and influenced by the social dynamic of the tour group (group dynamics). Guides may also help create a comfortable atmosphere by using humor (Howard et al., 2001).

Since its formulation, the Contact Hypothesis has been applied and utilized in a variety of contexts. Pettigrew (1998) conducted an extensive, detailed review of the literature pertaining to and/or testing the Contact Hypothesis, and pointed out that the Contact Hypothesis has been successfully applied to various subpopulations and situations including, but not limited to, the elderly (Caspi, 1984; Drew, 1988); homosexuals (Herek & Capitanio, 1996); and persons with disabilities (Anderson, 1994). The Contact Hypothesis has also been explored in relation to working professionals (Liebkind, Haaramo, & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000); baseball players and fans (Hanssen, 2001); and international students (Nesdale & Todd, 2000). In addition, tourism researchers have addressed the Contact Hypothesis, which will be discussed in more detail later in the review.

Based on his review, Pettigrew (1998) suggested reformulating Allport’s (1979) original hypothesis to address additional issues, and emphasized that cross-group friendship—especially long-term close relationships as opposed to acquaintances—should be added as an additional factor. This is quite pertinent to a tourism context, as most tourist-host interactions are limited in both time and depth. Yet, certain tourism contexts, such as multi-day tours or backpacking (Tucker, 2001), may allow for more intimate contact while other factors, such as the nature of the activity, may allow for
friendships to be forged, even in a single-day tour (Beeftink, 2004).

In addition, Pettigrew (1998) pointed out that contact with culturally or ethnically different individuals or groups can afford new perspectives of one’s own group, which may then reduce stereotypes of the other group. Tourism seems to be particularly suited for this sort of reappraisal. As tourists experience different countries and/or cultures abroad, they may reevaluate their own (Pearce, 1982b). This reevaluation, in turn, may result in a reappraisal of the visited country based on new criteria.

Personality factors should also be considered (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998). Allport (1979) noted that “certain personalities resist the influences of contact” (p. 279) and, even if all the above factors are in place, one cannot entirely predict whether or not a certain individual will experience reduced prejudice. In addition, Pettigrew (1998) suggested that prior attitudes and experiences should be taken into account when addressing the impact of interactions between groups.

The Contact Hypothesis also has been further developed by considering effects of indirect contact. For instance, simply having knowledge of someone in one’s own ethnic or cultural group with a cross-ethnic friendship may decrease prejudice towards the other ethnic group (Wright et al., 1997). This notion was tested by measuring the perspectives of both groups, and evidence supported decreased prejudice in each.

Alreshoud and Koeske (1997) evaluated the causal relationship between attitude and contact, and included mediating variables such as level of understanding of the host country in their model. Specifically, they hypothesized that increased contact would lead to increased understanding, which would then be reflected in more positive attitudes. They found instead that attitudes affect contact and that level of understanding does not
influence attitude. However, the quality and nature of the contact were not considered in the analysis, which greatly limits the conclusions drawn. In addition, Alreshoud and Koeske suggested that the level of cultural differences should be taken into account. This is consistent with some of the tourism literature that suggests cultural compatibility between tourists and hosts may contribute to lower irritation levels (Doxey, 1975). Alreshoud and Koeske concluded that “the desire for contact and enriching, positive contact can be expected to occur among visitors with a more favorable initial attitude, even for dissimilar cultures” (p. 244). This is particularly pertinent to a tourism context, as individuals often travel specifically to see and experience cultures vastly different from their own, and initial attitude may likely be reflected in tourists’ motivation to travel to a particular destination.

Amir (1998) emphasized the need to examine intercultural contact in its particular context and identified several factors consistent with Allport’s (1979) conceptual framework that may influence positive or negative outcomes in prejudice reduction programs, including opportunities for contact, equality of status, cooperation versus competition, casual versus intimate contact, and personality. Results of Amir’s study indicated that situations which allow for contact opportunities, cooperation between in-groups, and intimate rather than casual contact have positive impacts on the reduction of prejudice, and that these may be influenced through effective planning and programming.

In summary, the Contact Hypothesis is based on ideas for improving relations between two different ethnic or racial groups in which at least one of the groups (generally only considering the ethnic or racial “majority” group) has a negative attitude of unknown intensity towards the other (“minority”) group. In a tourism context, the goal
may be positive interactions that, in general, can lead to increased intercultural understanding. Mings (1988) identified “knowledge” and “positive feelings” as the basic elements required to develop genuine international understanding. In order to consider the potential for increased intercultural understanding that would positively influence both parties involved in tourism, one needs to consider the views of the tourists and of the hosts. Both groups may have limited and possibly misleading information about the other group. For example, hosts may see tourists as having unlimited wealth or as superficial (Evans-Pritchard, 1989), while tourists may see hosts as primitive, simple, and living in the past (Bruner & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2005; Howard et al., 2001; Mowforth & Munt, 1998). However, since tourists willingly enter into interactions with hosts, they may be motivated to gain new information (Amir & Ben-Ari, 1985). Although knowledge is only one factor that may influence positive interactions, the generation of new knowledge through contact undoubtedly has potential for increasing intercultural understanding. Thus, although tourism is arguably a different phenomenon from prejudice reduction programs, the Contact Hypothesis may be useful in understanding tourist-host relationships.

**Contact Hypothesis and Tourism**

Several factors of prejudice reduction programs that have been proposed to affect the reduction of prejudice between culturally-different individuals can be applied to the facilitation of positive interactions within a tourism context, including generating a supportive environment (Allport, 1979; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998); establishing equal status among participants (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson,
promoting cooperation in working towards a common goal (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998; Wright et al., 1997); facilitating positive interactions with others through ice-breaker and experiential learning activities (Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998); having guides use humor (Howard et al., 2001); creating opportunities for intimate rather than casual contact (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998, Pettigrew, 1998); and, observing cross-cultural friendships (Wright et al., 1997).

Some of the concepts that underlie the Contact Hypothesis have already been explored in terms of tourist-host interactions without direct reference to the hypothesis; such as implications of equal status (Ap, 1992; Evans-Pritchard, 1989; Heumann, 2005; Stevens, 1994); cooperative interdependence (Beeftink, 2004; Heuman, 2005); individual interactions (Pearce, 1994; Tucker, 2001); and positive interactions (Reisinger, 1997; Tucker, 2001). The number of researchers who have used the Contact Hypothesis in a tourism context is fairly limited. For instance, Milman, Reichel, and Pizam (1990) explored tourism’s impact on attitude change of Israelis towards Egyptians, and Pizam, Jafari, and Milman (1991) examined U.S. students who visited the former Soviet Union. Both studies found that tourism did not change tourists’ attitudes toward the host country and people in a positive direction; in fact, in some cases attitudes were more negative following the experience. However, the authors attributed the findings to these specific aspects of the tour: (a) the tour groups had little opportunity for intimate contact with hosts, and (b) the limited contact with hosts was generally with individuals of lower status in service positions. A related study, which investigated attitude change of Greek tourists visiting Turkey, considered additional variables, such as tourist motivation to travel, and past foreign travel experience (Anastasopoulos, 1992). Results also indicated
mainly an increase in negative attitudes towards the host country and people for many measures, with some exceptions of positive attitude change. However, again, the context of the tour (an escorted bus tour) precluded the ability to meet Allport’s (1979) criteria for contact, especially the opportunity for tourists to engage in intimate rather than superficial contact with hosts (Anastasopoulos, 1992). Nevertheless, researchers remain optimistic about tourism’s potential to promote cultural understanding (Milman et al., 1990; Pizam et al., 1991), given careful planning of the tourist experience (Anastasopoulos, 1992).

One study that incorporated the contact criteria into its research design was conducted by Pizam, Uriely, and Reichel (2000). Focusing exclusively on working tourists in three different areas of Israel, Pizam et al. examined different levels of contact between tourists and hosts, and included tourist motivation and satisfaction in their analysis. Findings indicated that tourists who experienced higher intensities of social contact with hosts had more positive feelings and positive changes in attitude towards the hosts, in addition to higher levels of satisfaction with their experience. Furthermore, tourists whose motivation included meeting people with different perspectives experienced more positive attitude change than those with other motivations.

Amir and Ben-Ari’s (1985) study of contact between Israeli tourists and Egyptian hosts likewise considered contact criteria. Recognizing that acceptance of new information will only occur if an individual is psychologically prepared, the researchers developed an intervention booklet about Egyptian life for Israeli tourists to facilitate both provision of new information and psychological preparation. This intervention was moderately successful, and Amir and Ben-Ari suggested, “greater success may be
expected when implementing such strategies on peoples whose initial attitudes toward each other are more positive” (p. 114).

This strategy has since been implemented in many ecotourism or cultural tourism programs in the form of codes of conduct or educational brochures for tourists (e.g., Petry, 1999; Smith, 1999). Travel guidebook companies such as Lonely Planet have even started publishing series aimed at educating tourists on customs and etiquette in destination countries. However, while it is plausible to assume that tourists may be very open to receiving new information about hosts since they chose to travel to a particular destination (as suggested by Amir & Ben-Ari, 1985), whether or not hosts are interested in or open to new information about a tourist’s ethnic or cultural group is unknown and may depend on their involvement in tourism. None of the studies utilizing the Contact Hypothesis have addressed hosts’ attitudes and perspectives. And few that have not built upon the Hypothesis address tourists’ attitudes and perspectives. If increased intercultural understanding is truly to be achieved, communication between tourists and hosts must be reciprocal, and research that considers both perspectives is warranted to further understand tourism’s potential for promoting peace.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Contact Hypothesis may provide a useful starting framework from which to examine tourist-guide interactions. Incorporating additional elements (Table 1) to the framework based on a review of tourist-host interactions can expand the framework to encompass the complexities of social and cultural impacts of interactions on both tour guides and tourists.
Table 1: Summary of the Conceptual Framework for Exploring Tourist-Guide Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prejudice reduction programs</th>
<th>Tourism context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tour Characteristics:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities for intimate vs. casual contact</td>
<td>Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig &amp; Grant-Thompson, 1998; Pettigrew, 1998</td>
<td>Cohen, 1972; Heuman, 2005; Pearce, 1982a, 1994; Prosser, 1994; Smith, 1997; Tucker, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of tour group&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cohen, 1972; Smith, 1997</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tour length</td>
<td></td>
<td>Beefink, 2004; Cohen, 1983; Tucker, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group dynamics</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anastasopoulos, 1992; Gale &amp; Beeftink, 2004; Quiroga, 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation / Common Goal</td>
<td>Allport, 1954, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig &amp; Grant-Thompson, 1998; Wright et al., 1997</td>
<td>Beefink, 2004; Tucker, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour activity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Arnould &amp; Price, 1993; Beeftink, 2004; Gale &amp; Beeftink, 2004; Heuman, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourist/Guide Characteristics:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tour motivation; Guide motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pearce, 1982a, 1994; Pizam et al., 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural similarity</td>
<td>Alreshoud &amp; Koeske, 1997</td>
<td>Doxey, 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior attitudes and experiences</td>
<td>Pettigrew, 1998</td>
<td>Anastasopoulos, 1992; Pearce, 1982a, 1994; Pizam et al., 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supportive environment</td>
<td>Allport, 1979; Wittig &amp; Grant-Thompson, 1998</td>
<td>Heuman, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of humor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Howard et al., 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language barriers</td>
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<td>Cohen, 1983; Tucker, 2001</td>
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</table>

<sup>1</sup> Note: Items in italics represent additions to the framework based on tourism literature.
Study Purpose and Research Questions

The overarching purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to understand tourist and tour guide perceptions of their interactions with each other, and to discover factors that influence their interactions. This was done by exploring interactions between indigenous tour guides and foreign tourists in an ecotourism setting, and accounting for the perspectives of both tour guides and tourists.

Specifically, I sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do indigenous tour guides describe their interaction with a foreign tourist or tour group?
2. How do foreign tourists describe their interaction with an indigenous tour guide?
3. What factors influence tourist-guide interactions from a guide’s perspective?
4. What factors influence tourist-guide interactions from a tourist’s perspective?

Broader Impacts of the Proposed Research

Although tourist-guide interactions are but one factor in the larger scope of social-cultural impacts of tourism, a more in-depth look at these encounters can provide input that can be integrated within larger research agendas. Given the extent of tourism’s role in the economic development of many developing countries and the influence of tourism on a global scale, tourist-host interactions provide a vast arena for the possibility of reducing prejudice and increasing intercultural understanding. Further insight as to the nature of these interactions and their repercussions on tourists, hosts, and their respective communities, can be used by tourism planners to create contexts that facilitate positive outcomes and contribute to increased intercultural understanding and peace.
Definition of Terms

Ecotourism. The definition of ecotourism used in this study is: “Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people” (TIES, 1990).

Indigenous Tour Guide. The use of the term “guide” for this study included indigenous BriBri or Cabécar persons who directly interact with tourists by leading hikes, giving talks or demonstrations, or transporting tourists via boat. It is not limited to individuals who have received training to be a guide.

Interaction. Interaction refers to encounters between tourists and guides during or following a tour.

Research Design and Methods

I employed qualitative methods, which are inductive, in-depth, useful when attempting to describe the “meaning” of a particular experience, and can be carried out with minimal disturbance to the natural setting (Creswell, 2003; Warren & Karner, 2005). It is “emergent rather than tightly prefigured” (Creswell, 2003, p. 181); that is, during the data collection process, the research questions and data collection procedures may change or be refined. Qualitative research is also an interpretive endeavor, in which the researcher analyzes the data through a personal lens, and this lens is reflected upon
throughout the research process (Creswell, 2003). Because qualitative methods do not predefine categories, qualitative data helps to “capture and communicate someone else’s experience of the world in his or her own words” (Patton, 2002, p. 47). In addition, utilizing qualitative methods such as in-depth interviewing and participant observation enabled me to capture indigenous understanding and definitions. According to Berno (1996), qualitative methods may be easier for indigenous people to relate to, as they “[allow] subjects to identify their answers within the framework of their own culture” (p. 391).

This qualitative study involved a naturalistic inquiry. In a naturalistic inquiry, “the research takes place in real-world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest…Observations take place in real-world settings and people are interviewed with open-ended questions in places and under conditions that are comfortable for and familiar to them” (Patton, 2002, p. 39). I sought to understand a phenomenon—tour guide-tourist interaction—as it exists naturally. Specifically, I sought to understand the interactions of guides and tourists as perceived by the participants involved. This study followed data analysis procedures for a grounded theory inquiry. Data collection methods included open-ended, in-depth interviews and participant observation. Detailed information on the data collection, instrumentation, and analysis are provided later in this section.

**Study Setting**

Although Costa Rica occupies only about 0.03% of the planet’s surface (roughly the size of West Virginia) it contains nearly 4% of the total species estimated worldwide
Thus, it is not surprising that Costa Rica is well known as a nature-based and ecotourism destination. In fact, over two million international tourists visited Costa Rica in 2010 (Costa Rica Tourism Board, 2011). Over 25% of Costa Rica’s territory has been set aside as protected areas. This includes 25 national parks, 8 biological reserves, 32 protected zones, 11 forest reserves, 58 wildlife refuges, and 15 wetlands (http://www.costarica-nationalparks.com/). The Talamanca region of Southeastern Costa Rica (in Limón Province) is a gateway to the bi-national Amistad Biosphere Reserve (Costa Rica and Panama) including the Amistad International Park. Costa Rica in general and the Talamanca region specifically are well known for their extensive variety of plant, reptile, bird, land and marine mammal species. Included in this vast species biodiversity are: 850 birds, 6,000 flowering plants, 208 mammals, 200 reptiles, and 35,000 insects (Honey, 1999).

Figure 1: Map of Limón Province and Talamanca region (www.costaricamap.com)
In addition, Costa Rica is home to several indigenous peoples. Although they only make up about one percent of the total population, there are twenty-two indigenous reserves peppered throughout the country, with the majority in the South and South East regions (Minority Rights Group International, 2008). The Talamanca region, which encompasses the southern Caribbean and mountainous inlands near the Panama border, is home to two groups of indigenous people: the BriBri and Cabécar, who have survived Spanish conquest and have retained their own unique culture and languages. See Figure 2 for an overview of the Indigenous Reserves in Talamanca and surrounding areas.

Figure 2: Overview of Indigenous Reserves in Talamanca
BriBri and Cabécar Culture.

Although many BriBri and Cabécar individuals and communities participate in Christianity, wear Western clothes, and speak Spanish (and, in some cases, Caribbean English), they also retain indigenous spiritual beliefs. They believe that Sibö is their creator and the creator of all things (Palmer et al., 1993). They also believe they belong to Sibö. That is, they are considered his property; he is their “owner” and he takes care of them accordingly (Palmer et al., 1993). Sibö also established rules for interacting with the natural environment, and anyone who violates these rules is punished (Palmer et al., 1993). According to these rules, indigenous people are allowed to kill wild animals and use forest resources, but may only use what they need for survival, not for economic gain. As stated by Palmer et al. (1993): “These laws prohibit the unnecessary destruction of our forests and the animals Sibö created. That is why we feel responsible for protecting and preserving the natural resources within our Reserve” (p. 51). As such, the BriBri and Cabécar beliefs seem highly compatible with environmental conservation, and indeed, some indigenous representatives have emerged as activists; for example, in protesting oil exploration in Limón province.

BriBri and Cabécar are distinct, yet similar languages (Palmer et al., 1993). In some areas, the BriBri and Cabécar language is still spoken; however, the use of the native languages in the areas where this research took place is limited. Some indigenous persons have described feeling ashamed and being made fun of for speaking their native language as children (Palmer et al., 1993). Many have forgotten how to speak the native language, but now there is some revitalization and communities are teaching the native language to youth. For example, in one of the communities where this study took place,
they have signs posted in the BriBri language, and children are now being taught to speak it again.

**Talamanca Tourism Development.**

Talamanca is the least developed region of Costa Rica. Up until 1979, there was no road connecting the area to the rest of the country, and electricity did not reach the city of Puerto Viejo until 1986 (Greencoast.com, 2011). As a result, tourism in this region is small-scale and in the fairly early stages of development. Also in the late 1970s, the economy in Talamanca was greatly shaken by a disease affecting the cacao (chocolate) crop. Members of a local non-profit, Asociación ANAI, took the initiative to talk to local (including but not limited to indigenous) individuals and communities about potential involvement in tourism as an alternative to selling off their farms (Berg, personal communication). Although some communities were uninterested, others decided to engage in tourism as a means to enhance their income and increase levels of development in their villages. In 1989, a non-profit organization, La Asociación Talamanqueña de Ecoturismo y Conservación (ATEC), grew out of ANAI to help local people develop tourism. They ran a training session with 18 local men and women to be naturalist interpreters, and included topics of carrying capacity, communicating with tourists, and first aid. As part of this training, a local indigenous farm owner who had begun informally guiding in the 1980’s also shared his experiences with the other “trainees”. Many of these individuals are still working as guides, some of whom were interviewed for the purposes of this study.

In addition to ATEC, other national tourism organizations (e.g. the Costa Rican
Community-based Rural Tourism Association - ACTUAR); local tourism organizations (e.g., Red Talamanca); and local indigenous organizations (e.g., Red Indigena) have been created to combine marketing efforts and to help indigenous populations develop tourism. ATEC also helps market tours to indigenous areas, and organize tours with local tour guides. Indigenous tours range from village visits and stays to wildlife viewing, chocolate-making demonstrations, service projects, and adventure activities such as hiking, horseback riding, and dugout canoe trips. Although many tourism operations are controlled by indigenous people or organizations, there are also a handful of non-indigenous companies that run tours to indigenous areas and utilize indigenous guides as part of their tours. For more information on the tourism system in Talamanca, please refer to Appendix A.

I collected data from foreign tourists on tours to the indigenous reserves of the BriBri of Talamanca, and to the KéköLdi indigenous reserve, which is home to both BriBri and Cabécar peoples. Several different villages and individuals within the areas offer accommodation and/or guide services for tourists. Specifically, I interviewed guides living in the villages of Yorkín, Watsi, Bambú, KéköLdi, and in or near the town of Puerto Viejo. Figure 3 shows a close up of these areas.

Yorkín is a remote community; access is by foot (approximately two to three hours) or by dugout canoe (approximately one hour). A community group offers day tours and multi-day tours including activities such as interpretive hikes, waterfall hikes, and cultural demonstrations and discussions (e.g., roof thatching, chocolate making). They have hosted visitors since 1992. According to ATEC, at first there were only approximately six groups per year, but now ATEC sends about one group a month or up
to one group a week during the high season (Berg, personal communication). This is in addition to other groups that may book their tours through ACTUAR or another tour agency. At the time of this study, Yorkín estimated their annual visitation at approximately 520, and, in anticipation of a future increase in visitation, they have placed a cap of visitors at 700. In addition, there is at least one other family in Yorkín who hosts tourists; however, I was unable to schedule an interview with them.

Figure 3: Close-up of data collection sites

Watsi (or Uatsi) has road access and is located approximately 30 minutes from Puerto Viejo. Visitors can experience waterfall hikes, medicinal plant interpretive hikes, and craft sales. At least three local indigenous guides work in this area. Information on visitation was not available. However, they have received visitors from a number of
outside tour operators in addition to ATEC. Also, because of their location along a road, visitors can access the area more easily without prior arrangements with a tour agency.

Bambú has road access but is more remote; it is approximately one hour from Puerto Viejo. It is also the access point for the river to Yorkin. There is overnight accommodation and tourists can participate in activities such as interpretive hikes and river trips. The lodge was newly built (within just a year or two of the data collection for this study), and therefore had had only a handful of visitors, including a university group, a Native American group, and a couple of individual tourists.

KéköLdi is a small reserve off the Talamanca coast, near Puerto Viejo, with approximately 200 residents. Residents developed a tourism and conservation initiative in 1990—a research project for the reproduction of the green iguana, which is a vital component of their culture. They have also, with the help of ANAI, built a scientific tower for observing bird migration. They host half-day and full-day tours with interpretive hikes, and recently added a lodge to host student and research groups for longer periods of stay.

Known for its beaches and surfing, Puerto Viejo is the largest tourist destination in the Talamanca region. Indigenous guides operate tours to nearby KéköLdi or do interpretive hikes or demonstrations on the land surrounding their homes. There were at least three indigenous guides working individually in this area. Visitor information was not available.

Some of these tourism projects have received assistance in developing tourism from non-profits such as ATEC, ACTUAR, or ANAI. Others became involved in tourism through selling native crafts. Yet, a couple of individuals have initiated tourism
on their own, and, generally speaking, the tourism projects are owned and controlled by the indigenous people involved. However, although they operate on either indigenous reserves or their own private land, some guides receive the majority of their tourists from outside (non-indigenous, for-profit) tour operators and have less control over fees generated, etc. So, for these guides, their tourism project is greatly influenced by outside players. In addition, while most of the tour groups organized by ATEC are fairly small, generally six or less, other group sizes can be larger; e.g., up to twelve people.

**Study Sample.**

Because the focus of this study was an in-depth understanding of interactions specifically between indigenous tour guides and foreign tourists, sampling was purposeful. Purposeful sampling “focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study” (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

The sample of tourists and of indigenous tour guides was drawn from tours organized through ATEC during the summer of 2007, and included half-day, full-day, and three-day tours. Guides ranged in age from approximately 20 years to 60 years old, and included men and women. For most guide interviews, I was either introduced by a member of ATEC, or I had participated in a tour with the guide previously during an earlier phase of my research. I explained the purpose of my study and provided a copy of the consent form (written in Spanish). Copies of the consent forms are provided in Appendix B. All guides who were invited to participate in the study completed an interview but one, who, although he agreed to an interview, we were unable to find a time to meet. All guides who were invited to participate also agreed to allow me to participate
and observe in a tour. However, because of a lack of tours, I was unable to do so for three of the guides.

Tourists ranged in age from approximately 20 years to 60 years old and included a mix of men and women. At the beginning of the tours, the guides introduced me and gave me the opportunity to inform tourists of the nature of the study. All agreed to participate. At the end of the tour, I arranged times to interview interested tourists. All who agreed to meet after the tour participated in an interview. They were given a copy of the consent form (in English) prior to the interview. Most of the tourists were from the United States; however, the sample also included individuals from Austria and the United Kingdom, plus one individual from France and one from Japan, both currently residing in the United States.

As mentioned above, there is a training program for tour guides, and many indigenous guides have participated in this. However, other indigenous persons engage in guiding activities, such as doing chocolate making presentations, discussing local medicinal plants, or communicating with tourists about local tourism initiatives, without having gone through the training. To broaden the sample, I included official “guides” and also indigenous persons participating in guide activities in the sample. Furthermore, additional tour guide interviews (not affiliated with ATEC) within the research area were arranged by a member of ATEC to broaden the sample. Part of the rationale for including these tour guides was to seek confirming and disconfirming cases. Confirming cases “elaborate the findings; adding richness, depth, and credibility” (Patton, 2002, p. 239). Disconfirming cases are “a source of rival interpretations as well as a way of placing boundaries around confirmed findings” (Patton, 2002, p. 239). By seeking out
indigenous guides with different backgrounds and experiences of tourism, I was able to better define themes for analysis, and provide additional perspectives that elaborated my findings, or offered an alternate view. I then attempted to represent these alternate views in the results and interpretation.

**Design and Instrumentation**

I explored how different members (tour guides and tourists) perceive, understand, and give meaning to their experiences. Interviews and field research are well-suited to this type of inquiry (Warren & Karner, 2005). Given that this was an exploratory study that employed a naturalistic inquiry, I did not alter environments, but instead endeavored to understand the phenomenon as it exists naturally (Patton, 2002).

**In-depth Interviews.**

In order to “understand the world as seen by the respondents [and to]…capture points of view of other people without predetermining those points of view” (Patton, 2002, p. 21), I used in-depth interviews with both tourists and tour guides. A semi-structured approach was used in the in-depth interviews because I was interested in exploring a specific set of topics, while maintaining flexibility to tailor the interview for each participant. Also, since I was interested in addressing guides’ and tourists' motivations and pre-tour beliefs as well as their perceptions of their interaction, pre- and post-tour interviews were sought. Questions towards the beginning of the interview were purposefully vague to elicit topics most important and pertinent to the participant. Interviews were tape-recorded for subsequent transcription and analysis. The interview
guides are located in Appendix B. In addition, I conducted interviews with members of the tourism system in the Talamancan region (e.g., ATEC), and interviews with indigenous community leaders. These interviews helped provide an understanding of the relationship between different local tourism organizations and the communities involved in tourism, and provided contextual information to aid in data analysis.

**Participant Observation and Informal Discussions.**

I also observed tourists and tour guides during the tour to provide supplementary detailed context. This allowed me to chronicle tourist-guide interactions, group dynamics, and activities. Participant observation, which has long been used in sociology and anthropology to provide rich, detailed descriptions of situations, has been found to be useful in a tourism context (Arnould & Price, 1993; Bowen, 2002; Gale & Beeftink, 2004). According to Bowen (2002), “contact with tourists in situ seemed to be the best research situation in an intangible, inseparable, heterogeneous, perishable, high-risk, high-involvement, interdependent, dream, and fantasy world” (p. 8). Furthermore, Bowen emphasized the need for obtaining a holistic view in tourism studies, and highlighted the advantages of participant observation in doing so by allowing for “the tourism experience [to be] observed and evaluated across the whole interdependent experience and not merely with reference to isolated attributes” (p. 13). In this study, observations of the interactions, the surrounding environment, and potential influences helped not only to put the interview data into context, but also made it possible for me to contrast a tour guide’s and a tourist’s perception of the same situation.
In addition, observations during the tour were particularly helpful in focusing post-tour interviews. That is, they enabled me to refer to particular situations or actions that occurred during the tour, which in turn resulted in more specific, detailed data. Interviews alone might have missed these key situational factors. Furthermore, Warren and Karner (2005) noted that a respondent’s account of an experience may differ from a researcher’s observation of that experience. This is because observations may highlight interactions, while interview responses may also capture or indicate a person’s intentions. Since it is human nature at times for one’s actions to fall short of one’s intentions, a discrepancy might exist. Utilizing both participant observation and in-depth interviewing allowed me to explore these differences with the interviewees (Warren & Karner, 2005).

Furthermore, when appropriate, I had intended to use three types of introspection during the tour: (a) “guided introspection,” which is informally asking tourists (or tour guides) to “think aloud about themselves and their actions”; (b) “interactive introspection,” in which there is a “two-way sharing of experiences between the researcher and the respondent”; and (c) “reflexivity within research,” which entails a focus on the tourists and tour guide but also acknowledges the researcher’s presence in the context (Wallendorf & Bruck, 1993, pp. 341-342). This type of data collection can be very successful; however, Bowen (2002) noted the importance of remaining non-intrusive in order to “[allow] a natural, unforced, and detailed evaluation” (p. 13). Used unobtrusively, I had hoped these techniques would enable me to capture their thoughts during the experience itself, and provide a rich context to aid in the interpretation of the interviews and another means of triangulating the data. However, during the tours, I did not find opportunities for guided introspection and interactive introspection, and felt that
attempts to do so would have been unnatural and forced. Therefore, I decided to focus on using my observations to focus interviews taking place after the tour. I did, however, use reflexivity within research by recording my own experiences in my field notes, along with observations of tour guide-tourist interactions. This helped inform my analysis and acknowledge my role in the context.

Data Collection

Data Collection took place in two phases. During the first phase, which lasted two weeks, I engaged in participant observation to gain familiarity with the setting and to meet potential contacts for interviewing and for recruiting participants. For a detailed account of this phase, please refer to Appendix C. The second phase took place over a period of two months. I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with indigenous tour guides and tourists, and engaged in participant observation of tours. Participant observation provided detailed contextual information as well as a means to focus the interviews and follow up on specific experiences that took place during the tour. However, logistics limited my ability to adhere to the original research design in some cases. For instance, some guides participated in two interviews—one prior to my participation in the tour, and the second following the tour. However, others only participated in one interview—either before or after an observed tour. And, some guides were interviewed, but I was unable to participate in their tour.

Guide interviews were conducted in either Spanish or English, with the exception of one interview conducted in a mixture of the two languages. For interviews in Spanish, I worked with a translator. The translator was recommended by my main contact at
ATEC, and I had been able to meet her during the first phase of research. Although born and raised in the United States, she has been living in Costa Rica for approximately 20 years, speaks fluent English and Spanish, is familiar with local dialects, is a member of ATEC, and was previously acquainted with the guides interviewed in this study. For the interviews in English, guides spoke Caribbean English. In total, I conducted interviews with 11 different guides in 7 different tourism enterprises; most of these were individual, one-on-one interviews, however, one was a group interview consisting of four individuals involved in a community tourism project.

In terms of the foreign tourists, I was only able to secure post-tour interviews. In total, I conducted 13 interviews with tourists. Ten of the interviews were individual, one-on-one interviews, two interviews consisted of couples traveling together, and one interview was a group interview consisting of three colleagues traveling together. All of these interviews were conducted in English, and all interviewees spoke English fluently. I transcribed the interviews and imported the transcriptions into QSR NVIVO along with field notes from participant observation. To maintain confidentiality, I did not include the names of participants or references to other guides in the transcriptions. All translations are provided verbatim (except where names are removed); hence, they reflect the idiosyncrasies of the local dialect (e.g., Caribbean English).

**Data Analysis**

Grounded theory utilizes specific, procedural strategies for data analysis (Charmaz, 1983), including line-by-line coding of the transcribed interviews and field notes. In this phase, I allowed the data to drive the analysis by “[looking] for what [I
could define and discover in the data," and “[making] the codes fit the data, rather than forcing the data into codes” (Charmaz, 1983, pp. 112-113). Throughout this process, bits of data were constantly compared to help elucidate and develop codes. Once a set of codes was developed and selected, the data was revisited and recoded according to the selected codes. This is known as focused coding; its purpose “is to build and clarify a category by examining all the data it covers and variations from it” (Charmaz, 1983, p. 117). I also wrote memos, or “written elaborations of ideas about the data and the coded categories” (Charmaz, 1983, p. 120). This process raises the data to an analytical level. I wrote two types of memos: initial memos, which were utilized to describe the codes and categories; and integrating memos, which helped to explore relationships between the categories (Charmaz, 1983). For grounded theory analysis, sampling and data collection continue until a point of saturation is reached; that is, until interviews add no new information about a category, its properties, and its relationship to other categories.

Logistics, however, restricted this ability, as there were a limited number of tours during the time available for data collection. I utilized QSR International software to organize the data into categories and related themes. To enhance validity, two other researchers coded some of the data, and discrepancies were discussed and restructured accordingly. I invited the interview translator to participate in coding as well, but this did not materialize.

**Positionality and Reflexivity**

My personal life experiences (see Appendix D for additional elaboration on life experiences) include working as a wilderness tour guide and conducting research with
whitewater guides in Fiji. These experiences may be advantageous in understanding aspects of employment as a tour guide, but may also elicit biases about tour guides, their roles, and their interactions with tourists. Hence, I attempted to be aware of and minimize my potential biases throughout data collection and analysis as I strove to: (a) understand different individuals’ perceptions of their own experiences and (b) relate my findings to the reader.

Specifically, during data collection and analysis, I kept a journal, and included observations of potential biases based on my background and interests. I also developed a manuscript documenting my experiences for the first phase of data collection, and a video reflecting on my experiences during the second phase of data collection. Please refer to Appendix C to view these materials. Throughout the analysis and writing of this manuscript, I referred back to the journal and materials to aid in my interpretation, with the goal of accurately reflecting the perceptions of the interviewees. Also, while writing field notes during participant observation, I included my own thoughts about the interaction in a separate space from the description of the interaction. Thus, later, I was able to consider those thoughts in the particular context from which they arose. As much as possible during participant observation, I tried to capture direct quotes from conversations occurring during interactions. I included observations on my own role during the interaction and, on some occasions, asked for feedback about my role as part of the interviews with guides and tourists. In addition, during interviews I was careful to state questions generally, and not to lead the interviewees towards a particular response.

Furthermore, I required the assistance of a translator for some interviews. This may have resulted in another form of bias and a loss of nuance in the data (Patton, 2002).
References


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Orientation to Chapter 2

Chapter 2 is written as a stand-alone manuscript to be later submitted in consideration for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. In terms of the dissertation research questions, the purpose of Chapter 2 is to examine the following:

1. How do indigenous tour guides describe their interaction with a foreign tourist or tour group?

2. How do foreign tourists describe their interaction with an indigenous tour guide?

The purpose of the overall study was to: (a) understand tourist and tour guide perceptions of their interactions with each other, and (b) discover factors they feel influence their interactions. Although a conceptual framework was utilized to address factors that influence interactions, it was not as relevant for to the research questions addressed in Chapter 2 and thus is not reviewed here.
CHAPTER 2
TOURISTS AND INDIGENOUS TOUR GUIDES: AN EXPLORATION OF ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

Tourism to indigenous lands has become increasingly prevalent, and can be a main source of income for indigenous people. Tourism also brings people from different cultures and backgrounds into direct and often close contact with each other, and provides opportunities for exchange between them (Chambers, 2000). Such contact between indigenous people and tourists can have positive and negative implications on host communities and individuals. For example, tourism can be a welcome means of sharing knowledge between cultures (Baez, 1996; Beeftink, 2004; Greathouse-Amador, 2005; Guerrón-Montero, 2006; Wearing & Larsen, 1996), and positive interactions with tourists can lead to an increase in self-esteem and cultural pride for hosts (Beeftink, 2004; Stevens, 1991). On the other hand, hosts may feel objectified by tourists (Cohen, 1983; Mowforth & Munt, 1998), or contact with tourists may result in unwanted changes in local beliefs or cultural norms (Chambers, 2000; Wearing & Larsen, 1996).

As tourism to indigenous lands has increased, more indigenous people have become involved in tourism by working as tour guides. It is widely recognized that tour guides play an important role in a tour’s success and serve a variety of functions. Cohen (1985) developed a framework to encompass the various roles of a tour guide. This model distinguishes between “outer-directed” roles, in which needs must be met using resources outside of the tour group; and “inner-directed” roles, in which needs are met
using resources from within the tour group (Cohen, 1985 cited in Weiler & Davis, 1993, pp. 91-92). Cohen suggested tour guides working in new, small-scale types of tourism engage in both leadership and mediatory roles. As group leaders, they provide direction and access, oversee the safety and security of tourists, facilitate group dynamics, and entertain. Guides also mediate between tourists and the local community and environment, providing organization, information, and interpretation. A similar finding was presented by McDonnell (2001) who found the mediatory role of tour guides in Australia, especially transferring cultural understanding of the host culture to tourists, to be particularly important. Focusing on the niche market of ecotourism, Weiler and Davis (1993) also examined the role of tour guides. They found two additional roles particular to ecotourism; that is, guides are motivators of environmentally responsible behavior on-site and they serve as environmental interpreters, encouraging tourists to develop a long-term environmental ethic.

Using participant observation and interviews with indigenous guides and park service members, Howard et al. (2001) specifically examined whether the guide roles developed by Cohen (1985) and Weiler and Davis (1993) were applicable to indigenous tour guides. Indeed, indigenous tour guides were found to engage in many of these roles, including providing organization, safety, and maintaining group cohesion and visitor interest in the tour through the use of humor. The mediatory roles, i.e., cultural interpreter and teacher, were found to be particularly important for indigenous tour guides. In addition, indigenous guides exhibited resource management roles; they motivated visitors to reduce on-site impacts (e.g., reminded visitors to respect the site), and stressed the sacredness of the land and the importance of the site to the local culture.
However, Howard et al. (2001) emphasized differences between ecotourism guides and indigenous guides. Indigenous guides focused on interpreting their cultural heritage and indigenous culture rather than a traditional model of environmental conservation. They also suggested that cultural exchange with tourists was an important aspect of tours for the guides because doing so helps to dispel misconceptions of indigenous culture.

Gurung et al. (1996) also specifically considered roles of indigenous tour guides. They focused on identifying training needs of indigenous tour guides to minimize negative outcomes for both tourists and host communities, and considered the main duty of the tour guide “to create a social climate and environmental understanding under which both the visitor and the visited will benefit in the long term” (p. 114-5). They found that tourists value not only the organizational and safety roles of guides, but also the more communicative and qualitative roles of interpreter and information provider; and recommended training to include elements of communication, social facilitation, cross-cultural understanding, and impacts of tourism, as well as management, leadership, and safety.

Beeftink (2004) explored indigenous tour guide perceptions of ecotourism in Fiji. She found that they acted as mediators by leading tourists through welcoming ceremonies and providing cultural and environmental interpretation. In addition, Beeftink found that tour guides enjoyed their interactions with tourists, and occasionally experienced continuing friendships, which contributed to their job satisfaction.

In terms of tourist-guide interactions, Pearce (1984) found that guides who were given flexibility to develop their own presentations were more likely to remain motivated and interested in their jobs. Tourists, on the other hand, experienced significant
emotional impacts from their interaction with guides, which had a positive influence on their satisfaction. In addition, Pearce (1982b) noted that tourists' experience with a particular tour guide or service personnel may extend beyond their perception of that individual and influence their perception of the hosts in general.

Yet, throughout the literature, the role of the tour guide has been examined mainly through the lens of the tour guide and, apart from considering tourist satisfaction, has not recognized a tourist’s role in the guide-tourist interaction. In addition, little attention has been given to a tourist’s perception of the structure and meaning of host-tourist intercultural interactions (Yoo & Sohn, 2003). Cohen’s (1985) scheme was developed with respect to tour guides who were not necessarily part of the community or culture they were representing. This approach is problematic because in many indigenous tours the boundary between “guide” and “host” is blurry, with community members serving as “guides” and others leading presentations, giving talks, etc. In these cases, the indigenous tour guide is also a host, not just a mediator. Also, as Weiler and Davis (1993) pointed out, Cohen’s (1985) roles focus on individual and group needs of the tourists, and do not consider the needs of the local community or environment (p. 92), all of which are important if tourism is to be sustainable in the long term.

**Study Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to understand tourist and tour guide perceptions of their interactions with each other. This was done by exploring interactions between indigenous tour guides and tourists and accounting for the perspectives of both tour guides and tourists.
The data for this manuscript was drawn from a much larger study. The overarching purpose of the larger study was to examine descriptions, facilitators and barriers to indigenous tour guide-tourist interactions. To address the purpose of this study, I answered the following questions:

1. How do indigenous tour guides describe their interaction with a foreign tourist or tour group?

2. How do foreign tourists describe their interaction with an indigenous tour guide?

Methods

I employed qualitative methods, which are inductive, in-depth, useful when attempting to describe the “meaning” of a particular experience, and can be carried out with minimal disturbance to the natural setting (Creswell, 2003; Warren & Karner, 2005). Because qualitative methods do not predefine categories, qualitative data helps to “capture and communicate someone else’s experience of the world in his or her own words” (Patton, 2002, p. 47). In addition, utilizing qualitative methods such as in-depth interviewing and participant observation enabled me to capture indigenous understanding and definitions. According to Berno (1996), qualitative methods may be easier for indigenous people to relate to, as they “[allow] subjects to identify their answers within the framework of their own culture (p. 391).

This qualitative study involved a naturalistic inquiry. In a naturalistic inquiry, “the research takes place in real-world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest…Observations take place in real-world settings and people are interviewed with open-ended questions in places and under conditions that are comfortable for and familiar to them” (Patton, 2002, p. 39). A naturalistic inquiry
was chosen because I sought to capture the meaning of an interaction as perceived by the participants involved without altering or manipulating the interaction.

**Setting and Sample**

This study was conducted in the Talamanca region of Costa Rica. Costa Rica contains nearly four percent of the total species estimated worldwide (InBio, 2011), and is well known as a nature-based and ecotourism destination. In fact, over two million international tourists visited Costa Rica in 2010 (Costa Rica Tourism Board, 2011). In addition, Costa Rica is home to several indigenous peoples, making up about one percent of the total population, and there are twenty-two indigenous reserves peppered throughout the country, with the majority in the South and South East regions (Minority Rights Group International, 2008). The Talamanca region, which encompasses the southern Caribbean and mountainous inlands near the Panama border, is home to two groups of indigenous people: the BriBri and the Cabécar, who have survived Spanish conquest and have retained their own unique culture and languages.

In the Talamanca region, tourism is small-scale and in the fairly early stages of development. Some of the few remaining indigenous populations who live on reserves within protected lands have begun to utilize tourism as a means to enhance their income and increase levels of development in their villages. National tourism organizations (e.g. *the Costa Rican Community-based Rural Tourism Association - ACTUAR*), local tourism organizations (e.g., *Red Talamanca*), and local indigenous organizations (e.g., *Red Indigena*) have been created to combine marketing efforts and to help indigenous populations control tourism. A BriBri indigenous group owns and operates an
educational center, *Finca Educativa*, which hosts tourists and offers training and educational programs for locals. Other local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), i.e., *La Asociación Talamanqueña de Ecoturismo y Conservación* (ATEC), help market tours to indigenous areas, and organize tours with local tour guides. Tours range from village visits and stays to wildlife viewing, service projects, and adventure activities such as horseback riding and dugout canoe trips. Although many tourism operations are controlled by indigenous people or organizations, there are also a handful of non-indigenous companies which run tours to indigenous areas and utilize indigenous guides as part of their tours.

I collected data from foreign tourists on tours to the indigenous reserves of the BriBri of Talamanca, and to the KékóLdi indigenous reserve, which is home to both BriBri and Cabécar peoples. Several different villages and individuals within the mountainous BriBri indigenous reserve of Talamanca offer accommodation and/or guide services for tourists. KékóLdi is a small reserve off the Talamanca coast with approximately 200 residents. They developed their own tourism and conservation initiative in 1990—a research project for the reproduction of the green iguana, which is a vital component of their culture. They host half-day and full-day tours, as well as student and research groups for longer periods of stay. The sample of tourists and of indigenous tour guides was drawn from tours organized through ATEC during the summer of 2007, and included half-day, full-day, and three-day tours. Additional tour guide interviews within the two indigenous reserves were arranged by a member of ATEC to broaden the sample.

There is a training program for tour guides, and many indigenous guides have
participated in this. However, other indigenous persons engage in guiding activities, such as doing chocolate making presentations, discussing local medicinal plants, or communicating with tourists about local tourism initiatives, without having gone through the training. To broaden the sample, I also included guides who had received training and indigenous persons who had not received training yet participated in guide activities.

**Data Collection**

On-site data collection took place in two phases. During the first phase, which lasted two weeks, I engaged in participant observation to gain familiarity with the setting and to meet potential contacts for interviewing and for recruiting participants. The second phase took place over a period of two months. I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with indigenous tour guides and tourists, and engaged in participant observation of tours. Participant observation provided detailed contextual information as well as a means to focus the interviews and follow up on specific experiences that took place during the tour. Some guides participated in two interviews – one prior to my participation in the tour, and the second following the tour. Others only participated in one interview—either before or after an observed tour. And, some guides were interviewed, but I was unable to participate in his tour. In terms of the foreign tourists, I was only able to secure post-tour interviews. The interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. A translator assisted with the interviews conducted in Spanish. I transcribed the interviews and imported the transcriptions into QSR NVIVO along with field notes from participant observation.
Data Analysis

I analyzed the data by using procedures for grounded theory. Grounded theory utilizes specific, procedural strategies for data analysis (Charmaz, 1983), including line-by-line coding of the transcribed interviews and field notes. In this phase, the researcher allowed the data to drive the analysis by “[looking] for what [she could] define and discover in the data,” and “[making] the codes fit the data, rather than forcing the data into codes” (Charmaz, 1983, pp. 112-113). For instance, although I had reviewed literature pertaining to tourist-host interactions prior to collecting data, I remained open to the possibilities of the data without reference to prior research or attempting to place data into pre-established codes. Throughout this process, bits of data were constantly compared to help elucidate and develop codes.

Once a set of codes was developed and selected, the data was revisited and recoded according to the selected codes. This is known as focused coding (Charmaz, 1983). I also wrote memos to describe the codes and categories, and integrated them to explore relationships between the categories (Charmaz, 1983). To enhance validity, two other researchers coded some of the data, and discrepancies were discussed and restructured accordingly.

After the data was structured into codes, and categories were developed, I reviewed the literature related to tour guide roles (e.g., Cohen, 1985; Howard et al., 2001; Weiler & Davis, 1993). Subsequently, I compared my results to the models presented by those researchers and formulated an interpretation of the data. Although I tried to accurately capture the perceptions of the participants, it is important to emphasize that the interpretation of the data which follows also reflects my personal experience and
perceptual lens. In addition, these results are not meant to be generalized; although they may be informative for other small-scale ecotourism enterprises.

**Results and Interpretation**

The data revealed several types of roles and relationships enacted by tourists and indigenous tour guides. Consistent with the tour guide literature, guide roles included being caretakers, access providers, teachers, and conservation advocates. In particular, results from this study confirmed aspects of Cohen’s (1985) model, which included leadership and mediatory roles (i.e., guides provide direction and access for tourists, take charge of tourist safety and comfort, and, provide information and interpretation). In addition, results that reflect a tour guide’s role as conservation advocate corroborate Weiler and Davis’ (1993) findings of the tour guide as a motivator of environmentally responsible behavior.

Results also revealed that tourists have roles, such as being a “student.” In some cases, however, the student/teacher relationship is reversed; guides become students as they learn from tourists. The data also revealed that some perceive that the responsibility for making the interaction and the tour a success belongs to both parties and, perhaps as a result, deeper relationships are formed. For instance, guides and tourists may become friends or even view each other as family; guides and tourists may be enablers and sources of motivation for each other; and, tourists can be supporters of indigenous guides, communities, and environments.
Guides as Caretakers and Access Providers

Guides are leaders who provide tourists with an experience. As discussed by Cohen (1985), a primary role of the guide, particularly in nature-based settings, is to provide access and direction for tourists. In this study, guides provide tourists with access to indigenous reserves as well as organization and direction by leading a hike or doing an activity or demonstration. As a tourist explained:

What I expect from a guide is to be able to, you know, get myself to that geographical location and then the guide takes me into a more focused area and focuses that time on those events that I’m interested in and that this guide is offering a service for.

Guides allow the tourist to experience both the jungle environment and aspects of indigenous life through various means. For instance, guides let tourists experience the environment simply by walking through the forest. They also may enrich the tourist’s experience by picking fruits to eat, or cutting open a coconut to drink along the way. In addition, guides set clear expectations about the content of the tour, particularly pertaining to wildlife viewing; both priming tourists for what they may see, and warning that there are no guarantees for seeing specific animals:

I’m not going to say to you, we go and find Toucans. We don’t know if we going to find. You have to be concrete: they are free, they are maybe here today, I’m not going to guarantee you that we going to see, but let’s go.

As part of their leadership role, guides are responsible for tourists’ safety and comfort (Cohen, 1985). Results from this study also indicate this role. Guides may provide gear which helps tourists travel more easily and comfortably. They also give safety precautions to tourists, warning them about potential hazards or poisonous plants or animals, and may help tourists navigate tricky trails. As a guide explained:
I treat them as if it was my own daughter, or my own children that were on there with me, so if there’s any part of the trail that I see is muddy, or something, and that they could slip, I give them my hand, I warn them about anything they shouldn’t touch and stuff like that, as if it was my own flesh and blood.

Plus, guides recognize the need to set clear expectations regarding the physical aspects of the tour:

…Someone [may] have different expectation, and sometimes they are maybe not in condition physically, so you take them on a hike and is a little too heavy, so they get a little upset. But those are things that we have to learn how to be clear, and if I see you a little too heavy, I would say to you, Hey this is the trail, this is the condition, so I make you aware of that, and it’s not a surprise for you, and it will be fine for everybody.

But according to tourists, guides may not always communicate this successfully, as in the following case:

[The guide] said, was there any problem with me hiking for two hours, and I said…No, I hike for two or three hours a lot, in San Francisco, three times a week. But it’s usually flat, no humidity, nice perfect weather for it, nice breeze, and there’s no mud, you know. So, I guess I, it was my fault, well, it was my fault and his fault possibly a little bit, ‘cause that steep climb plus the mud and the humidity, was way too much for me. I mean, if it was gonna be like that for, on and off for an hour, I would, I was gonna have a lot of trouble. So it wasn’t a normal hike.

Despite the occasional miscommunication, tourists trusted guides with their safety: “I definitely trusted him to not like, lead us into some…patch of like, deadly leaves [or] plants....” And, for the most part, tourists felt that guides were sensitive to their needs:

I was thoroughly amazed that, how cognizant the guide was, without actually saying or doing anything of the…unspoken needs of the other clients, and what he had in mind and how the day was going…and the pace. He was just really in touch with understanding people and what their needs were.

Other challenges were noted as well. Some tourists felt rushed during the tour and wanted either more information—“it was a little rushed. We could’ve spent a little more
time on explaining things”—or a slower walking pace—“I love how they always do this. They say take your time and then they book on ahead.” Despite these challenges, though, it is evident that both guides and tourists identify the roles of caretaker and pace setter as part of the guide function, regardless of how successful they are in those roles.

**Teacher/Student Roles**

A good chunk of the data depicts the indigenous guides as teachers and the tourists as students. However, this relationship is more complex than a simple one-way flow of information from guides to tourists. Guides not only rely on tourists to take an active role in the learning process, but also seek to learn from tourists as well.

**Guides as Teachers.**

Throughout the literature, tour guides are referred to as information providers (Cohen, 1985; Gurung et al., 1996; Howard et al., 2001; Weiler & Davis, 1993). The results in this study proved to be no exception. In fact, one of the main aspects of relationships described by tour guides and tourists relates to information provision, although I believe it is more accurately represented as “teacher/student.” Tourists described guides as knowledgeable: “[the guide was] a gentleman that grew up in the rainforest, knew every inch of the land that we were walking, and had an amazing knowledge of different things to use plants for, and shared it.” Tourists also expressed that guides provide lots of relevant information. Likewise, guides portrayed themselves as knowledgeable; however, they also acknowledged the limits of their knowledge to tourists. As one guide
explained:

As an indigenous person, my knowledge is indigenous knowledge. I know the names of plants and trees and everything, but the indigenous names for them. I don’t necessarily know their family names or their scientific names or that sort of thing.

During a tour, guides teach several topics: they explain about local plants and animals, talk about their community and the history of the area, and convey indigenous culture to tourists. As part of this, guides feel they are able to open tourists’ minds to their way of life. This goes beyond mere information provision and enters the realm of teaching.

I really enjoy this transmitting of what we have and how we live. I feel people probably come down here with a really limited vision of how other people in other places live, and I really enjoy opening up that door in people’s minds so that they can see another way of living.

In all cases, guides recognize the responsibility they have to be honest and to give accurate information:

We still have the responsibility that tourists should go home satisfied and with information [that] is true, not just that going there, that is a bird, but that may be a … you say something else but since you think its tourism oh you can say anything, so that responsibility that you have to be true…

Cohen (1985) discussed the use of fabrication by tour guides. In this study, guides denounced being untruthful to tourists, although some accused others (mainly non-indigenous, but some indigenous guides as well) of doing so. For instance, an indigenous guide explained:

One day I walked over here to the house and I saw one of these [non-indigenous guides] over here by the apple trees. He was with some people from Spain. I was inside of myself, I was angry. Here he is, lying to these people. What he was sharing with them wasn’t true. How can he be a guide and just go around making
stuff up and lying to people?

Guides use a variety of techniques to teach tourists. At perhaps the most basic level, guides merely allow tourists to experience the jungle environment and indigenous life for themselves. For example, one tourist described his experience with a guide as follows:

…There are tour guides that want you to be totally focused on the science and the botany and the biology and all that kind of stuff, and others that want, just you to have a wild experience and go slip sliding around, and I think the guide today just basically wanted us to experience his culture and that’s what we did…

Guides also recognize that tourists sign up for a tour looking for a direct experience that engages their bodies as well as their minds:

If people that come to this area…and take out from that touristy vacation time to come here, specifically to…the Indian reserve, I feel that’s because they have a specific, precise interest in experiencing in their own physical body, what it means to be in the jungle…

In this sense, guides provide more than information—they provide an *experience*. One can see how this method of teaching follows easily from the guide role as caretaker, through providing direction and access. Although merely providing an experience may not seem like teaching in the traditional sense, in experiential education, letting the experience speak for itself is referred to as a facilitation technique (Priest, & Gass, 1997). For instance, tourists may learn about other ways of life simply through being in that environment. As one tourist explained:

Just experience, you see that on TV, you know, all the stuff, people living in nature, without technology, or very little technology, and it’s one thing to see it on a documentary, but it’s another thing to, to be there and…to really live it, and just kind of experience the people’s sense of generosity and giving…
And this direct experience may allow for greater learning than can be captured through other means, as described by this tourist: “You can get information from websites, or on the internet, but going to the real experience is more useful or precious.” The guide is the agent that makes this experience possible.

Guides also use other methods to teach tourists about the natural environment and indigenous culture. Consistent with Howard et al.’s. (2001) findings, instead of just relying solely on a verbal lecture to present the information and expecting tourists to listen, guides use a variety of techniques to draw tourists' interest and engage all of their senses: “I share with people not only the information, but when there is an opportunity to touch or feel, smell things; I allow [tourists] to do that as well.” Specifically, guides imitate animal sounds, both to try to attract animals for viewing and to teach tourists about sounds in the jungle; they pick fruits for tourists to eat; and they pass plants around the group to smell or to touch. They also physically point out wildlife in the area or call tourists’ attention to animal sounds. According to one tourist:

[The guide] could’ve just taken us through the walk and we just could’ve just looked at all kinds of things, and you know, we would’ve picked up certain things here and there, and asked a few questions, but we really wouldn’t have gotten anything. So he took the time to actually point out the things…

To help tourists understand the relationship of indigenous people with the environment, guides explain by demonstrating, using hand gestures, or by using analogies that tourists can relate to. This was also found to be the case for indigenous guides in Australia (Howard et al., 2001). For example, one guide describes how he and others explained the forest to tourists as a supermarket:

I always say to the people, to make them think a little the way they think, that for example, the forest is our supermarket. So, ooh a
supermarket, it’s like funny, like joke. But it is not joke, it’s the truth. We depend on that. And we learn how to harvest, when to harvest, and where to find, so we share that. And this is like for them, Oh this is your supermarket, so it’s not anymore the forest.

As in the above example, explaining by analogy and using other teaching techniques are often combined with the use of humor. Here, another guide describes how he jokes around with tourists as he teaches them about plant life:

I like to goof around with people and joke around a little bit. …I’ll cut off a piece of that [plant] and say that this is our bubble gum, and I’ll take a little piece of the bark and I’ll chew on it, you know, and so people will go, Oh, they want a piece and they all start chewing on it, and it is super bitter, so as they’re chewing on it, first they’re like, Oh, this is, and then (screaming) Aaaah!

Howard et al. (2001) likewise found humor to be a vital technique used by indigenous guides, both to relieve tension and to revitalize tourist interest.

Guides may also engage tourists actively in the learning process. Instead of giving all the information upfront, they may ask tourists what they think the answer is; encouraging them to think for themselves much like a teacher may do with students in a classroom. In this case, as captured in my field notes, a guide was explaining about cacao (chocolate) plantations:

[The guide] doesn’t say cacao, but waits for [the tourists] to guess what it is after he describes a bit… “It is something that people like to eat, drink, put in ice cream, what do you think it is?”

Lastly, some guides may sing and do prayers for tourists. This method allows tourists to experience sacred and spiritual aspects of indigenous life, and, as I witnessed, can be particularly powerful and moving. As one tourist expressed:

When [the guide] was standing on the rock, singing that blessing in BriBri language and later telling us that it was a blessing for all of us, that was definitely, not only the most important thing, the highlight of my day, but definitely of the past week and a half that
I’ve been here, for sure.

This particular guide’s singing was also a highlight for me, as I described in my field notes following the first time I heard him sing:

His voice was deep and expressive. It resonated within the small building, and his body moved with the music, enhancing its expressiveness. The experience touched me in a way that only music can, affecting not my brain, but some part of my soul in a way that is indescribable. For those moments, I lost perception of where I was; for that brief time, the only thing that existed for me was the sound flowing through my being. Although I’d had many enjoyable experiences within Bri Bri territory, this was the most intensely moving to date for me personally.

All of the results shared above reveal that guides and tourists identify a guide’s role as a teacher. However, tourists also adopt the role of “student.”

Tourists as Students.

Ecotourists often seek to learn about the natural environment and/or the people who inhabit it. The results of this study reveal many examples of tourists learning from guides. As one tourist explained:

Although you can get to a geographical location, you may not be able to find and learn, in a short period of time, that’s the key, a short period of time, a lot of the information that you really wanted to learn about. So, for example, with the walk that I did with [Guide], I could’ve spent probably three months down here, and only accumulated about half of the information that I’d learned from [Guide] in just four hours.

Tourists learn not only information about plants and animals, but also an appreciation for different styles of life, or ways one can change his/her own life to be more rewarding.

For instance, one guide expressed:

[Tourists have] gone away with, much more knowledgeable about
the reality of the situation here, and a little bit more about the
culture, and many of them have gone back to other parts of the
world, or of the country, to help other indigenous groups, or needy
people.

Tourists also recognize larger implications of their learning, either at the personal or
societal level, as seen in the following quotes:

So that was also interesting that, let’s me know that I’m not alone
and that I can be, I can adapt wherever I go. Which…it’s important
to know that I can just, as long as I maintain the basics, and keep
ture and in touch to the earth, I think, no matter where you are,
everything’s fine, it works out. So that was, that was a very good
thing, and that’s a lesson that I’ll hopefully take with me, for the
rest of my life.

…It helps you be a better world citizen, to try and understand what
other social and communical [sic] struggles that people in the
world have. It helps you be less self-centered.

Results also demonstrate that guides view tourists as students. Guides describe
tourists as being interested and having an interest in the indigenous perspective. As one
guide noted:

…Whatever I share with people, they appreciate it and they get
excited about it, and I feel that…appreciation by them, basically
they don’t know anything when they come here, so when I show
them a banana plant or a yucca plant or a plantain, anything,
they’re excited about it…

In addition, tourists ask questions and pay attention (or sometimes not—see below).

**Challenges to Teacher/Student Roles.**

There are also challenges in the teacher/student relationship, which may limit
learning potential. For example, as tourists are learning about and experiencing a new
environment, they may be hesitant to eat fruit, touch an iguana, or swim under a waterfall,
and wait for the guide to allay their fears. This type of challenge is easily overcome by
the guide leading by example or reassuring tourists it is safe to proceed. Another
closest. Another challenge in the teacher/student relationship may occur if tourists come in to the tour with
preconceived ideas they wish to confirm, or are skeptical of the information guides
provide. Although in such cases tourists may not learn or accept specifically what the
guides teach, they may yet come away with new knowledge or ideas.

A more difficult challenge for guides is when tourists do not pay attention. Some
guides expressed aversion for tourists who fail to pay attention: “something that I don’t
like is when I’m talking…and they’re not paying attention or they’re being disrespectful
in some way.” Here, guides recognize a breakdown in the teacher/student relationship,
and feel that tourists are not adequately performing their role as students. Yet, data from
this study suggests that at times, even though it may appear that a tourist is not paying
attention, she or he may later recall specific information provided by the guide. Also, at
times, tourists may simply pay more attention to some aspects of the tour than others,
depending on their own interests—similar to a student with selective learning.

There are also examples demonstrating that not all guide/tourist relationships can
be categorized as those of “teacher/student.” In some cases, tourists may simply not
desire to be taught. As one tourist indicated, “I’m a dreamer…I don’t even need the
explanation, I’m just happy walking along and looking at the nature.” Alternatively, a
guide suggested:

Of ten [tourists], four will be really, really interested and motivated
and, and then the others, some of them will be really unhappy that
they’re here, and others will just be sort of neutral, not really
interested but not really saying anything. I’ve taken people on
hikes and stuff, and given explanations about things, and I think to
myself as I’m doing it, how can they be here and not be interested?

Thus, for these guides, it is not simply enough for tourists to listen and to be respectful
during a tour. It is also important for tourists to show interest and to actively participate. In most cases, for this study, guides view the student role as active rather than passive, and prefer a mutual exchange during a tour.

**Two-way Interaction/Exchange.**

There are several ways in which the teacher/student roles represent more than a simple one-way flow of information from guides to tourists. First, guides rely on tourists to be involved to make the tour interesting and successful. Here, a guide describes the difficulties encountered when tourists do not show an interest and engage in the activity:

> And there is also, not everybody is just sweet and beautiful, you know, some people are like, they don’t react to you. If I move my hand and you look there, and if I don’t move my hand then you don’t look, so they don’t have, they expect you to do everything. And sometimes you go there and you don’t see a Toucan, so you feel helpless. So, Did you enjoy? [I] don’t know. So, the tours take two or three hours to make that loop, and since we don’t see much and there was no question and there was no interest, so we make it in one hour and a half. So, shit. I finish now, but you pay me for three hours. So what I do, I don’t know what to do now to wake you up and say ok.

For some, it is the tourists’ interest that enables guides to talk. As one guide explained:

> …Our interest is always to share with people, and that people learn what it means to live right with nature. So when people come and are interested in that, I’ll give them everything they want. I’ll explain and I’ll show and share, but if I see that they’re not interested, then I shut down.

One way in which tourists express their interest is by asking questions. By asking questions, tourists not only help guides to share their knowledge, but also elicit guides’ motivation and satisfaction: “I like to be with people…that want to be here, that enjoy being here, that love nature, that see the beauty here, that feel good here, that ask
questions and want to know stuff; that makes me feel good.” However, some guides also feel it is their responsibility to engage tourists, not the other way around. As one guide expressed:

That’s what I learned [during guide training]; that you have to be friendly and animated, because if you’re serious and like, quiet, people aren’t going to want to come back because you’re not talking to them…If I don’t speak as a guide, you’re not going to talk to me.

While many guides feel it is a tourist’s responsibility to ask questions during a tour, some tourists also recognize their own responsibility in the interaction to make it successful. Specifically, tourists feel they should be responsible for having a good time and for gaining the most from a tour, as described below:

But it’s not the guide’s responsibility to guarantee you a good time. If you want to see it, you’re welcome, come. If you don’t want to see it, don’t come. But, don’t make it the guide’s responsibility to guarantee that you have a good time.

Another tourist explained his role this way:

…At the same time, we really have to be very educated travelers, be, you know, I guess be able to get all the good things from the community and not just hang out and say hi to other people homes.

In addition, guides tailor tours based on a tourist’s interest, both in content and in length. Most guides maintained a flexible approach to tours; some spending an hour or all day for the same price depending on tourist interest, or focusing on specific wildlife interests:

So I left it open for people to just ask what they wanted to ask. They didn’t even walk twenty meters, because there are plants that have smells, there are plants that don’t have smells, there are plants that sleep. It was four hours, and all they walked was a tiny little bit.
Most of the explanation is the way the indigenous people are interacting with what is there in the forest. So that’s, that’s my job, depends what they want. Sometimes they want just to go see birds, and then I just dedicate time to look for birds.

For multi-day tours, tourists are often given choices regarding the types of activities or presentations they take part in. Guides in these situations rely on tourists to express what they would like to do. For example, when I asked a guide what we would be doing next, he replied: “I don’t know. I am the guide, but I need to know what the desire is.” At times, tourists even take the initiative to suggest an activity to a guide. For example, a guide described an interaction with an overnight tourist: “And afterwards, she came and had dinner. We ate, and then she asked, do you want to go for a walk”? Despite the flexibility afforded tourists, guides nevertheless maintain control over tour specifics, such as which trails to follow, and may vary routes to prevent their own boredom.

Yet there are different tourist views regarding a tourist’s role in the decision-making associated with a tour. Overall, none of the tourists seemed to like scripted tours:

And I hate tours where you’ve got a script again, where if you look to your left, you’ll see this, if you look to your right, you’ll see this. It’s got to be spontaneous and genuine based on who is taking you around, but it can’t, and it can’t be scripted by a tour group. However, some tourists appreciated guides who “read” them and catered to their interests, while others claimed that tourists should take a back seat in the decision-making and let the guides decide what to do and see since it is their area.

This tourist appreciated the tour being flexible and based on the tourists’ expressed interests: “[The guide was] really knowledgeable, really low-key, and based a lot of his information on our questions. So yeah, it was very much our directed tour
instead of [his] directed tour.” But another felt that tourists should defer decision-making to guides:

I came here and asked him to share with me his culture and his community, and he did that, and for me to say well I think you should’ve done this or should’ve done that, I don’t even go there. I mean, I’m not even thinking, oh I wish he would’ve done, or showed me this or showed me that. He showed me what he thought was important and it’s his community, so I take what I can get from that and just say thank you very much.

Overall, there seems to be a need to be a balance which reflects the guide’s expertise and the tourists’ interests.

**Tourists as Teachers; Guides as Students.**

Overall, much of the data supports the roles of guides as teachers and tourists as students. However, I also found that, in many cases, guides seek out and appreciate a two-way exchange of information with tourists. As one guide stated, “I always say to the people, you know a little there, and I know a little here, so let’s make an exchange and it will be better.” That is, in many cases, the teacher/student roles may be reversed, with guides becoming students as they learn from tourists. For instance, guides recognize tourists may be well-educated and knowledgeable about the ecology of the area, and can provide additional information which augments a guide’s indigenous knowledge:

…Many of the visitors that we get here, they are very interest[ed] in the area, they are very interest[ed] in what we’re saying, but they are professors, they are biologists, so they exchange with you, and they teach you things that we didn’t know. We know the leaf cutter ant, we know they live there and they cut the leaf, but we didn’t know more about it, what they are doing there. So we get to know that, so that’s like, complete more, that what we didn’t know, and that was something that I appreciate from tourism…
Guides also appreciate learning about tourists’ cultures and home environments (Baez, 1996; Beeftink, 2004; Greathouse-Amador, 2005; Guerrón-Montero, 2006; Wearing & Larsen, 1996), and feel the information each gains from the other can be used to improve or maintain their own quality of life. One guide described the value of this exchange below:

We value what the visitors give, or bring with them, because they come and share the world that they’re coming from as well that they come and learn from what we have here. And from that process, the visitor can see what we have, what they don’t have, or we can learn from the visitors the things that we don’t have that come from the other world. For example, maybe you come from San Jose, but I’ve never been to San Jose, just your being here, and telling me about, what, how San Jose is. And I learn about their world and then I can say, Oh, maybe I don’t have this and maybe this is important, maybe I am missing this. So it’s a process of learning, because the person that comes value what we have and say the bad things that they have, comparing with what experience they have here, and they learn from that process. For example, if in San Jose or another country, garbage is a big problem. So when people come here and see what we have, it’s like wow. It’s like a learning process because we still don’t have a problem here with the garbage, so from that experience, because the people come and share the problems that they have, we can try and see how we can solve, or don’t make this problem to become a problem in our community. So we will try and find a way how to manage the garbage and things like that.

Tourists also expressed an interest in sharing their knowledge or ways of life with guides, and to open their minds to other cultures. For example, a tourist explained:

I don’t want to destroy the community if they really want to protect, or I don’t know, preserve, I guess. And, at the same time I want to show them that there are different things, you know, around the world, and I want to show them, you know, where the Japan is, and I’m from Japan, and, you know, we speak Japanese, and all these different things…

Or, in my own experience, I made an effort to show one of the guides some pictures of giant sequoia trees of California and explain about the differences in the types of forests.
Plus, tourists noted that guides also express an interest in hearing about their lives, as illustrated below:

[Guides] want to learn from us too. She asked me what I did for a, you know, for work and things. You know, she was curious. So she, they’re curious, they’re, they’re trying to take the best, the good things from our, our culture, without hurting theirs. That was the best thing; that they’re using, you know, the good stuff that we have to offer, and discarding the negative.

However, some tourists see themselves as receivers of information, not sharers. As one tourist expressed, he was there to learn about indigenous culture, and interested in understanding the differences between indigenous culture and his own, but not to really share anything with the guide about his own culture.

[The purpose of a tour guide is] basically just to help us understand their culture and their community and to help us understand the differences…That it’s not about, you do this better than we do, and we do this better than you do, but you’re different than us, how are you different and the fact that being different is good, and we want to understand those differences.

Plus, both tourists and guides express reluctance for indigenous people to receive undue influence from foreign cultures. For example, a tourist explained:

I have mixed feelings about wanting to influence him, and his viewpoint, because once you do that then, like I can be changed because I live in this mish-mash of society and, and it’s sort of anything goes, whereas here, you know, once, once you make that change, you, you can’t go back, so, it could be good, it could be bad, you never know.

For both tourists and guides, the reluctance stems from a desire to protect the indigenous culture, as demonstrated by the following tourist’s response: “I hope that they don’t see us as a, taking away like, showing them the other world, and then make them interested in going out there.” However, guides also act as overseers for appropriate tourist behavior in indigenous communities—encouraging them to interact in appropriate ways.
and discouraging displays of cultural behavior that run counter to indigenous values and lifestyles. For example, one guide described how he asked tourists to remain clothed when swimming, and not to bring alcohol into indigenous communities. This is consistent with Cohen’s (1985) mediatory guide role of “cultural broker.”

Although many guides refer to getting enjoyment out of sharing their knowledge with tourists, for some, talking to tourists can become boring, always getting the same questions and talking about the same basic things. However, when tourists share information that the guide finds interesting, this adds to his enjoyment and satisfaction with his work. In addition, guides may learn from tourists indirectly as well. For instance, tourists may ask questions to which the guide does not know the answers. This can motivate the guide to seek out those answers either through consulting other guides or written resources. As one guide explained:

The responsibility that we have taking somebody into the forest and explaining the way it is, and not just saying I don’t know, or to solve the question you say something that is not true, then all of this would go against, also better we can prepare, and when you don’t know, you have your paper, you set down your question, you go home and you search to give a good answer to your job, can be learning.

Repeat tourists (although a challenge if on a tour with first-time tourists) pose another means for guides to push their boundaries and explore their environment more deeply. In these situations, a guide can move beyond the basic information provided in a standard tour and engage his skills on a more advanced level. Here, a guide describes his response to me after I’d been on two tours:

I wish I could go with you alone, so all my information is shared different…because I don’t have to explain to you. You know this tree, the tree is poison; you know that already. So when I go with
no one else, I can explain, stimulate me to see a next thing, and…
we leave the trail and we somewhere else to see… we explore…

As guides and tourists engage in a two-way exchange of information, learning from each other and conversing on a more informal level, the potential also develops for the relationship to move beyond teacher/student roles. As one guide put it, “Exchange means we learn from them and they learn from us. And from that process of exchange, we create friendship, relations. La Amistad.”

Friendship/Family

Both guides and tourists express a desire to get to know the other. Specifically, guides feel tourists should make an effort to communicate with them; and tourists feel guides should make an effort to get to know them. For instance, one guide explained the importance of having tourists attempt to communicate, even if they don’t speak the local language:

People from the U.S., even if they don’t speak Spanish, they will try and communicate, and try, and are happy, are content, and Europeans, I don’t like Europeans. Well, it’s not like I don’t like them, I feel like they’re more, they’re more, they don’t even try to speak Spanish if they don’t speak it. If they don’t know how to speak Spanish, they don’t really make any effort to communicate…. And the grandfather, he didn’t speak Spanish, but he was very happy, very effusive. He didn’t speak Spanish but he was happy. He talked a lot, I didn’t understand him, but that’s something I liked about him. He tried to speak, he tried to communicate.

Similarly, a tourist expressed a desire for guides to take an active interest in getting to know them, at least learning their names, although he also recognized the difficulty of doing so during a short tour. Here, he discusses differences between two tour guide experiences – the first, a two-hour hiking tour, the second, an all-day rafting tour:
…The information that [the guide] was telling was all relevant and it was all good to know, but if possibly in the future maybe he could’ve, uh, it’s such a short tour, it’s difficult to know people personally, so that’s difficult to make it a personal thing… [whereas] the tour guide there was very friendly, very forthcoming, tried to know everyone’s names by the end of the tour. But again, we had pretty much all day with him.

Tourists also conveyed an interest in understanding guides as individuals (i.e., as indigenous persons or representatives of indigenous communities), but also in general as human beings:

And so you want that person to interact with you and actually open up, and start telling you more information than what was probably even on the tour. So, something personal, something that helps you understand the personal side of the area, the personal side of the guide and the connection [of the land] to the guide. Like, how long have you lived here? Is this all of your land? You know. Tell us more about the BriBri culture, the BriBri Indian. How did you learn all of these things? Tell us stories from when you were a little boy. And those little windows of stories actually open up the guide and let you know that, yeah, he’s human.

In fact, guides and tourists alike describe each other as friends and as family. Guides trust tourists and, as a result, open up their homes and their lives, welcoming them as friends and treating them as family. For example, a guide described his experience with tourists this way:

When a tourist comes here, I don’t look at them as just, you know, an old tourist, you know, any old tourist, they’re a family tourist because they’ve come to share with families. As soon as you sit down there, and I’m giving you a cup of tea, you’re not just a tourist, you’re a friend. You’re someone I’m giving something to and sharing, I trust and like you enough to share myself with you. This is the development that I’m trying to encourage with this cultural center and with the tourists.

Some guides cited making new friends as a main reason why they became interested in guiding as a profession. For example, one guide stated: “So I decided to
become a guide in order to work, to have income for my family, but also to have more 
friends, to have more friends all over the world.” In fact, for many guides, the desire to 
interact with others in a positive way is more important than the money they earn from 
guiding.

…What I’ve learned [from my culture] is not just for me, it’s for, 
to share what I have learned with other people. My intention is not 
so much the economic part; it’s to, that encounter with other people 
from other places, become friends, to make friends.

However, there are also accounts from guides who feel other guides do not necessarily 
have the same priorities:

Without any intention to offend, I feel that in the mind of many of 
the indigenous and black and white people around here who do 
guiding and tourism, what they’re really interested in is getting the 
dollars out of your pocket, through lying or saying whatever. And 
the tourists don’t know anything. [Other guides] say things that 
aren’t really true so that the tourists will pay. For me, that’s not 
getting to know the people that you’re leading, the tourists, and it 
makes it impossible for them to get to know you too.

Tourists, nevertheless, feel guides are interested in interacting with them rather than 
simply earning money from them. As one tourist explained:

He really wants people to understand about the indigenous 
community. And it’s not only about getting profit out of tourists, 
but it’s also about letting us understand what his principles are and 
where he comes from.

Another tourist portrayed his experience with an indigenous community this way:

I was thinking maybe…they could be, you know, not as genuinely 
accepting of us, that they just had, they needed to do it for money, 
and they were doing it and it wasn’t really something they really 
wanted to do, invite a lot of people there to, you know, live with 
them, eat with them, and hang out with them. I just, I wasn’t sure 
whether it was…indigenous people trying to, just needing money 
or needing, needing, needing us rather than wanting us and sharing 
so much. I wasn’t sure about that. But it turned out perfect. It
wasn’t about, they’re not about money, but they, they can use some
to help themselves.

In terms of direct interaction with guides, one tourist indicated, “I’m not a paying tourist,
I’m more than that, I’m not just a revenue string for, for these guys, and they just wanted
to really enjoy moments, and uh, so that was, that was really good.” In fact, in many
cases, tourists feel they are treated like guests or even family. “They don’t call us tourists,
they call us visitors, we’re visitors here, we’re guests here, and that’s a very different,
you know, a very different view of, of outsiders.” Another tourist said the way in which
a guide interacted with him made him “… feel like I was part of the family.” Another
illustrated the difference between his experience with guides from this study area and
other guides:

I think if I compare it to several, um, American guides maybe,
where they generally will just give you the traditional, I don’t
know, American greeting of, (in flat tone) ‘Hi, good morning, my
name’s so and so’. This was, (animated tone) ‘Oh, how are you
doing…and we’re so glad to see you again, and it’s oh, so happy
and Oh, let’s, let’s go, let’s go now’. Like you’re one of the family,
rather than, (in flat tone) ‘Ok, class, today, I’m going to be taking
you to Mt. Everest, and we’ll be leaving here at eight. My name’s
Johnny. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.’ You
don’t feel connected to Johnny there.

Guides likewise described themselves as treating tourists as family.

So it’s not a tourism that’s just coming and separate from the
people, it’s a tourism with a family feel. A lot of people talk like
that, but nobody actually does it, very few. I try and what I say,
actually do it.

However, tourists also described some discrepancies pertaining to overnight tours
and being treated like family. In these cases, tourists are housed separately, and do not
share meals with the guides or their families. This presented a disconnect for some
tourists who felt being invited into a guide’s home and sharing a meal would be a more
appropriate way to treat someone described as family. For example, one tourist said:

…Well, I actually didn’t eat with them. You know, we were situated in a, in a space different from them, so we didn’t all sit around at the same table, the same community, and interact with them and listen to them speak and so forth…. And the puzzling part is, you know, they say, my house, at the end, you know, we’re so happy that you came to visit us, and, my house is your house and, feel free to come back and stay, and stay longer, but come back and stay and, and do what? Be treated like a tourist? Be treated separately, or be treated like family? I get conflicting pieces of information there. Yeah, they welcomed me in, but at the same time, they keep me isolated. So, what, am I a tourist, or am I a, you know, a friend? I, I don’t know.

Nevertheless, both guides and tourists described a feeling of acceptance from the other. For example, a guide stated: “when I see the affection that they show me, and the place, it makes me feel motivated and cared about, important.” And, when asked by some guides about my own experience, I explained it this way:

For me, it’s very tranquil here, and I feel very welcomed, and there’s, to me, there’s this sense of happiness, and I feel like in my life back in the [United States], there’s a lot of pressure to do things, to do certain things, and expectations that I need to live up to, but when I’m here, I feel like I can just be. Just kind of live and enjoy life…

In some cases, this feeling extended into affection for the other, as in this guide’s description of a tourist’s parting:

When she left, she gave me a big hug and a kiss and just walked away, and when I turned around I saw that she had left her tennis shoes, so I called out, [Katie! Katie!] So I ran after her and gave her her shoes and she gave me another big hug, such an affectionate hug that I almost felt like she was gonna take me too…

Tourists may also feel affection, and a deeper kind of connection, with guides. For instance, when asked about an incredible moment for him during the tour, a tourist related:

For me, there was one where we were climbing in the mud, and that, [the guide] put…his hand on my shoulder and says, Hey, no
worries, you and I can come back tomorrow and climb this...and I just felt like, Wow, you know, he’s actually touching me and he’s actually connecting and feels really comfortable and um, and I thought it was really cool.

Plus, both tourists and guides spoke of wanting more time to spend with the other and develop their relationship further. Indeed, guides recounted occasions in which tourists felt sad to leave the community, and even cried upon departure. A tourist suggested:

I wish we had, had more time to spend with them and, because I definitely see how, at first you have the relationship of, of guide and visitor. You don’t really know each other and you just get on the boat and, and by the end of the trip, you know, [Guide] is putting his hand on your shoulder and, and you know, you can see there’s an evolution of the relationship, after just one day, and I think, you know, the more you stay, the more you get this connection, and you feel, feel comfortable with each other…

And, a guide put it this way:

What I really would have liked, I feel like [Tourist] just got a quick brush-over of what this place was like, and to really see what my people are like, how they really live, you have to go farther in, and I would have liked to have done that, but with the time limitations it wasn’t possible.

Although, there are some cases, particularly with overnight stays, in which tourists felt they could spend more time with guides and their families, such as eating meals together, participating in cooking or other daily tasks, or staying up later at night to “just chat.” However, tourists were uncertain whether guides would be willing to participate in this way, or whether particular activities such as cooking are gender-specific, thus culturally inappropriate for male tourists to participate.

Nonetheless, all of these descriptions point to a deeper level of relationship between guides and tourists which may develop, especially if given enough time.
Tourists and guides describe instances in which they intend to meet up again in a tour or a non-tour setting, or meet up by chance and spend more time together and get to know each other better. For example, a guide stated:

I find you on the street and we drink, we eat an [ice cream], so what we talk? I’m going to ask you questions that have to do with my curiosity, you know, where you from, what you doing. Maybe the same thing what the tourists ask me, no? The same thing they ask me, what you doing here? But it’s fun, it’s nice to know people.

In other cases, tourists and guides may keep in touch by exchanging letters or emails.

Guides sometimes experience a deeper connection with tourists who return to visit the area, and vice versa. Here, a guide describes his relationship with a visiting family over a period of several years:

The guy from Alaska, he came here with his family about four times already. And he still write, he say, you know, here we are in Alaska, and my kids they are big boys now and. But they come here over and over, like four or five times. So you get somehow, Ah, there’s coming the Alaska people. Then we have time to go and harvest coconut and buy them a drink and eat and talk, and that’s fun.

Plus, tourists not only feel they would be welcome to visit again, but also express an interest in having guides visit them, as illustrated below:

I think that they would look forward to my return, and I would look forward to them coming to see me, visiting me, so I could reciprocate, try to reciprocate the kind of hospitality that they exhibited, a little bit. But I really do, I really think they would look forward to me returning, and that’s powerful for me, that’s very powerful for me.

In some cases, tourists do indeed reciprocate, and guides visit them. Thus, tourists switch roles with the guide; they become the guides (or hosts) to their former guide; taking him around their homeland and showing him the sights. In the following, a guide describes how a family who had been on a tour with him hosted him for a number of days:
So later we talk, and I say, you know, I have to go there, I’m leaving in three days….So, they say, any time you reach there, you call me and I will take you around. But these people you don’t know, I only know for short hours, and they’re so open, so kind. And really I call them and, when I was there, and they come for me. After I finish my, what I was going to do, I don’t know, somehow I change my flight for two days more late, and it worked. So I could stay, spend with them two nights, and they take me…

Below, a tourist explains his ongoing friendship with a guide:

[Guide] is truly a friend. He’s come to the U.S. and we’ve come here and I’ve had his kids live in my house and all that kind of stuff, so that’s a friendship that’s developed over the years because of the tours that we’ve taken.

But even single, short visits may elicit a deep feeling of connection. That is, even if the interaction between a tourist and a guide (and family) is a one-off encounter, it may continue to influence those individuals throughout their lives whether or not they have kept in touch. As one tourist explicated:

…Even years after you’ve visited a family like this, you always wonder, Oh, what are they doing now? You know, the kids would have, must have grown and, and are they, do they now have fresh water in the village, or do they, are they still sleeping in the same huts and beds and you…do think about it and, and you do feel attached and, I think I, that influences your, your life back home…

Thus, feelings of friendship or solidarity may continue regardless of whether there is ongoing communication or interaction.

In summary, tourists and guides want to get to know each other, and may develop friendships, or even feel like they are a part of the other’s family. These feelings may emerge during a tour, and/or may develop through repeated visits or interactions.
**Enabler, Motivator**

In addition to the roles and relationship types explored so far, guides and tourists also act as enablers, or motivators for each other. Guides and tourists encourage and enable each other to open up and interact more fully. Guides motivate tourists to help them, their communities, and others. They also motivate tourists to preserve indigenous knowledge and to make changes in their own lives. Tourists motivate guides to appreciate and protect their environment and culture.

As discussed earlier, guides and tourists want to get to know each other; thus, a successful tour depends on two-way communication. Although some data points to the need for the other party to make an effort to communicate, there are also examples from both tour guides and tourists recognizing difficulties which may be experienced by shy, quiet individuals. Specifically, guides highlight attempts to encourage shy, quiet people to interact more with them; to “bring them out of their shell.” For example, a guide said:

> …There are different types of people, and you can kind of learn how to bring them out. There are those who talk, and those who don’t talk as much, and so you start to ask them questions, talk to them so that they’re happy.

Tourists also endeavor to engage guides who are a bit quiet, enabling them to open up and interact more fully:

> I thought she was really shy and she was not talking and, and uh, you know, she started making the chocolate and, and I started, I, I tried to, you know, I asked her a few questions, and at first she was, she was responding but not, you know, just in a few words, and, but then I felt that, then at the end, she started to really relax and smile and actually talk with me, so that was, that was really good too, um, see how we can, you know, connect with people little by little.
In these cases, tourists and guides make an effort to enable the other to open up; however, some guides also view talking with tourists as liberating. For example, one guide explained: “When talking to people that I don’t actually know, you know, that are coming to visit, I feel like a little more free.” In addition, tourists feel guides should be free to express their views, and encourage them to do so, as illustrated here:

And if there’s something they don’t like about their country or something they don’t like about our country, or something they don’t like from the world, it’s very important to us that the people have an opportunity that are guiding us to be real.

Plus, tourists may also feel a sense of freedom during their interactions with tour guides:

I [felt like I] was eighteen years old, and I was fifteen just playing with, you know, high school days, you know, having fun. I mean, like, I went to camp in high school, in grammar school. It was like camp, it was fun.

Guides feel the interaction they have with tourists may also serve to motivate tourists to help other individuals or people. For instance, according to one guide:

I feel that the impact that it’s had on the people that have come here, international or national, has been really good, really, really good. They’ve gone away with, much more knowledgeable about the reality of the situation here, and a little bit more about the culture, and many of them have gone back to other parts of the world, or of the country, to help other indigenous groups, or needy people. We had a group of tourists that came from Puerto Rico, and a year later, they came back with twenty-eight doctors. So they went up to [a local facility], and they received all kinds of free visits, they attended all kinds of people with free medical help.

Following their interactions with tour guides, tourists mention a desire to help others. Here, a tourist describes his eagerness to help a tour guide: “If she told me tomorrow, I would need you to live here so that you can help me run the house, I would do that, you know, because my, you have so much respect for her, you know.” And this was after just a very short, approximately 30 minute tour! In addition, tourists feel motivated and
inspired by hearing stories from guides about overcoming challenges in their lives:

It’s just amazing that how much one person can do, and what it takes is to just, is courage or, being active, willing to do something different and, it’s just amazing. It touched me, it touched my heart a lot today, when she was telling us about all the hard work she has been through...

Guides feel motivated by interacting with tourists as well, and may experience a boost in their self-worth. As one guide expressed:

The benefit is much more than the economic because we see how motivated people get. …when I see their motivation about things that to me are just day to day, common things, it excites me too, and then it motivates me and makes me think that maybe I really have something valuable, when I see the affection that they show me, and the place, it makes me feel motivated and cared about, important.

Or, as another guide explained, interaction with tourists can generate a greater appreciation of his own environment:

And the tourists they are travelers, so they travel all over the world, and sometimes you get people who explain you things that they see in other countries. For example, I have people going with me from Nepal, and he explain to me about the tree that is here, and he seen and he said to me over there we have this. So this end up making me feel that we have so much, and it’s so rich, because in some areas, look like, there are so much people, and they start to have to protect things because so much people, so, we have so much.

These interactions serve as a reminder of the uniqueness of the area and the culture in which they live; something which guides may forget or take for granted. A guide describes this as follows:

When a visitor comes, I live here, for me everything looks the same. So I don’t value it anymore. But when a visitor comes, and they have that surprise expression in their eyes of the things that they see and the things that they can, we have it here and maybe we don’t value it; that process of exchange help us to reevaluate the things that we have. To see that the things that we have around here has a great value, that maybe we don’t see that value because,
you know, the tree just become to be something common we see everyday. And a visitor come and say, Oh, you guys have that tree, you guys have this, you guys have the rivers, the mountains, and Oh, oh yeah, we have rivers and mountains. So that gives us, that’s like a positive reinforcement for us also to value what we have.

As a result of these interactions, guides may feel more appreciative of what they have, and may be more motivated to protect it. This is in addition to the more direct effect which interacting with tourists has had on indigenous culture. The following quotes from guides exemplify this fact.

I feel that the contact with them has forced us to continue to maintain our lifestyle….It has helped us to preserve our culture.

…What happens here is that you strengthen our culture, because you come here, I teach you my culture, if anything that helps me to continue forward with my culture, to strengthen it. You see how [we] write, how we make signs to identify things, we put up the signs in BriBri. So people come and they see the signs in BriBri.

Furthermore, interactions with tour guides enable tourists to appreciate both the indigenous culture and their own culture:

…as you’re going through all these experiences, you appreciate more of your culture and more of your other culture. That’s why we enjoy it, and I think it’s great for us to keep our eyes very open and, you know, getting different information.

This may also motivate tourists to help preserve indigenous culture. For example, a tourist indicated:

I’m interested in preserving what he is saying if he is a legitimate medicine man in their culture. Whether it’s accurate or not doesn’t really matter to me. It’s just that I think it’s important to preserve what he has learned from his mother and grandmother and before that and before that.

Or, in some cases, it may serve to motivate tourists to change areas of their lives they aren’t satisfied with, as discussed here:
My life tends to be complicated. I have my own firm and I, you know, do all the things that we Americans do on a daily basis, running a company, and all the things that go along with that. But again, the simplicity, there is another way. There is another way...there doesn’t need to be the complexity in our lives. We can survive just fine in a, in a more simple environment....I need to remember, I need to remember this experience. This doesn’t need to be complicated, and...I don’t need to operate at the, you know, highest level of efficiency I can possibly conceive and execute. It’s not about that, so. It’s just a, it’s a tempering view of life, is really what it is.

It is important to note that guides also draw motivation from other sources. For instance, guides mention being motivated by and inspiring to members of their own communities for keeping up the old traditions. Plus, too many interactions with tourists may have the opposite effect and discourage guides. Simply put, guides need a balance of work and non-work time to remain motivated in their jobs. Here, a guide explains how too many tours in too short a time left him dispirited and avoiding further interactions with tourists:

But it become so much for me that I have people coming...Like I come home, and I have already a tour and maybe, I’m, my heart is not for next tour, my heart is to sit in the hammock. But I can’t say no. So what happen is that then later, I start to tell lies. Like they come and ask for [me], I come and say, Oh no, [he] is not here. So then I feel worse, I feel more guilty, and I say no, I can’t, I can’t be telling lies. So I move out from there, I leave. And I didn’t want to do no more tours because I get too much...

Thus, although interacting with tourists can be motivating for guides, it is also important that there be enough indigenous guides to accommodate tourists in the area.
Guides as Conservation Advocates; Tourists as Supporters

Weiler and Davis (1993) found that ecotourism guides act as motivators of environmentally responsible behavior and environmental interpreters. Indigenous guides also engage in similar roles, although they focus on cultural heritage and the landscape (Howard et al., 2001). This study likewise reveals that indigenous guides also are conservation advocates who view tourists as supporters of environmental conservation and of indigenous communities.

As part of their teaching, indigenous guides discuss conservation efforts and ecological consequences of human behavior. This is based on BriBri and Cabécar beliefs, which include rules for interacting with the natural environment, and repercussions for failure to do so properly: “We obey the laws that Sibö gave our ancestors. These laws prohibit the unnecessary destruction of our forests and the animals Sibö created. That is why we feel responsible for protecting and preserving the natural resources within our Reserve” (Palmer et al., 1993, p. 51). Guides explain the indigenous ways and hope that tourists may learn from them and become more proactive in responding to environmental issues. As one guide described:

I talk about the types of animals that are around. I explain also about the scarcity of animals, the extinction of some, why they’re endangered. So I share that, how we’re suffering the consequences of what man himself has done to the planet….I love to share too our vision of how man can live in harmony with Mother Nature. My ancestors all maintained this respect for Sibö and his creation, and it’s something that we try to maintain that and share that with people who come here. With young people, I always try to motivate them, that they are the future and that I hope that their experience here would motivate them to do something about what they see happening, the destruction of our planet.
Thus, indigenous guides in this study fulfill the roles highlighted by Weiler and Davis (1993) in terms of instilling a long-term environmental ethic, and the modified roles suggested by Howard et al. (2001) for indigenous guides in terms of communicating the link between indigenous culture and the land.

Guides also perceive tourists as supporters of conservation and of indigenous communities. In some areas, tourists support conservation simply by paying to go on a tour, because a percentage of the proceeds goes towards conservation projects within the indigenous community. As one guide noted:

I also thank them for coming and for paying and I explain to them that the money that they leave helps us to continue the things that we’re doing. The iguana farm continues because of the money that comes in through the tours, and a lot of the things that we’re able to do conservation wise, we’re able to do because we’re able to support ourselves with the money that comes in.

Tourists also support conservation by providing alternative means of income to extractive industries:

[Tourism] is really important to us because it allows us to do what we need to do to survive without, and to preserve the forest and not have to use it in some way.

This is indeed one of the aims of ecotourism—to contribute to environmental conservation (Honey, 1999).

Note that there is a connection between tourists assisting conservation efforts and supporting indigenous communities which stems from the environmentally sustainable way of life based on indigenous BriBri and Cabécar lifestyle and beliefs. That is, when tourists support the community through tourism, they also assist the conservation of that land by allowing the original caretakers of the land to continue caring for that land (Palmer et al., 1993). This may include keeping the land as an indigenous farm as
opposed to being sold for development or extraction, and/or contributing to conservation projects such as iguana breeding and indigenous plant repopulation. As one guide explained:

So for me…the visitors are very important because they come and fulfill our three objectives. The first one is the protection of the biodiversity, the protection of the culture, and the improvement of the family economy. So for that reason, they are important, because they fulfill that vision that the group has.

What’s more, tourists may provide additional support for indigenous communities and environments beyond a tour experience. Here, a guide describes how a tourist helped to acquire land for the indigenous reserve:

And another thing that has happened is that sometimes tourists come, and besides the walk and, you know, sharing that, there can, in some cases have been like, even deeper sort of relationships formed. And in one case…a tourist family that came here actually helped them to acquire land… for the indigenous reserve.

By doing so, these tourists were able to assist the indigenous community and preserve the environment at the same time.

Weiler and Davis (1993) assert that the tour leader should monitor and modify tourist behavior and enhance a tourist’s appreciation of the surroundings. Results from this study indicate that this does occur, but interestingly, the opposite also occurs—tourists enhance a tour guide’s appreciation of his or her surroundings. Thus, while guides clearly act as conservation advocates, tourists also help to motivate them to protect the environment as well. As discussed earlier, by showing interest and admiration of indigenous land and culture, tourists remind guides of the uniqueness of their environment and culture, and reinforce an appreciation for that environment. This may also drive guides to conserve the environment not only for themselves, but also for future
visitors. As a guide clearly expressed:

So, let’s take care of what we have, and when we take care of what we have, I can be sure that we will share this with the people who [are] coming. You come here now, and in fifteen years you come here with your family and we can still share this, and this is not only my obligation, this is because I live here, but you are stimulating me to keep it like that because I live from that.

Accordingly, there may be repercussions for environmental and cultural sustainability, as well as continued income through tourism.

**Conclusion and Implications**

Through this study I aimed to add to the current knowledge on the role of tour guides by (a) focusing specifically on indigenous tour guides in ecotourism, and (b) offering the perspectives of tour guides and tourists. This was accomplished by delving deeper into the interactions between indigenous tour guides and tourists, and exploring the role of the tourist during these interactions.

The results support aspects of Cohen’s (1985) model specifically pertaining to the leadership roles of providing direction and access for tourists, assuming responsibility of tourist safety and comfort, and entertaining; and the mediatory roles of teaching. The results also corroborate Gurung et al.’s (1996) findings related to the importance tourists place on the guide as information provider and interpreter. That is, although some tourists in this study utilized tour guides mainly for access and direction, most greatly valued receiving information and learning from guides about the local environment and indigenous culture. Furthermore, the results support Weiler and Davis’ (1993) and Howard et al.’s (2001) findings that the ecotourism guide serves as a conservation advocate and environmental interpreter. The special combination of indigenous and
ecotourism guide means tourists learn specifically from a guide from a different culture, which, in this case, includes one whose core beliefs dictate taking care of the environment. Therefore, tourists learn not only information about plants, animals, and the ecosystem, but also an appreciation for different styles of life, or ways one can change his/her own life to be more rewarding. There can be larger implications of this learning for tourists, at a personal or a societal level, such as living with less “stuff” or less stress, living more “in harmony with the earth,” or, through understanding issues and challenges in other societies, i.e. being a better world citizen.

Plus, the results of this study suggest that indigenous guides and tourists experience a variety of other roles and relationships during their interactions with each other which have not been captured in existing models of guide roles models thus far. In many cases, the roles which guides exhibit may also be enacted by tourists. Guides are learners as well as teachers; tourists are teachers as well as students; tourists and guides may view and treat each other as friends or family; and guides can be motivators for tourists, but tourists can also be motivators for guides. In particular, the motivation which guides and tourists provide for each other in terms of environmental and cultural appreciation can indeed have repercussions on environmental and cultural sustainability, both of which are aims of ecotourism (Honey, 1999). Certainly, in this case, ecotourism’s goals of conserving the natural environment and benefiting local populations appear to be occurring through both intended and fortuitous means.

Based on these findings, I propose amendments and extensions to Cohen’s (1985), Weiler and Davis’ (1993), and Howard et al.’s (2001) models of guide roles to account for the additional roles experienced by indigenous ecotourism guides and to reflect the
complexity of their interactions with foreign tourists. Tour guide-tourist interactions are
two-way phenomena; both parties are involved, and each influences the other. Therefore,
a model which also captures the tourist’s role in the interaction is warranted. These roles
are discussed below, and summarized in Table 2. Modifications and additions are shown
in italics.

My study results suggest differences in the way some of Cohen’s (1985) and
Weiler and Davis’ (1993) roles are fulfilled by guides in the study context. For instance,
the mediatory role of “cultural broker” is fulfilled, but often in a different manner. Since
indigenous guides are members of the culture they are representing, they mediate more so
by explaining their culture in ways tourists can understand, (i.e. through using analogies,
doing demonstrations, etc.) than negotiating between tourists and the local population.
Hence, their mediation is actually part of their teaching. Similarly, the guide role of “on-
site resource manager” is fulfilled through teaching tourists about the indigenous way of
living with the natural environment, ecological challenges they face, and local
conservation projects they organize and participate in. Furthermore, the resource
management role of “environmental interpreter” includes both the roles discussed by
Weiler and Davis (1993) and the proposed indigenous roles by Howard et al. (2001).
That is, indigenous ecotourism guides both instill a long-term environmental ethic and
values related to indigenous communities and knowledge.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guide Role Outer-Directed</th>
<th>Guide Role Inner-Directed</th>
<th>Tourist Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Sphere</td>
<td>Social: Entertainer/Motivator: Use humor, motivate tourists to try new things, have fun</td>
<td>Trust in guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental: Caretakers and Access Providers: Provide direction, access, security, and safety</td>
<td>Trust in guide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediator Sphere</td>
<td>Teacher/Communicator: Help tourists to experience and learn about the jungle and indigenous life.</td>
<td>Trust in guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactionary: Organizes meals, etc. “Cultural Broker” – In terms of explaining their culture in ways tourists can understand (i.e., through using analogies, doing demonstrations, etc.</td>
<td>Teacher: Pay attention, ask questions, show interest, actively participate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Management</td>
<td>Student: Learn from tourists about ecology, tourists’ cultures and environments</td>
<td>Trust in guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site Educator: Teach tourists about indigenous way of living with environment and local conservation projects</td>
<td>Teacher: Share/exchange information about environment or culture with guides</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental and Cultural Interpreter: Instill environmental ethic and motivate to be proactive in environmental issues</td>
<td>Motivator: Enable guides to speak freely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate tourists to help them, their communities, and others; motivate tourists to preserve indigenous knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Promoting: Make effort to know tourists on a personal level; encourage tourists to open up and interact more fully</td>
<td>Promoting/Accepting: Make an effort to communicate/exchange; encourage guides to open up and interact more fully; understand guides as human beings, not just indigenous representatives, show appreciation for/acceptance of indigenous life</td>
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<td>Welcoming: Welcome tourists as friends/family; Have genuine desire to interact with tourists besides income</td>
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Within Cohen’s scheme, I also propose additions to the guide mediatory role of “teacher/communicator.” In addition to being teachers, guides are also “students”—they learn from tourists during their interactions. Plus, guides serve as “personal motivators” for tourists to make changes in their own lives.

Furthermore, I suggest tourist roles to complement Cohen’s (1985) guide role scheme (see Table 2). For the leadership component, the tourist role is “trust” in the guide. For the mediatory roles, the tourist role of “student” encompasses paying attention, asking questions, showing interest, and actively participating. However, tourists are also “teachers”: they share information about the environment and their culture with guides. In addition, they act as “motivators” for guides by enabling them to speak freely. In terms of the resource management role, tourists are “conservation and indigenous community supporters and motivators.” That is, they support conservation efforts, and motivate guides and indigenous communities to appreciate and protect their environment and culture.

Moreover, I propose a new set of roles pertaining to the relationship sought by and experienced between guides and tourists. These roles are outlined in Table 2. Guides trust tourists and “welcome” them into their lives as friends or family. They also show a genuine desire to interact with tourists, not merely for the income they receive, but to make new friends. In addition, guides can help “promote” a relationship by making an effort to get to know tourists on a personal level, and by encouraging tourists to open up and interact more fully.

Tourists likewise can “promote” a relationship by making an effort to communicate with guides, regardless of their ability to speak the local language, and by
encouraging guides to open up and interact more fully. Plus, tourists should seek to understand guides as human beings, not just indigenous representatives, to “accept” guides for who they are, and to show an appreciation for indigenous life.

There are also implications for guide training and for tourist education, pre-trip information, and preparation. Consistent with Howard et al. (2001), guide training in other indigenous settings can include methods to fully engage tourists in the experience and to communicate about indigenous culture by using analogies and humor. Guides can also continue to strive to understand cultural differences regarding fitness levels, set clear expectations regarding tour difficulty level, and monitor the pace to suit the slowest hiker. Tour agencies can include in promotional materials suggested guidelines for fitness levels for tours, including specifics on trail conditions.

In addition, given that guides prefer a two-way interaction, tourists can be encouraged by tour agencies to ask questions and take an active role in the tour, and to be prepared to share information about their own lives and cultures. Given the effect of two-way interaction on the guides’ motivation and satisfaction, and tourists’ preference for spontaneous, non-scripted tours, it is in everyone’s best interests to keep each tour unique; otherwise a bored guide, lacking input from tourists, may rely on reciting the same stories in the same way, resulting in a unintended, and undesired, “script.” While keeping a tour unique may be a worthy goal, there also needs to remain a balance between tourist interest and a guide’s expertise, and an on-going commitment to access and safety.

In summary, the results of this study further the understanding of the roles and relationships experienced by indigenous tour guides and foreign tourists in ecotourism settings. Using participant observation and in-depth interviews with guides and tourists, I
augmented the results of previous research related to tour guides and guide-tourist interactions. Interviewing both guides and tourists was particularly helpful in establishing an understanding of roles from both perspectives, and participant observation was an effective means of focusing the interviews within a unique eco-tourism context. As a result, I have proposed a new model encapsulating both guide and tourist roles in an interaction. This model extends the work of Cohen (1985), Weiler and Davis (1993), and Howard et al. (2001) by suggesting modified and additional roles which reflect the complexity of interactions between indigenous guides and foreign tourists. Implications pertaining to tourist-host interactions and to environmental and cultural impacts of tourism are also revealed.
References


Orientation to Chapter 3

Chapter 3 is written as a stand-alone manuscript to be later submitted in consideration for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. In terms of the dissertation research questions, the purpose of Chapter 3 is to examine the following research questions:

3. What factors influence tourist-guide interactions from a guide’s perspective?

4. What factors influence tourist-guide interactions from a tourist’s perspective?

The overarching purpose of this study was to understand tourist and tour guide perceptions of their interactions with each other, and to discover factors they feel influence their interactions. For research questions 3 and 4, I utilized a conceptual framework based on the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1979) and on tourism impact literature.
CHAPTER 3

TOURISTS AND INDIGENOUS TOUR GUIDES: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE INTERACTIONS

Introduction

Although tourism can have negative impacts on local residents and host communities (Chambers, 2000; Cohen, 1983; MacCannell, 1984; McLaren, 1999; Minerbi, 1999; Mowforth & Munt, 1998; Wearing & Larsen, 1996), it has also been suggested as a potential force for bringing peace between different cultures (D’Amore, 1988; Poyya moli, 2003). A key aspect of this potential is the sharing and appreciation of, and respect for, cultures developed through interpersonal encounters between tourists and local residents (D’Amore, 1988). Reisinger (1997) suggested that efforts to improve tourist-host interactions have implications not only for successful tourism operations, but also for intercultural understanding as a whole. Although tourist-host interactions are but one factor in the larger scope of social-cultural impacts of tourism, a more in-depth look at these encounters can provide input that can be integrated within larger research agendas.

The focus of this study is to explore tour guide and tourist perceptions of factors that influence their interactions by examining interactions between indigenous tour guides and foreign tourists in ecotourism settings, and by accounting for the perspectives of both tour guides and tourists. In this setting, tour guides are members of the culture and area they are representing; therefore, they also act as, and for the purpose of this study are considered, hosts.
This manuscript consists of: (a) a discussion of the conceptual framework for the study, which is based on a review of tourism impact literature pertaining to tourist-host interactions, and related literature discussing the Contact Hypothesis; (b) an account and description of the qualitative methods chosen to explore this topic; (c) a presentation and discussion of the results as they relate to the conceptual framework; and (d) implications of the findings.

**Tourist-Host Interactions**

Tourism researchers have examined positive and negative social and cultural implications for host communities. For example, tourism can provide increased educational opportunities and cross-cultural sharing of knowledge (Beeftink, 2004; Greathouse-Amador, 2005; Guerrón-Montero, 2006; Wearing & Larsen, 1996); greater gender equality (Lama, 1999); and increased quality of life (Beeftink, 2004; Wearing & Larsen, 1996). However, tourism can also contribute to a decrease in traditional activities (Chambers, 2000; Wearing & Larsen, 1996); loss or change of traditional values or beliefs (Chambers, 2000; Wearing & Larsen, 1996); a loss of cultural identity (MacCannell, 1984); and the marginalization and/or “zoolification” of indigenous peoples (Chambers, 2000; Cohen, 1983; MacCannell, 1984; Mowforth & Munt, 1998).

To understand the positive and negative implications of tourism some researchers have focused specifically on documenting tourist-host interactions. For example, Cohen (1983) examined tourism in the hill tribes of Thailand and found that short tours (i.e., one hour) were more superficial and also led to more objectified interactions with tourists than longer (i.e., overnight) tours. That is, tourists viewed villagers as part of the scenery:
they observed and took photographs, but did not engage in two-way interactions with
villagers. Consequently, Cohen argued, villagers experienced a loss of personal dignity.

Tourist-host interactions can also be viewed positively by hosts. For instance,
Stevens (1991) found that Sherpas in Nepal received a boost to their self-esteem. As
tourists display their admiration and respect for *sirdars* and the Sherpa culture in general,
they reinforce Sherpa cultural pride and self-confidence. Similar findings were reported
by Beeftink (2004) and Guerrón-Montero (2006). Beeftink found that interactions with
tourists were not only a highlight of Fijian whitewater guides’ job, but these positive
interactions also led to increases in self-esteem and cultural pride. Guerrón-Montero
found that Afro-Antilleans in Panama consider interactions with tourists to be positive—
they enable them “to ‘meet new people’, ‘learn about the world’, and ‘learn interesting
things’” (p. 77).

Researchers also have attempted to explain, at least in part, *why* there are positive
or negative interactions between tourists and hosts. For example, Doxey (1975)
suggested that cultural incompatibility may be a factor in hosts’ negative interaction with
tourists. It may not be this simple, however. Cohen (1972) and Smith (1997) argue that
cultural compatibility may be mediated by forms of tourism and tourists' desired level of
novelty or familiarity and their degree of adaptation with local norms. Smaller-scale
forms of tourism (which attract tourists who desire more novelty and who integrate with
local norms) may have more potential for cross-cultural understanding between tourists
and hosts than mass forms of tourism. According to Smith, the basic uniformity required
by mass tourists will result in routine interactions between tourists and hosts (e.g., hosts
are asked the same questions routinely by tourists). Such routine may negatively impact
hosts' interest in their job and their ability to see tourists as individuals. In turn, as hosts become more impersonal in their interactions, tourists will likewise see them only as the “other.”

Beeftink (2004) suggested that the role of the guide as an adventure trip leader, and the adventurous and cooperative nature of the activity (whitewater rafting), may play a role in tourist-guide encounters; however, these aspects are largely unexplored in the tourism literature. Along similar lines, Howard et al. (2001) highlighted the importance of the guide’s use of humor to break down perceived barriers between different cultures. This is similar to the elements of play in whitewater trips that Beeftink found to be a contributor to positive relationships between guides and tourists.

Heuman (2005) found that specific parameters of the host-guest relationship appear to influence tourist behavior. For example, “working” (or service-based) tourism models that place less emphasis on financial transactions and are more in line with traditional hospitality exchanges have positive influences. Specifically, “working” tourists, i.e. individuals who volunteer their time and energy to work alongside local residents on community projects, were found to express concern over the potential impact of behaving inappropriately and made considerable attempts to behave in accordance with local wishes and expectations. Heuman noted that the host-guest relationship levels the power dynamic between tourists and locals with positive outcomes; that is, although tourists clearly are dominant in terms of financial resources, locals control knowledge, networks, and the extent to which they make tourists feel welcome.

A similar outcome of the host-guest relationship was found with backpacking tourists in Turkey (Tucker, 2001). Since backpacker interactions are not mediated by a
tour guide necessarily, the tourist-host relationship is more closely aligned with that of hosts and guests as described by Heuman. Thus, if tourists do not behave in an appropriate manner, locals can choose not to act as hosts. In addition, because they typically travel independently and stay longer, they have more prolonged interactions with villagers that allow for a wider array of encounters. While Cohen (1983) noted language barriers between tourists and local residents (and these were viewed positively), Tucker did not perceive language as a constraint (or a facilitator) to tourist-host interactions.

Using social exchange theory as a framework for examining the parameters tourist-host interactions, Ap (1992) found that interactions are viewed positively if the individual or group perceives the exchange of resources is high (if power level is low) or roughly equivalent (if power level is high or balanced), and negatively if the exchange of resources is low in any power relation. Evans-Pritchard (1989), however, offered a different view. She found that, despite often having a higher level of power in the exchange relationship and experiencing a fair exchange of resources, Native American hosts did not necessarily view tourists positively; instead, they were likely to continue embracing and perpetuating negative stereotypes of tourists. Evans-Pritchard also argued that although tourist-host interactions may remain on a more superficial level, there was still potential for positive encounters for both parties.

However, an additional element specific to group tours that should be considered is the role other group members may have in shaping interactions, particularly for longer tours. Tour guides often facilitate group dynamics (Cohen, 1985; Gale & Beefink, 2004; Gurung et al., 1996; Howard et al., 2001; Quiroga, 1990), but can also be considered a
members of the group (Arnould & Price, 1993). Alternatively, in a group tour context, tourists may focus their attention on other members of the group rather than interacting with the host population (Anastasopoulos, 1992). Thus, including group dynamics in the analysis of guide-tourist interactions may provide additional insights.

Hosts (e.g., tour guides) and tourists may have different goals and expectations of their interaction resulting in different perceptions of impacts (Chambers, 2000; Stevens, 1991). Tour agencies commonly market cultural aspects of tours to accentuate differences between indigenous peoples and tourists, often representing the indigenous as primitive and naive (Bruner & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2005); consequently, tourists may expect or desire to gaze upon or encounter indigenous peoples as the “other,” as part of the scenery, as something to be viewed and photographed (Bruner & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2005; Cohen, 1983; Mowforth & Munt, 1998; Urry, 1992, 2002). Indigenous tour guides, on the other hand, may wish to dispel inaccurate images and educate tourists on current realities of their lives (Howard et al., 2001). Thus, in order to gain a broader understanding of the perceptions and impacts of tourist-guide interactions, researchers should consider both tourists’ and guides’ perspectives.

In addition to examining impacts on hosts, Pearce (1982a, 1994) explored effects of intercultural contact on tourists; both in terms of their perceptions of the host community and of their own culture. He concluded that a tourist’s motivation to travel, the strength of a tourist’s pre-contact beliefs, and the level of intimacy of contact may influence a tourist’s perceptions of the host community. However, research which focuses on understanding both tourists’ and hosts’ perspectives of the tourism experience in general (Pearce, 1982b; Stronza, 2001), and of what constitutes and contributes to a
positive interaction specifically at an individual level is limited.

**Contact Hypothesis Framework**

Developed by Allport (1979) to examine race relations in the U.S., the Contact Hypothesis has since been utilized within a variety of contexts, including tourism. It is used in this study as part of a framework for exploring tourist-guide interactions (see Table 3 below for a summary of the framework). The Contact Hypothesis outlines specific factors that influence interactions between ethnically and culturally different individuals and groups. Initially, Allport identified four main factors that may have a bearing on whether contact will result in amiable relations and/or reduced prejudice: (a) type of contact, (b) relative status between the individuals, (c) social sanctions, and (d) common goals. These factors have been tested or applied in several studies and various contexts.

Superficial contact, in which there is limited communication between two groups or individuals, may serve to merely reinforce pre-existing stereotypes (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Pettigrew, 1998). If these stereotypes are negative, prejudice is maintained. On the other hand, contact that allows for “true acquaintance” to form and knowledge about groups to be acquired may result in more accurate beliefs and positive attitudes (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998; Pettigrew, 1998). In some cases, individual interaction can be promoted by using ice-breaker and experiential learning activities (Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998). In a tourism context, the ability to experience deeper-level contacts between tourists and hosts, where not only knowledge is exchanged, but also acquaintances may be formed, may be an important factor in
contributing to decreased stereotypes and prejudice and increased intercultural understanding.

Status levels between individuals or groups may also influence interactions (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998; Pettigrew, 1998). Through examining occupational contact, Allport (1979) discussed how unequal status between individuals is “an active factor in creating and maintaining prejudice” (p. 274). Therefore, in order to reduce prejudice, it is important to come into contact with out-groups of equal or higher status. Yet, equal status relations are not necessarily the norm in tourist-host interactions, where hosts are generally in service positions. Exceptions may be hosts who are in recognizably skilled positions, such as the Sherpas in Nepal (Stevens, 1991); whitewater guides in Fiji (Beeftink, 2004); or guides for extended nature or adventure tours. Indeed, Arnould and Price (1993) found that during multi-day rafting trips, “the guides were fully integrated into the experience as members of the team” and “people report thinking of the guide, not in service provider terms, but as a friend” (p. 35).

Another factor, social sanctions, may be affected through laws, customs, as well as the general atmosphere of level of acceptance (Allport, 1979; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998). For example, teachers and other role models can play a key role by establishing norms and expectations for interactions (Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998). In a tourism context, this may be facilitated through tourist codes of conduct, and influenced by the social dynamic of the tour group (group dynamics). Guides may also help create a comfortable atmosphere by using humor (Howard et al., 2001).

Participating in an activity with a common goal and common interests may also influence interactions (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998;
Citing an extreme example of White and Black soldiers fighting side-by-side for survival, Allport (1979) discussed the difference in favorable attitudes of White soldiers towards serving with Black soldiers. That is, those who had previous close associations in combat situations with Black soldiers were more likely to favor having divisions consisting of both White and Black platoons. However, one must also consider that most contacts (including those in a tourist context) that involve participating in an activity together do not involve life and death situations; therefore, the need to address this factor in other contexts such as tourism is warranted.

Personality factors must also be considered when assessing interactions between tourist and host. Allport (1979) noted that “certain personalities resist the influences of contact” (p. 279) and, thus, even if all the above factors are in place, one cannot entirely predict whether or not a certain individual will experience reduced prejudice. In addition, Pettigrew (1998) suggested that prior attitudes and experiences, as well as long-term friendships, should be taken into account when addressing the impact of interactions between groups. With respect to prior experiences, the effects of contact are cumulative; that is, persons with prior (positive) experiences with an ethnically/culturally different group had more favorable feelings and were more likely to engage in further contact experiences with that group.

Alreshoud and Koeske (1997) evaluated the relationship between attitude and interaction, and included mediating variables such as level of understanding of the host country. Specifically, they hypothesized that increased contact would lead to increased understanding, which would then be reflected in more positive attitudes. They found instead that attitudes affect contact and that an increased level of understanding does not
influence attitude. However, the quality and nature of the contact were not considered in the analysis, which greatly limits the conclusions drawn. In addition, Alreshoud and Koeske (1997) suggested that the level of cultural differences should be taken into account. These findings are consistent with some of the tourism literature that suggests that cultural dissimilarity between tourists and hosts may be a factor in irritation levels (Doxey, 1975). However, Alreshoud and Koeske also concluded that “the desire for contact and enriching, positive contact can be expected to occur among visitors with a more favorable initial attitude, even for dissimilar cultures” (p. 244), further bringing into question the role of cultural similarity. This is particularly pertinent to a tourism context, as individuals often travel specifically to see and experience cultures vastly different from one’s own, and initial attitude may likely be reflected in a tourist’s motivation to travel to a particular destination.

With respect to long-term friendships, Pettigrew (1998) suggested reformulating Allport’s (1979) original hypothesis to emphasize that cross-group friendship—especially long-term close relationships as opposed to acquaintances—be added as an additional factor. This is quite pertinent to a tourism context, as most tourist-host interactions are limited in both time and depth. On the other hand, as noted earlier, certain tourism contexts, such as multi-day tours or backpacking tourists (Tucker, 2001), may allow for more intimate contact while other factors, such as the nature of the activity, may allow for friendships to be forged even in a single-day tour (Beeftink, 2004). Pettigrew (1998) pointed out that contact with culturally or ethnically different individuals or groups can afford new perspectives of one’s own group, which may then reduce stereotypes of the other group. Tourism seems to be particularly suited for this sort of reappraisal. As
tourists experience different countries and/or cultures abroad, they may reevaluate their own (Pearce, 1982b). This reevaluation, in turn, may result in a reappraisal of the visited country based on new criteria.

Amir (1998) emphasized the need to examine intergroup contact in its particular context and identified several factors consistent with Allport’s (1979) conceptual framework that may influence positive or negative outcomes in prejudice reduction programs, including opportunities for contact, equality of status, cooperation versus competition, casual versus intimate contact, and personality. Results indicated that situations which allow for contact opportunities, cooperation between in-groups, and intimate rather than casual contact have positive impacts on the reduction of prejudice, and that these may be influenced through effective planning and programming (Amir, 1998).

In sum, the Contact Hypothesis is based on ideas for improving relations between two different ethnic or racial groups in which at least one of the groups (generally only considering the ethnic or racial “majority” group) has a negative attitude of unknown intensity towards the other (“minority”) out-group. In a tourism context, the goal may be positive interactions that, in general, can lead to increased intercultural understanding. Mings (1988) identified “knowledge” and “positive feelings” as the basic elements required to develop genuine international understanding. In order to consider the potential for increased intercultural understanding that would positively influence both parties involved in tourism, one needs to consider the views of the tourists and of the hosts. Both groups may have limited and possibly misleading information about the other group. For example, hosts may see tourists as having unlimited wealth or as
superficial (Evans-Pritchard, 1989), while tourists may see hosts as primitive, simple, and living in the past (Bruner & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2005; Howard et al., 2001; Mowforth & Munt, 1998).

Many of the concepts that underlie the Contact Hypothesis have already been explored in terms of tourist-host interactions without direct reference to the hypothesis; such as implications of equal status or power (Ap, 1992; Arnould & Price, 1993; Beeftink, 2004; Evans-Pritchard, 1989; Heuman, 2005; Stevens, 1991); cooperative interdependence (Beeftink, 2004; Tucker, 2001); and opportunities for intimate vs. casual contact (Cohen, 1972; Heuman, 2005; Pearce, 1982a, 1994; Prosser, 1994; Smith, 1997; Tucker, 2001). Missing from the research are studies focused on interactions in an adventure-tour context, which involves teamwork between tourists and tour guides towards reaching a common goal (i.e., during a mountaineering expedition or a whitewater rafting trip). Further, the contexts in which these studies have been conducted do not meet the criteria developed by Allport (1979) and others. For instance, Milman, Reichel, and Pizam (1990), Pizam, Jafari, and Milman (1991), and Anastasopoulos (1992) conducted studies with members of tour groups who had little opportunity for intimate contact with hosts, and whose limited contact with hosts was generally with individuals of lower status in service positions. Exceptions include research conducted by Amir and Ben-Ari (1985) and Pizam, Uriely, and Reichel (2000).

Recognizing that acceptance of new information will only occur if an individual is psychologically prepared for it, Amir and Ben-Ari (1985) developed an intervention booklet about Egyptian life for Israeli tourists to facilitate both provision of new information and psychological preparation. This intervention was moderately successful,
and Amir and Ben-Ari (1985) suggested, “greater success may be expected when implementing such strategies on peoples whose initial attitudes toward each other are more positive” (p. 114). Focusing exclusively on working tourists in different contexts, Pizam, Uriely, and Reichel (2000) examined different levels of contact between tourists and hosts, and included tourist motivation and satisfaction in their analysis. Findings indicated that tourists who experienced higher intensities of social contact with hosts had more positive feelings and more positive changes in attitude towards the hosts, in addition to higher levels of satisfaction with their experience. Furthermore, in one context, tourists whose motivation included meeting people with different perspectives experienced more positive attitude change than those with other motivations. Notably, these researchers did not address hosts’ attitudes and perspectives. If increased intercultural understanding is truly to be achieved, communication between tourists and hosts must be reciprocal, and research that considers both perspectives is warranted to further understand tourism’s potential for promoting peace.

In conclusion, the Contact Hypothesis provides a useful starting framework from which to examine the complexities of impacts of interactions on both indigenous tour guides and tourists. Based on the review of literature regarding tourist-host interactions, I have added six additional factors to the framework for this study; they are: size of the tour group (Cohen, 1972; Smith, 1997); length of the tour (Beeftink, 2004; Cohen, 1983; Tucker, 2001); type of activities in the tour (Arnould & Price, 1993; Beeftink, 2004; Gale & Beeftink, 2004; Heuman, 2005); tourist motivation (Pearce, 1982a, 1994); group dynamics (Gale & Beeftink, 2004); and language barriers (Cohen, 1983; Tucker, 2001). See Table 3 for a summary of the conceptual framework I used to guide this study.
Table 3: Summary of the Conceptual Framework for Exploring Tourist-Guide Interactions

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<tr>
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<th>Prejudice reduction programs</th>
<th>Tourism context</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tour Characteristics:</strong></td>
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<td>casual contact</td>
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<td><strong>Size of tour group</strong>¹</td>
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<td>Cohen, 1972; Smith, 1997</td>
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<td><strong>Tour length</strong></td>
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<td>Beeastopoulos, 1992; Bale &amp; Beeftink, 2004; Quiroga, 1990</td>
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<td><strong>Group Dynamics</strong></td>
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<td>Cooperation / Common Goal</td>
<td>Allport, 1954, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig &amp; Grant-Thompson, 1998; Wright et al., 1997</td>
<td>Beeftink, 2004; Tucker, 2001</td>
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<td><strong>Tour activity</strong></td>
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<td>Arnould &amp; Price, 1993; Beeftink, 2004; Gale &amp; Beeftink, 2004; Heuman, 2005</td>
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<td><strong>Tourist/Guide Characteristics:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998</td>
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<td>**Tourist motivation; Guide</td>
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<td>motivation**</td>
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<td>Level of cultural similarity</td>
<td>Alreshoud &amp; Koeske, 1997</td>
<td>Doxey, 1975</td>
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<td>Prior attitudes and experiences</td>
<td>Pettigrew, 1998</td>
<td>Anastasopoulos, 1992; Pearce, 1982a, 1994; Pizam et al., 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supportive environment</strong></td>
<td>Allport, 1979; Wittig &amp; Grant-Thompson, 1998</td>
<td>Heuman, 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of humor</td>
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<td>Howard et al., 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>power**</td>
<td>Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig &amp; Grant-Thompson, 1998; Pettigrew, 1998</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language barriers</strong></td>
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<td>Cohen, 1983; Tucker, 2001</td>
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¹ Note: Items in italics represent additions to the framework based on tourism literature
Study Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to understand tourist and tour guide perceptions of the factors that influence their interactions with each other. This was done by examining interactions between indigenous tour guides and foreign tourists in ecotourism settings, and by accounting for the perspectives of both tour guides and tourists.

The data for this manuscript was drawn from a much larger study. The overarching purpose of the larger study was to examine roles and relationships experienced by indigenous guides and foreign tourists, and facilitators and barriers to their interactions. Specifically, for the purpose of this study, I sought to answer the following questions:

1. What factors influence tourist-guide interactions from a guide’s perspective?
2. What factors influence tourist-guide interactions from a tourist’s perspective?

Methods

Because this manuscript represents part of a larger study that entailed the same methods, the following account of the methods is a modification of those detailed in the first article.

From this study, I sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning of a particular experience (interactions with tourists or indigenous tour guides) as it occurs naturally. Qualitative methods were chosen for this study because they are particularly useful for this type of inquiry (Creswell, 2003; Warren & Karner, 2005). In addition, qualitative methods allow for the researcher to capture descriptions of someone’s experience in his or her own words (Patton, 2002). This approach is especially useful
with indigenous populations because it allows participants to frame their answers in terms of their own culture (Berno, 1996).

This qualitative study involved a naturalistic inquiry. In a naturalistic inquiry, “the research takes place in real-world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest…Observations take place in real-world settings and people are interviewed with open-ended questions in places and under conditions that are comfortable for and familiar to them” (Patton, 2002, p. 39). A naturalistic inquiry was chosen because I sought to discover and understand the factors that influence interactions as perceived by the participants involved without manipulating the interactions.

I utilized the Contact Hypothesis as part of a framework to explore intercultural interactions. Based on previous tourism impact and tour guide literature, additional factors were added to the framework. Hence, the overall framework I used for this study consists of the following factors:

- tour characteristics, including length of tour, size of tour group, opportunities for intimate contact, type of tour activities, cooperation, common goal, and group dynamics;
- tourist characteristics, including tourist motivation, tourist prior travel experience, and perceived level of cultural similarity; and guide characteristics, including guide motivation and perceived level of cultural similarity;
- perception of a supportive environment;
- perceived equality of status between tour guide and tourist; and
- language barriers.
Setting and Sample

This study was conducted in the Talamanca region of Costa Rica. Costa Rica is a popular nature-based and ecotourism destination, with over two million international tourists in 2010 (Costa Rica Tourism Board, 2011). Indigenous persons represent approximately one percent of the total population (Minority Rights Group International, 2008). The Talamanca region encompasses the southern Caribbean and mountainous inlands near the Panama border. Two groups of indigenous people reside there: the BriBri and the Cabécar. They have retained their own unique culture and languages despite Spanish conquest.

The Talamanca region is the least developed of Costa Rica. Up until 1979, there was no road connecting the area to the rest of the country (Greencoast.com, 2011). Thus, tourism is in the fairly early stages of development and remains small-scale. Some of the BriBri and Cabécar have begun to host tourists to enhance their income and increase levels of development in their villages. Various tourism organizations have been created to combine marketing efforts and to help indigenous populations develop tourism, including national (e.g. the Costa Rican Community-based Rural Tourism Association - ACTUAR); local (e.g., Red Talamanca); and local indigenous (e.g., Red Indigena) organizations. In addition, local non-governmental organizations, such as La Asociación Talamanqueña de Ecoturismo y Conservación (ATEC), help market tours to indigenous areas, and organize tours with local tour guides. A variety of tour activities are offered, including village visits, wildlife viewing, service projects, and adventure activities such as horseback riding and dugout canoe trips. Many tourism operations are controlled by indigenous people or organizations, but there are also a handful of non-indigenous
companies which run tours to indigenous areas and utilize indigenous guides as part of their tours. In addition, the Talamanca region is a popular surfing destination, and hosts a variety of tour options with other, non-indigenous tour guides.

I collected data from foreign tourists on tours to the indigenous reserves of the BriBri of Talamanca, and to the KékōLdi indigenous reserve (a small reserve of only 200 residents), which is home to both BriBri and Cabécar peoples. The sample of tourists and indigenous tour guides was drawn from tours organized through ATEC during the summer of 2007, and included half-day, full-day, and three-day tours. Additional guide interviews within the two indigenous reserves were arranged by a member of ATEC to broaden the sample. The majority of interviewed tourists were North American; however, a host of other nationalities were represented, including: English, Austrian, German, Japanese, and French. The indigenous guides interviewed for this study mainly spoke Spanish as their primary language. Some also spoke BriBri or Cabécar, and a few could speak and understand varying amounts of English. However, although some tourists spoke Spanish, many spoke only English.

Many of the indigenous guides interviewed for this study have participated in guide training. However, other indigenous persons who engage in guiding activities, such as doing chocolate making presentations, discussing local medicinal plants, or communicating with tourists about local tourism initiatives, but have not gone through the training, were also included to broaden the sample.
Data Collection

I engaged in two phases of data collection. For the first phase, I engaged in two weeks of participant observation. Data from this stage of the research was not analyzed, but served to acquaint me with the setting and with potential participants for tours and interviews in the second phase of data collection. For the second phase, I spent two months conducting in-depth interviews with indigenous tour guides and tourists. I also continued to utilize participant observation as a means to focus interviews and to provide detailed contextual information for analysis. Although I originally intended to conduct pre- and post-interviews with guides and tourists, logistics intervened. I was only able to secure post interviews with tourists. For some guides, I was able to conduct pre- and post-interviews; others participated in only one or the other; and some guides were interviewed, but I was unable to participate in their tour. Interviews were conducted in English for tourists, and either English or Spanish for guides. A translator assisted with the interviews conducted in Spanish. I transcribed all interviews, and imported them into QSR NVIVO along with the field notes from participant observation during the second phase of data collection.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was guided by the specific, procedural strategies for grounded theory. Initial, or open, coding consisted of a line-by-line content analysis of transcribed interviews and field notes. During this stage, the data drives the analysis; it is a process of discovery in which a researcher allows the codes to fit the data rather than forcing data into predefined codes (Charmaz, 1983, pp. 112-113). Data is also constantly compared to
help develop and clarify codes. After a set of codes was developed and selected, a second stage of coding occurred during which data was revisited and recoded according to the selected codes. This is known as focused coding (Charmaz, 1983). I also wrote memos throughout both stages of coding. During open coding, memos helped to define and describe the codes and categories; during focused coding, integrative memos were useful in exploring relationships between the categories (Charmaz, 1983). I coded all interview data and field notes from the second phase of data collection. To enhance validity, two other researchers coded the data, and discrepancies were discussed and restructured accordingly.

This study utilized a conceptual framework to focus interview questions and participant observation. For example, to explore the influence of perceived level of cultural similarity between tour guides and tourists on interactions, I asked tourists: “How similar or different do you think the tour guide’s culture is from yours? In what ways?” However, most questions were purposefully broad and open-ended. For instance, I asked guides: “Can you describe the relationship that exists between you and tourists? Is the relationship always the same? If not, why not?” Or, following an observed tour, I asked guides and tourists to describe their interactions. I also asked, “In which particular situations were the interactions most positive? In which particular situations were the interactions most negative?” Furthermore, throughout data collection and analysis, the researcher remained open to new ideas and interpretations based on observation or as described by the participants. That is, I approached the data without referring to my research questions or to the conceptual framework, and without attempting to place data in a pre-established set of codes based on that framework. Participant observation was
particularly helpful in focusing interviews to elicit detailed responses by participants. I also utilized the data from participant observation to help establish and clarify codes, to consider interview responses in the corresponding context, and to examine differences in guide and tourist perceptions of the same interaction.

Although I tried to accurately capture the perceptions of the participants, it is important to emphasize that the interpretation of the data which follows also reflects my personal experience and perceptual lens. In addition, although these results may be informative for other small-scale indigenous ecotourism enterprises, they are not meant to be generalized.

**Results and Interpretation**

Several factors were found to influence tourist-guide interactions. Some factors were found to facilitate or impede interactions. However, often the manner in which the factor influenced the interaction—that is, whether it was perceived to facilitate or impede the interaction—varied in different contexts. For instance, many factors facilitated interactions in some contexts, but impeded them in others; or, could be viewed as have little or no bearing on the interaction. Plus, in some instances, factors that were expected to be barriers emerged as facilitators, and vice versa. Hence, there is a complexity revealed through the in-depth analysis, which adds to existing knowledge. The results are presented based on the themes that evolved through data analysis, and are discussed in relation to the conceptual framework: (i.e., tour characteristics; including tour group size, opportunities for intimate contact, tour length, tour activity, and group dynamics; tourist and guide characteristics, including similar age, similar interests, level of
knowledge, motivations and expectations; image and perceived cultural differences; supportive environment; status equality; and communication and language). Each is discussed in terms of the different viewpoints and scenarios associated with the tourist-guide interaction.

Tour Characteristics

Several tour characteristics were found to influence tourist-guide interactions. They include: tour group size, opportunities for intimate contact, tour length, tour activity, and group dynamics.

Tour group size.

Smaller-scale forms of tourism have been suggested to have an increased potential for positive interactions and cross-cultural understanding (Cohen, 1972; Smith, 1997). Overall, results from this study indicate that a small tour group size is a positive factor for both tourists and guides. A few tourists, however, found being part of a small group limiting, and would have preferred individual interactions, as described here:

Well, I wish I could have had him to myself for that whole time. Could’ve gotten a lot more accomplished. We definitely would not have covered the same amount of territory, cause we would’ve spent a whole lot more time talking, picking, and what not. But I would’ve learned a whole lot more about things that he learned, and I probably could’ve shared some knowledge and found out that a lot of it’s the same, and maybe, maybe, hopefully, had a, more of an influence of him rubbing off on me, which is what I would’ve preferred, because that’s why I come down here, to experience the culture.
For guides leading a large group, it can be difficult enough just to convey information to all the tourists, much less engage in conversation. As one guide explained:

\[\text{[Because] ten people, is very difficult. [Because] me only one guide, for the people, one, two, three, four, [the last one], won’t hear anything. It’s very difficult.}\]

Thus, a group size of 10 people can be too large for guides and tourists to interact on a personal level, at least while participating in a hike or similar activity.

**Opportunities for intimate contact.**

In general, having opportunities for intimate rather than casual contact is recognized as an important factor in facilitating amicable relationships between culturally different individuals (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998, Pettigrew, 1998). Small group size is one essential factor, but certainly not the only one. Level of involvement can also influence interactions between tourists and guides. Tourists looked for and appreciated opportunities to be involved alongside guides in as many aspects of the tour as possible, both as a way to deepen their experience and to get to know each other. For example, a guide explained:

\[\text{A lot of people have told me, the great advantage of coming here. And it makes me happy because they told me that they really enjoyed having the kitchen right there in the middle and being able to watch, and sit there and take in the smells and everything and see how food is prepared.}\]

In this site, the visitor is able to watch and be more involved while the food is being prepared, even if they are not the ones preparing it. Hanging out in the kitchen whilst food is being prepared is a common social activity and a way to bond with others, much like hanging around a campfire during a camping trip. Indeed, being involved in everyday type activities like cooking enhances the feeling of community between tourists
and guides. As one tourist explained:

That was good because they tried to involve us as much as possible, like with the cooking side of things as well in the evenings. And then, it was pretty rustic, so it was, all hands to the deck sort of thing, so everyone was helping out with everything else, and they got us involved with that. And, they were telling stories in the evenings, and everyone was sitting around telling jokes and things….And so it was really like, big community sort of thing with them involved as well. So that was really good.

Participating in these activities requires cooperation, yet is less structured than other aspects of a tour experience, thus providing opportunities to work together or to simply chat informally with each other. In many respects, it is more akin to a community atmosphere. A tourist explained how being involved in these types of activities can bring people closer together:

…if I had an opportunity, I would like to go back and go as part of a, I don’t know, volunteer group that was going to, build something, you know. I don’t know why, but I feel as once you, if, if, if you get to the basic things of life and you can interact with different cultures on those things, you understand a whole lot more. So, if you’re building something, or carrying out a job, you learn things and you learn about people, just naturally brings you together. If you’re cooking with a culture, you learn about natural things, you learn about the culture the way that, that they’re done.

In some cases, tourists participating in a multi-day tour related lost opportunities for spending time with guides during cooking and meal times, as well as evening hours.

You know, there’s one thing that, that I would have liked is actually, eat with them. I would have liked, I would have loved to actually share a meal with them. And I also would have loved to, to sleep in the same, in the same structure with them. But more so the, the meal, because that’s traditionally a way, really you can share more.

Or, um, have talk at night, kind of stayed up longer. I didn’t know what the status was, like what time they go to bed, and you know, if there are somebody who are willing to talk to us at night, staying up late and, just chat. I would have loved to do that, but I wasn’t sure for sure…
Furthermore, from a tourist’s view, the separation of tourists and guides during mealtimes and evening hours can impede relations and understanding of the host culture.

Well, I actually didn’t eat with them. You know, we were situated in a, in a space different from them, so we didn’t all sit around at the same table, the same community, and interact with them and listen to them speak and so forth… I took a trip to Germany, and visited some relatives of a friend of mine…and so we sat and talked for hours around the kitchen table, with the, the relatives and, even though we didn’t speak a lot of the language, they knew more of our language, so we conversed that way, and we learned so much, and we were able to understand more about, like, well, where do they go, and what’s it like to live in that town, and what is it like to live in that country. And then, you know, we, we ate with them, and the only time we were separated from them was when we went up into our own room and they situated us in, you know, something that was, more akin to what they were used to sleeping in, as opposed to what we were used to sleeping in. And so that made me feel like I was a whole lot closer to them, and would actually miss them when I left.

Or, as another tourist explained, feeling confined to a specific space inhibits learning more about the daily life in the community:

I did feel like, you know, it was, it was the community center, and we were restrained to that community center, I would have liked to go out of it and, and seen more of what’s going on in, in the life of the village. I did feel like, you know, they had to be there and, and that was the focus…

Therefore, guides should make use of available opportunities for tourists to participate in everyday and informal activities like meal preparation and eating as much as possible.

**Tour length.**

Having opportunities to chat in an informal setting, in which no presentations or particular tour activities are involved, is important to tourists who want to get to know guides and their communities. Guides also expressed the importance of unstructured time within a tour to facilitate deeper interactions with tourists, yet acknowledged that it is difficult with single day tours. For example, one guide said:
At least the people who spend one night here, there’s more time to talk, to establish a conversation or to communicate. But that’s not the same for the people that just come the same day and leave the same day. They’re always in a hurry, and everything is in a hurry, all the presentations, all the things that they have to see, so there’s no, almost no interaction.

Here, the guide experienced limited interaction with tourists due to a short tour length and the scheduling of many activities within a short time span.

Guides also feel that longer tours are more beneficial for tourists, providing more opportunities for learning and experiencing life in the community, including interacting with other community members:

So the quality of the experience for the visitors are not the same. The people who come and leave the same day, probably they just see the cook, the two ladies that are cooking, and the guide. Where the people that spend the night here, they start to see the women that come around and the kids, and they have meetings, and they have gathering and they are talking, [and] that create[s] more possibilities of learning, more possibilities of interaction, more possibilities of understanding what we are doing.

Although guides clearly recognize and point out the financial benefits of longer tours, for most money is only one aspect; they also desire more time in order to share and interact more with tourists. As one guide expressed:

Of course I feel much more satisfied with a longer time. You know, you get paid more, that’s one thing. I also, if they’re here for just a few minutes, there’s not much I can share with them, if it’s just a little bit of time that they’re with me.

Likewise, tourists often desire more time with guides to get to know them better and to learn more about their way of life. For instance, a tourist who had participated in a two-hour hike stated: “So it might be quite a good idea to give us a few more days or to stay there or something, to actually give a more in-depth feel of what goes on with their daily lives.” Below, the same tourist compared his experiences of a full-day tour with the two-hour tour and the difference between his relationships with the guides:
[re: two-hour tour]: it’s such a short tour, it’s difficult to know people personally, so that’s difficult to make it a personal thing.

[re: full-day tour]: …the tour guide there was very friendly, very forthcoming, tried to know everyone’s names by the end of the tour. But again, we had pretty much all day with him. … And, we got to know them a lot better, whereas something like today, it was just a short morning thing.

Similarly, another tourist related the difficulties in establishing friendships in a short time span, and a desire to spend more time with a guide to form a deeper friendship:

You know, we’re not going to become best friends in twenty-four hours, and you just have to accept this. However, you can, you can feel the connection and you can feel sometimes that if you stayed a little bit longer, you really could become good friends. So [Guide], I think, you know, is a good example. I think he’s a great guy, and I would’ve loved to spend, to spend some more time with him and to get to know him better.

In terms of guides, some were not bothered by a short tour length. For one guide, participating in the activities with the tourists, regardless of how long they stay, is a source of enjoyment and does not impede interactions: “No, it doesn’t bother me [if they only come for one day]. For me, it’s the same. I’m happy, even if they come for a day…”

In another case, when asked about her interactions with tourists after an hour-long tour, the guide replied: “it’s nice to make new friends”. Plus, another guide described his relationship with day tourists this way: “I enjoy, I know lots of people like that. Superficial, we know each other, we’re very respectful, but I know. And then later I get postcard.”

In addition, in most situations, tourists relate positive interactions with guides even on short tours. As one tourist described:

So, if I look at just the ones with short-term durations, they’ve been sort of in two classifications I guess. There would be like the, the more personal, this whatever we’re doing I’m gonna show you today means a lot to me and then the other one where you’re just another number, and I have to get
through so many groups today so that I can be done for the day, so. [Guide] I think fell into the former group where he was really, connected to all of the land and the plants and the area we were in. Obviously because he grew up there. So, for him, it was more like bringing new friends into his house and showing them around and letting them sort of understand how much fun and excitement it was him for him to grow up and all of the richness that still exists on his land and on his area of life.

Thus, although longer tours facilitate establishing deeper friendships between guides and tourists, even short tours can result in positive interactions and a feeling of goodwill towards each other.

**Tour activity.**

Working towards a common goal is one factor that may have a bearing on whether contact between culturally different individuals will result in amicable relations (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998; Wright et al., 1997). In a tourism context, activities such as whitewater rafting and volunteering have been suggested to influence guide-tourist interactions positively (Arnould & Price, 1993; Beeftink, 2004; Heuman, 2005). Results from this study reveal that tour activity can be perceived as a facilitator to guide-tourist interactions—a way to experience things and spend time with each other. For instance, guides enjoy sharing their land and their knowledge with tourists, and doing the activities with tourists is a source of satisfaction. As one guide expressed, the nature of the activity doesn’t matter; simply spending time with tourists in general makes him happy: “I’m happy…because I’m talking about the forest, we can go see the waterfalls; we can do any of the different activities.”

However, in many cases, activities during the tour are perceived as an impediment to guide-tourist interactions. For example, a tourist explained how hiking can limit
conversation:

I mean, you don’t, sort of, get into these long, drawn-out philosophical conversations about the culture and the area and him when you’re doing a nature hike. Those, those two things sort of contradict each other. Especially because we have a, sort of set goal to be from point A to point B, in a certain amount of time and if you stop and, you know, take an hour to talk about the culture and…his viewpoints, well that throws you off by an hour and then, you know, he’s cognizant of that because he knows that, well, we’re not, we’re gringos, but we’re not just gringos, you know, we’re human beings, and we get hungry, and we’re hot and sweaty and that we’ll probably want to go and take a shower, and so, you know, he wants to keep that moving. But at the same time, you know, you, if you caught him on the street, you’d be more than open to do that, and I feel that, you know, if I did see him on the street, and I had the time and he had the time, I could probably finish that conversation.

In another case, a trip upriver via dugout canoe posed limitations for guide-tourists interactions. A tourist described the difficulties as follows: “And the boat is very long…and somewhat loud, so you can’t have any interactions, plus [the guides are] busy all the time.”

Guides also discussed how tour activities, in general, can restrict their interactions with tourists. This is especially pertinent for tourists who only visit for the day. As a guide explained: “They’re always in a hurry, and everything is in a hurry; all the presentations, all the things that they have to see; so there’s no, almost no interaction.”

Thus, if tourists try to do too many activities within a short time frame, there is a lack of unstructured time for guides and tourists to converse and get to know each other on a personal level. And, although tourists may learn about the guide’s culture and way of life while participating in activities; there may not be adequate opportunity for guides to learn about tourists.

Furthermore, the type of tour activities common to the research area included hiking (with varying amounts of environmental and cultural interpretation); motorized
dugout canoe travel; and presentations on various aspects of indigenous culture (e.g.,
chocolate making, conservation efforts). Perhaps the tours were not as influential as they
might be in facilitating positive interactions between guides and tourists because the
activities during the tour do not require much in the way of cooperation or working
towards a common goal. One exception may be when guides offered assistance to
tourists while navigating muddy, slippery parts of the trail. A tourist described how
physical contact augmented his feeling of connection with a guide:

“…we were climbing in the mud, and…[Guide] put his hand on my
shoulder...and I just felt like, Wow, you know, he’s actually touching me
and he’s actually connecting and feels really comfortable.”

In addition, physical limitations and physical discomfort may restrict a tourist’s
ability to interact with guides during tour activities such as hiking. For example, I
personally experienced fatigue during one of the tours, which limited my interaction with
the guide. Being outside one’s comfort zone—a common technique used in adventure
education to bring groups closer—may, in this circumstance, be a barrier, especially
when the length of time together with the guide is short. That is, if all of a tourist’s
concentration is focused on just surviving the hike and keeping up with the group, and if
there isn’t time afterwards to chill out together, then there is no processing or sharing of
the experience with each other to help form a bond or sense of group unity. Thus,
although tourists often look for adventure, and overcoming challenges can make the
experience more memorable, a proper balance between level of challenge and tourist
ability is essential to avoid hindering the quality of interaction between guides and
tourists.
Nevertheless, tourists do not necessarily feel negatively towards guides because of their discomfort. For example, when asked about any negative situations during the tour, a tourist replied: “Being tired…Yeah, besides my own, like, physical discomfort, which is not [the guide’s] fault.” And, guides were often empathetic to tourists’ discomfort. For instance, a guide described his reaction to a group that had very little energy: “It doesn’t bother me. I understand them. Because they are not accustomed this climate. Rain, sun and sun and heat, humidity, they’re not accustomed. I understand them.”

Allowing for flexibility in tours to accommodate different tourist abilities may help facilitate interactions. However, catering tours to an appropriate level of challenge for tourists may be easier to do in some situations than others, and can pose difficulties for guides when tourists on the same tour have different ability levels. Negotiating these challenges is more likely to be successful if all parties remain open to accommodating others’ needs. For example, during an observed hike to a waterfall, one tourist was having difficulty with the hilly, muddy terrain. Although he offered to return to the community center on his own, the guide suggested for the whole group (four people in total) to head back together. Because this was an overnight tour, tourists were given the option to complete the hike the next day, and the group had a leisurely return hike and then participated in chocolate making. When asked about the change in plans, a tourist replied: “He took us on a great hike anyway. He showed us all the different, you know, I mean, he took us for a nice little hike that was fine, you know and showed us lots of different things, and got coconuts for us, I thought that was great, you know, right in the middle of the hike. It was perfect. It was perfect the way it came out.”
Group Dynamics.

Group dynamics, or the way in which tour members interact with each other, was found to have positive or negative repercussions on guide-tourist interactions. On the positive side, tourists report learning things they would not have learned without other tourists asking questions, and gaining a different perspective on guides and their culture. For instance, a tourist explained:

…it was actually a good experience. I mean, the *more*, it doesn’t have to be a one-on-one interaction to really learn. It, it can be a group, it can be a group of interactions, so, I mean, all the questions that were asked by other people, I benefited from them.

Another tourist described her experience this way:

…if we were there, just together, we wouldn’t ask different kind of question, we would just see out through our glasses. But since we had a, other couple, different people, I could see how they’re seeing the program, or the community, or how they interact….You can see different point of views, and in looking at them from different perspectives…

However, tourists also gave negative accounts, in which they felt other tour members hindered their own interactions with guides. In one case, a tourist who did not speak the local language repeatedly asked another tourist to translate things he didn’t understand. The tourist who was asked to translate said:

I felt it was, a few comments were too condescending and…I thought there was no substance behind them, and I just had a hard time translating that and conveying that message, because I really did not, even if I agreed with them, I just didn’t think it was, that these were useful comments to establish a communication with people, and establish a link…. I wish, honest, I wish he had not been there because it was, it was, it was a little bit, embarrassing, at times…

And, a fellow tourist remarked: “I think that I was like feeling uncomfortable, making *him* translate all these things.”
Differences in tourists’ level of knowledge may also impede interactions for tourists and for guides. For example, a guide explained his uneasiness in having to repeat information when a returning tourist is on a tour with first-time tourists:

If you go on my tour already, and then we take somebody new, sometime I feel a little funny because you know. But I explain to you already, so I have to explain to the other one.

Also, for tourists, participating in a tour with others who are less knowledgeable can limit opportunities to interact and engage with the guide on a more detailed level:

I had a lot of, not a lot, but some knowledge of, um, what’s the word, not native but, medicinal birds and plants from North America, and, um, so I felt like I could come in at, at a bit more than the, the basic level and go up from there. But it was difficult to really close that bond because I mean, I could’ve talked to sort of great length detail about the preparation and harvesting of the, of the plants and stuff, whereas probably nobody else in the group could have comprehended or been interested in that task, so…

So in both cases, an opportunity was lost to explore something deeper together, because of being part of a group with different levels of knowledge and, perhaps, interest. One can see how group size can also play a role; with larger numbers of tourists, the probability of having different levels of knowledge is higher as well.

In conclusion, small group size, high level of involvement in aspects of community life, and time for unstructured conversation or simply hanging out together, help to facilitate guide-tourist interaction. A longer tour length, especially when coupled with involvement and unstructured time together, certainly facilitates interactions; however, short tours are not necessarily a barrier to positive interactions. Although participating in activities together forms the basis for interaction between tourists and guides, tour activity can also be an impediment to engaging in deeper levels of interaction and cross-cultural exchange. Lastly, other tourists may provide different perspectives
with positive outcomes for fellow tourists, or may hinder a tourist’s interactions with
guides, depending on their approach to interacting with guides, and their level of
knowledge about tour topics.

**Tourist and Guide Characteristics**

Several tourist and guide characteristics emerged as influential to guide-tourist
interactions. Some can clearly be termed facilitators, including: being a similar age, and
having common interests or experiences. Others were perceived as barriers, such as
tourist lack of knowledge. However, motivations and expectations could either facilitate
or impede interactions.

**Similar age.**

Tourists commented how age similarity or disparity influenced their feeling of
connection with a guide. Specifically, tourists felt they could identify more with guides
who were close to their own age and perhaps going through the same stage in life. As
one tourist remarked: “I felt connected with him because he’s young too, he’s trying to
graduate from high school, and so, that’s, that’s a great thing.” On the other hand, if a
guide was much younger or much older, tourists might feel they have little in common.
For example, a tourist mentioned: “…the younger one, from the area, you know, just
younger in age, couldn’t relate to…” Another tourist described her interaction with an
older guide this way:

I think just kind of like, and the age difference too. I mean, we were both
like, a lot younger than him...so it’s like, we don’t really, I really, I don’t
have much in common....We’re at very different points in our
lives....Yeah, like, we just graduated from college, you know, and we’re
like, and he’s got this like, little business, lifestyle set-up, like kind of on a permanent basis. So I felt like we wouldn’t, we didn’t really have like, much personal connection.

There were other cases in which an age difference did not seem to matter to tourists. For instance, a tourist described her interaction with a guide approximately 40 years her senior:

He’s awesome because, you know, he has his feet on the ground, and he’s really eager to get his culture across. He really wants people to understand about the indigenous community. And it’s not only about getting profit out of tourists, but it’s also about letting us understand what his principles are and where he comes from…. He’s just a really warm person, and I would love to see him more around…

It is unknown if tourist age is an influence for guides, since none of the guides commented on tourist age during their interviews.

Given these results, it may be advantageous for tour agencies to attempt to match tourists with guides of a similar age, or at least (during overnight tours) provide opportunities for tourists to meet community members in their own age group. Of course, this presents several challenges because tourist groups may range in ages and, for many tours, especially day hikes, there is only one guide per group.

**Similar interests.**

Having similar interests, goals, experiences, or life outlooks helped tourists and guides feel more connected to each other. For instance, a tourist explained how a common interest in plant life bridged a gap of culture and knowledge about the area:

Because we certainly didn’t have anything else in common. I’m not an Indian, I’m not from Central America. This is the first time I’ve been here. And so, about the only common language that we could speak other than English is about plants.
For tours obviously marketed as “ecotourism,” having a shared interest in or goals of environmental conservation and cultural preservation can facilitate interactions as well. For example, when asked about her ideal visitor, a guide responded: “The types of visitors that like our culture, or people that want to help us protect the forest….And the biodiversity and the environment; and wanting to strengthen our culture.”

For another guide, having a similar approach to life was important in helping him feel comfortable with a tourist:

One of the things that I like best is that the person that comes is also simple, down to earth. If I see someone that comes here and is like turning their nose at things or you can tell that they don’t like it, then I don’t feel good with that person.

The same applied to me as a tourist. That is, although I felt very comfortable and enjoyed all my interactions with the guides in the study, I felt perhaps the most immediate connection with a guide who seemed to approach nature with the same sense of wonder I do. As I wrote in my field notes:

One thing I really liked about [Guide] is that he referred to nature a lot and considered himself someone who really likes nature. He put me in that category as well….I felt barriers between us disappear very quickly…I felt that [Guide] was more like me….It’s like, nature is something more magical for me, and seems to be for [Guide] too.

Having a sense of a similar life experience can also facilitate interactions, as described by a tourist:

That resonates too with our lives. I mean, you know, we come from different countries and we experience, you know, especially in Japan, it was, it was quite a process to change people’s mentality and, I mean, even in France, and that’s something we struggled with everyday. I mean, everybody, in their own country, so it was really inspiring to see that, you know, she has so many, she has so many obstacles in front of her. She’s a woman, she’s in a remote part of the country, and then, and yet she succeeds. So it was really inspiring.
However, having similar interests, in and of itself, is not enough; opportunities to explore those similarities must also be seized to fully benefit the interaction. For example, during an observed tour, a tourist commented that although he really enjoyed the tour and the guide, he noticed the guide’s bird book was filled with notes, and would have liked to discuss more with the guide about the wildlife in the area – something they both had an interest in. But the opportunity was lost, perhaps partially due to lack of time and a long hike.

**Level of knowledge.**

A tourist’s lack of knowledge was perceived for some as an impediment to forming friendships. For instance, for one guide, getting beyond the responsibility of giving certain information to the tourist seemed important in moving past a simple guide-tourist dynamic and reaching a new level of relationship with each other. That is, once he fulfils his responsibility of providing basic information to tourists; then the relationship can progress if there is continued contact. In his words:

> It’s like talking to you, no? I talk to you the other day, you come back and talk. So I change, you are not any more a student. You are somebody, you are more confident. So it’s like, what a difference. We can talk, no? We can know each other. With the tourists it’s different. You don’t know nothing. You just come and say, Hello, I am from here, and doing this, and let’s go, and I explain to you and you gone, so not much feedback for me.

It is important to note that guides can and do still experience positive interactions with tourists who come in with limited or no knowledge about the area. However, it may benefit guides when there is a tourist within the group who has some prior knowledge, as explained below:
And it happen that, you come here already, and then later you come back with your friend and you say, Hey, let’s go and do this. So I still have to explain that, but I have this, I don’t know, confidence that I can change, because I know you already, and, you are not a new tourist that you know nothing. So the one who is new, anything you, anywhere you go is new, and it can be exciting, it can be boring, but it’s new. I enjoy, I know lots of people like that.

Nevertheless, for some guides, it is the very sharing of information with tourists that brings them the most satisfaction in their interactions with tourists. Also, the guide role of sharing information is what enables the relationship between the two individuals in the first place. Tourists sign up for guided tours in order to learn from the guides; it is the elemental basis of the relationship, without which there may have been no interest on either party's side in interacting at all. As in the above scenario, would the guide have met the tourist if not for the tour in the first place? Without that initial teacher/student relationship, there may not have been a reason or opportunity to meet each other. Every relationship has to start somewhere; but clearly getting beyond the basics can be important in developing the relationship into something deeper and more meaningful for both parties.

**Motivations and Expectations.**

Previous studies have recognized the role of tourist motivation in guide-tourist interactions (Pearce, 1982a, 1994; Pizam et al.; 2000). Results from this study reveal that both tourist and guide motivation may influence interactions. In this study context tourists generally expect to see wildlife, to learn about indigenous life, and to experience the jungle. Some may expect a bit of adventure; others may have few or no expectations. Tourists who described themselves as “just going with the flow,” or participated in a tour
as “just a way to spend the day,” were happy with their interactions and their experience.

From a guide’s perspective, some tourists expect things they cannot guarantee, or are overly demanding. This can hinder interactions. For example, a guide explained:

We have perception that some tourists are very, but this happening everywhere, you know some people are very [im]patient, and some people are very strict. You say at 7 and you read there that 7:05 so he’s upset. And they say four hours and you finish at three hour and a half because, because you finish, no? So sometimes, we have this, but we always say that you should express your [dis]comfort, that that’s the way we will learn.

Earlier, I discussed how tour activity and physical limitations and discomfort could hinder interactions. This may be different for tourists who are looking for an adventure.

For example, a tourist described the benefits of being pushed outside one’s comfort zone:

From the experience you actually find what, what you’re really made of. Because if you go into the comfortable and, and surrounding that are really safe, they’re too safe for you, you’re probably not gonna come back home with, with an experience of learning something new and, so it’s good sometimes to just push your boundaries a little bit more.

However, it remains unclear whether this also facilitates their interactions with guides.

Guides varied in their motivations for working in tourism. Some mainly focused on guiding as a means to earn some money and support their families. Others expressed a genuine interest in making new friends, and engaging in cultural exchange with tourists; to learn about tourists’ cultures and environments as well as teach about their own.

Perhaps the most significant guide motivation to influence guide-tourist interactions is having a genuine desire to interact with tourists, not just a means to make money. A guide discussed the difference for tourists between guides interested only in making money and those who care about tourists:

Tourists come here and he starts telling them, lady, come here, I want to sell this to you, it’s our cultural records from 5000 years ago. His
objective with this tourist, is he wants you to buy this, he doesn’t care if you’re hungry or if you’re life is ok at home, he’s not interested in that, he just wants you to buy that, because he wants your money. That’s what happens here with tourists and with hotel owners. That’s why I want my cultural center to be different. So when a tourist comes to me, and they want a tour, I bring them on a tour. They can ask whatever they want when they come back here, I give them tea, I give them something to eat, some fruit. It’s free, I give it to them. The tourist, when he sees that, goes on this hike, gets treated so kindly, their way of looking at things changes. It’s not just the money in their pocket to pay for it, it’s, he’s being given love.

When treated with respect and caring, tourists may reciprocate with their own generosity.

For example, after receiving medicinal care from a guide, a tourist reciprocated like this:

He wrote me, he wants to bring me back to Israel for 3 months, my trip, everything paid for, all expenses. So what does all this mean? What I gave him, what I was giving him was worth a lot more than I was even charging. I valued his life more than I valued money….I’m not just looking for money. What I’m hoping that [tourists] take away from here is the ability to, that they feel good, then they’ll be able to say that this is such a beautiful place, and that they received so much.

Furthermore, guides commented that those motivated solely by money may lie to tourists, thus undermining the chance of building a relationship:

[Some guides] say things that aren’t really true so that the tourists will pay. For me, that’s not getting to know the people that you’re leading, the tourists, and it makes it impossible for them to get to know you too.

Tourists may be apprehensive about guides’ motivations as well. However, when evident that guides are interested in genuinely sharing with tourists, and not just for the money, tourists feel a closer connection. For example, a tourist explained:

…if the only way to get to is by boat, it sounded, I was thinking maybe they were, possibly, they could be, you know, not as genuinely accepting of us, that they just had, they needed to do it for money, and they were doing it and it wasn’t really something they really wanted to do, invite a lot of people there to, you know, live with them, eat with them, and hang out with them. I just, I wasn’t sure whether it was…indigenous people trying to, just needing money or needing, needing, needing us rather than wanting us and sharing so much. I wasn’t sure about that. But it turned out
perfect. It wasn’t about, they’re not about money, but they, they can use some to help themselves.

Yet, the very exchange of money can complicate the guide-tourist relationship, as some tourists mentioned:

…it’s always tricky when, when money is involved because it, you don’t want to feel like a customer, uh, you don’t want to feel like, yeah, like a client, right? You just, if you wanted to, to be a client, we would be in Monteverde and paying for excursions and, I really want to be, we want more, we want to, kind of um, not have money involved, I mean, money, sometimes it’s a bit embarrassing to have, for me, to have money involved in the whole situation. But, um, it made me feel like, Oh, we’re really visitors, rather than tourists.

Heuman (2005) noted differences in relationships between local people and working versus paying tourists. However, as in the situation described above, this can be overcome if tourists feel guides desire interacting with them as visitors, not just as paying clients.

Similarly, some guides feel a better connection with tourists who are interested in sharing and interacting with them. But, interactions are hindered when tourists are preoccupied with saving money, and try to haggle down prices or go on hikes free of charge. In the latter, guides feel disrespected, as expressed below:

There are people who come here, and these jicaras [crafts], even if it’s two thousand colones [four dollars], they’ll say, Oh, it’s really expensive, you can’t charge this much, and they’ll try and barter or bargain with us about the prices. We say that we charge twenty dollars for the tour in the forest, they say, No, it’s too expensive. And even if we go down to fifteen, they’ll still be complaining. If there’s two or three or four people come, they want to pay like one thousand or two thousand colones per person….It’s like they’re trying to put a price on what we’re offering, so, telling us what we should be offering, how much it should cost….I feel, it bothers me, we feel bad…

Overall, these findings share similarities with Pizam et al.’s (2000) work in that positive outcomes occur when motivations include meeting people with different
perspectives. However, in this case, the motivations refer to guides as well as tourists. This is explored in more detail in the next section.

**Image and Cultural Differences**

Previous literature suggests that cultural dissimilarity poses barriers for interactions (Alreshoud & Koeske, 1997; Doxey, 1975). To address level of cultural similarity in this study, I focused on participants’ perceptions. Specifically, I asked tourists how similar or different they felt their culture was from the guide’s and vice versa. I found that perceived cultural similarity may not matter; instead, exploring cultural differences can be a basis for, and facilitator of, guide-tourist interactions. That is, guides and tourists form a relationship as they learn from each other about their ways of life. An exception pertains to tourists who hold specific, preconceived images of indigenous persons and are uninterested or unwilling to change those images.

In some instances, tourists come to an indigenous area expecting to see people dressed or looking a particular way; to correspond with their image of what indigenous people look like. Although guides try to explain they are indigenous even though they wear t-shirts, modern clothing, etc., in some cases, tourists may simply leave if they don’t see the image they expected to see. For example, a guide said:

> Just yesterday…some people came and said, “Where are the Indians? We want to see the Indians.”…My wife greeted them and said, you know, we are indigenous people….They said, oh no, no, we want to see Indians, so they got back in the bus, whatever, in the car, and they left.

Another guide stated:

> They’ll [the French people] say things to us like, You guys aren’t indigenous. Indigenous people are supposed to be wearing just loin cloths and stuff, and they get mad because they think we’re not authentic. So we
always ask them, “So what is it you want to see? We’re indigenous people, what were you expecting’?

Expecting to see indigenous people as imagined definitely seems to be a barrier to interactions, especially if tourists leave when they don’t see the image they expect to see; negating any potential of learning about the other. Similar to Alreshoud and Koeske’s (1997) findings that attitudes affect contact, this study reveals that expectations may influence contact.

Due to the nature of the study, the sample did not include tourists as described above, so further insights of their perceptions are not available. However, tourists who were interviewed described indigenous persons as wise, sensitive, compassionate, and innocent; and indigenous communities as close-knit and in harmony with nature. As one tourist described:

…this is everything, everybody walks, everybody waved, everybody smiled, everybody was polite, nobody that I walked by didn’t smile or wave or say hello, and that doesn’t happen where I live.

Perhaps perceived cultural differences are not a barrier to interactions for many tourists because they respect indigenous culture, and in some cases, desire their own culture to be more similar to it in many respects. Again, this corroborates Alreshoud and Koeske’s (1997) findings that positive interactions are anticipated for tourists whose initial attitudes are favorable, regardless of cultural dissimilarity.

In other cases, it is the human openness and ability to learn about and relate to other cultures that facilitates interactions. As described by a tourist:
The cultures themselves, just by the nature of location are light years apart. But the basic human component, I mean people are people all over the entire world. There’s different cultures, different ways of living. But the bonding that I saw with our guide today and the [group] was just way cool. I mean, he was enjoying talking to them, they enjoyed talking to him and joking around a little bit. And you know people are people the world over. So, culture is usually different, the ability to relate to other cultures just incredibly possible.

Or, as described by a guide: “And we can share, so. I find it interest that everybody have something different, but we have a common thing. Be nice, share, you know, be in peace, and, then I learn from that.”

Indeed, for many, it is this sharing and learning from each other about cultural differences which facilitates the guide-tourist relationship. For instance, a guide explained:

The good part of the relationship is that I get to know about them, and their culture, and they get to know about me and my culture, so it’s a good relationship…

Or, in reference to a particular tour group, a guide expressed:

I liked them because they were very friendly, they talked about their own countries, so I liked that a lot.

Another guide discussed the difference in his interactions with tourists who shared about their own culture and those who did not:

Yes, I did feel much more comfortable with this particular group, but partly was because their reason for coming was specifically to share their culture and learn about my culture; so that I learned about their culture too. We even made little figures out of corn husk, so that was really interesting for me, and because they came with that specific purpose to share their culture, I felt like I benefited as well, whereas sometimes the other tourists that aren’t coming with that specific purpose, they come, for a place to stay and they want to go on a tour, but I never get to know much about them and their culture.
Tourists also feel sharing and learning are important facilitators for their interactions with guides. For example, a tourist responded when asked how similar or different he felt the guide’s culture was from his own:

I guess it’s a lot different. But still, you know, there’s no, there are not really any big barriers. It kind of works great…if you are open-minded and not too…you know, narrow-minded….It’s just interesting to, to have different cultures. That’s why you travel, that’s why I travel, to actually talk, to get to know how things work there…

Having an open mind seems to be a key factor on whether cultural differences will pose a barrier or be a facilitator to interactions. For example, a tourist expressed:

…[we] were raised to be very much, kind of, intercultural?, not intercultural, but not afraid of differences and to embrace the differences and not treat it as a, a barrier of communication but actually instead as a, a portal for communication. So in that sense, like I don’t really feel like there was anything specific that inhibited our interaction. But it, it’s the same as any sort of interaction you have with somebody who’s where you’re from.

Working, or volunteer tourists, however, may encounter challenges based on perceived cultural differences. For instance, when trying to accomplish a project, differences in approaches to work may be challenging for tourists. As one tourist described:

…the frustrating part for me is…there’s no striving for efficiency here. Very un-American, you know, very, you know, unlike, how we operate our lives and our businesses, it’s just, it’s, it’s, and I, and I sit back and I say, Yes, but if you did it this way, you’d be done so much faster and you could do something else, and that’s not what they strive for here. It’s, it’s, it’s not a, it’s not a priority. …Their, their sense of time is so different from mine. You know, I wanna, you know, time is money, that sort of mentality, and the time here, as a matter of fact, it’s, they have a, they have an expression called “Tico” time…five minutes may be five minutes or it may be forty-five minutes, and when it’s all said and done, it doesn’t matter. And so there’s, there’s something, refreshing, obviously about that, sometimes frustrating, for me, trying to get some projects accomplished, but uh, refreshing, um, all the time.
Although he experienced challenges in these types of interactions, ultimately they were not viewed negatively. In fact, they formed the basis for a lesson he incorporated into his life at home:

I need to remember, I need to remember this experience. This doesn’t need to be complicated, and I don’t, you know, and I don’t need, I don’t need to operate at the, you know, highest level of efficiency I can possibly conceive and execute. It’s not about that, so. It’s just a, it’s a tempering view of life, is really what it is.

Guides face their own challenges with cultural differences. Guides may feel uneasy when tourists engage in behaviors that are unconventional in the guide’s culture; for example:

Probably the thing that has been a little bit hard for me is that, with tourism, you see all kinds of things that you’re not used to…. Like homosexuals, for one thing, male or female. For us, that’s been a new thing. Drugs, but as long as they are respectful with these different customs, I’m ok with it, as long as it’s them, doing their thing over there.

Although guides may respect those differences, there is yet the challenge of maintaining their own customs and values:

We accept that you come with (piercings) and all that, because it’s you. But we want that not to influence what we have here. So that is a challenge for us.

Overall, though, it seems that it is not cultural similarity or difference per se which influences interactions; rather, it is whether or not both parties are respectful of the other, and interested in exchanging information and learning about the other.
Supportive Environment

Guides and tourists identified certain characteristics that contributed to or prevented a sense of a supportive environment, including: feeling comfortable with each other, a sense of camaraderie, and a feeling of acceptance, openness, and respect. These were demonstrated by smiling; being generous, nice, kind, friendly, or easy-going; use of humor; and showing interest in the other.

The following are tourist descriptions of feeling comfortable with guides. For some, the feeling of acceptance and camaraderie was instantaneous:

I thought he was, just, just, from the get-go, he was like, very smiley and very easy-going and, instantly you feel, you felt comfortable with him, and, it was great...he was like, just very outgoing...

He smiled, he smiled a lot. He was open. I really like that. He didn't, I don't, meet that very often. Uh, cause, you know, just like, yesterday I went to the police station here and you know, they were like, because I walked up to them, and they like, I said, like, their guest just said, Oh no, not again. Or for example, the bus driver, today, going to Hone Creek, he was like, I don't know, he, bit of a bad mood, and kind of fed up with the tourists, so it was odd. And, yeah, that was really nice. He was just open-minded, walking towards us... yeah, so, I really liked [Guide].

It's just that I felt that he’s, he's open to me and I was open to him, so kind of connected the moment we met...

Oh, I thought it was instantaneous, um, camaraderie....I was up in the front and I asked [Guide] some questions and I, we talked and I’d say, Bueno, mucho trabajo and stuff like that, and he responded beautifully. He was just easy to talk to and, always smiling, very, made me feel real secure.

I thought it was funny when he said that he’s so scared of computers like I am of huge spiders....He was amusing....His humor helped ease the tension, I suppose.

For both tourists and guides, it is important to feel accepted for who they are. For example, a guide explained it this way:
One of my main objectives with this project is to live with nature, in harmony. The type of tourism that we want to attract here are tourists that love nature, that love our culture and are willing to live with us as we are, because we can’t be offering a beautiful big sophisticated place or things. That’s not what we are or what we have, and I want tourists that will, that accept us and want to know us as we are.

A tourist likewise expressed the importance of accepting things the way they are:

I guess there’s different types of tours, there’s fancy ones and there’s kind of like ours, but it’s not, it’s not for a lot of American tourists, or older people like me. This, I mean you gotta really, you can’t be afraid of a lot of mud and dirt…But a lot of people are, you know. A lot of middle class people are, they’re so used to walking on carpets and concrete that, even a dirt path kind of sometimes bothers them.

Feeling welcomed, with no expectations, also facilitated interactions for tourists, as described below:

They don’t, um, treat you like just a number. I felt, generally, warm and welcome, and were greeted very happily, joyfully, so it was very, right off the bat it was very warming experience, felt warm, and welcome.

In general, if a guide is easy-going, it helps the tourist feel comfortable; if a tourist is easy-going, it is more pleasant for the guide. For instance, a tourist explained:

I think as a culture, they’re always very happy, and, what’s the right word, low stress, I don’t know, but, anything that happens is really great and really fun, so. That was good.

And, a guide described an interaction with easy-going tourists this way:

There was nothing that I didn’t like. They were very friendly, understanding, very contented. Even though we couldn’t go to the waterfall, we return here, make the chocolate, and it was very good, no one made a fuss...

On the other hand, interactions can be impeded when guides are too intense. For example, a tourist described his relationship with a guide from another country:

In terms of our relationship with her, she was extremely cordial, and like gave us contact information after the tour, but we didn’t really, we found her a little kind of intense.
Furthermore, interactions are impeded when tourists are overly demanding, disrespectful, or stingy. Guides reported negative interactions with tourists who were disrespectful or expected too much:

There’s always people…that come here and act like, they have a saying here in Costa Rica, ‘como perros por su casa’, like dogs walking through your house, you know, like thinking that they’re owners or something.

Not everybody is just sweet and beautiful, you know, some people are like, they don’t react to you. If I move my hand and you look there, and if I don’t move my hand then you don’t look, so they don’t have, they expect you to do everything.

They also described unpleasant interactions with tourists who tried to bargain down prices:

There are people who come here, and these jicaras [carved gourds], even if it’s two thousand colones, they’ll say, Oh, it’s really expensive, you can’t charge this much, and they’ll try and barter or bargain with us about the prices. We say that we charge twenty dollars for the tour in the forest, they say, No, it’s too expensive. And even if we go down to fifteen, they’ll still be complaining…It’s like they’re trying to put a price on what we’re offering, so, telling us what we should be offering, how much it should cost….it bothers me, we feel bad…

Some tourists also commented that guide-tourist interactions could be impaired if tourists are disrespectful or expected too much from guides:

Just, you know, countless stories from guides of disrespectful people who demand things, I mean it’s, and like on a hike today where you’re slipping and sliding, you know, angry people saying, I didn’t, this wasn’t on the itinerary or in the syllabus, what are you doing this to me for? I just fell down and hurt myself and I’m gonna sue you, and, it’s like hello?

It always takes two. And that’s kind of the problem with most of the tourists is that they always expect the thing out of the one person which is the tour guide, and not themselves.

In addition, tourists discussed the importance of being open-minded, friendly, and
interested in truly learning to genuinely connect with local guides:

    One thing that was, that was kind of, annoying was, the way how, the way they, I felt that the BriBri people were instrumentalized by, by [another tourist], and, and how they were *used* in a way to prove a point or to, to, to do that, I thought there were, there was no real connection to what they, really they felt or what they, they thought. It was more about, proving a point, about Indians in general, and about the world in general, and it was, I didn’t feel like he was trying to understand, he was just trying to, to prove a point basically, and just, from what his prejudice was about the world and the interactions between Indians and people who live in nature, in third world countries, this is, this is the modern world. …So, I guess it’s, it’s a difference between going there just with *no* prejudice and just open-minded and just, let’s figure it out, let’s discover and let’s have a connection, and sometimes there’s no connection. I mean, these people could have been very, you know, greedy, and not interested in connecting with us and not smiling to us and, very cold to us. We didn’t know, two days ago, and, it just didn’t happen this way, which is great.

Guides also discussed the importance for tourists to be open to and interested in what they have to share, as well as being friendly:

    I like to be with people like you, that like to, that want to be here, that enjoy being here, that love nature, that see the beauty here, that feel good here, that ask questions and want to know stuff, that makes me feel good.

Or, as another guide described, interactions are better when tourists are friendly and willing to talk:

    I think people in the States are happy, relaxed, and not sad….That’s why I like to talk to you, people from the United States. You’re like my family. It’s very good….You’re happy, we talk to each other…

However, establishing a friendship may depend not only on friendliness during the initial encounter, but on having the opportunity to connect again. For instance, a guide explained:

    …if the people are friendly, if I see them again, there’s that friendship that is established. The sort of seeds of a friendship are established and I feel that’s a positive thing, a good thing that I enjoy.
In summary, guide-tourist interactions are facilitated when each senses the other is supportive and accepting. This is manifested through smiling, being open, friendly and talkative, using humor, and being easy-going.

**Status Equality**

Equality in status has been suggested as an important factor to facilitate interactions between culturally different individuals (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998; Pettigrew, 1998). Thus, if guides and tourists view each other as equal in status, the potential for positive interactions is enhanced. Results of this study support this claim. In most cases, guides and tourists viewed each other as equals. Specifically, tourists respected guides for their knowledge and skills. For example, a tourist expressed:

> It’s amazing to see how much someone could just like be in the forest and completely support themselves. Like, I mean someone like [Guide] could get like, lost in the forest and like…feed himself, well, he couldn’t get lost, like, he could like, feed himself and like, shelter himself, and it’s just pretty amazing. How like, completely un-self-sufficient I am. It’s embarrassing, you know.

And, a guide repeated what a tourist told him:

> There’s two things that are different between us and you. He says, I went to a university with four walls to study books that another man like me wrote. So you are talking to me about something that’s more profound than what I know and without the use of any books, without having to go to any four walls.

Guides also felt equality with tourists, and recognized their own knowledge in comparison to tourists. For instance, a guide remarked:

> Once they’re here, there is no difference. These different professions and all that don’t have a lot of meaning here in this environment, so there’s an equality. They don’t feel less, nor do they feel more and I don’t feel less or
more either…. In this environment, since they come here with, dressed to go out on a hike, it's also, that visually I’m not imagining them in their professional attire, so you don’t feel that difference either. If I didn’t ask, I would never know that they were, you would never notice any sort of difference. Like for example, if a doctor comes, I say, Well, you’re a doctor of medicine in your community, but I am a doctor of medicine here in my community.

However, although guides and tourists view each other as equals, differences in level of development may yet represent a disparity in status. For example, some guides expressed concern that tourists wouldn’t like the accommodation or food, which suggests a feeling of inequality—that these may not be up to tourist standards. For example:

Maybe she won’t feel for example, good in the bed I’m giving her. Or perhaps, with respect to the food, I was concerned about, if the food would sit well with her or not, so I’m careful, but I’m always a little bit worried, how things are going to sit with people, because of what they’re used to.

However, if tourists show enjoyment, these feelings may dissipate, with positive ramifications for the guide:

But when I see that she ate everything and she even asked for a fresco and it sounded like, she said that she slept well, then I figure, Ok, it went over ok….

Furthermore, guides can facilitate this by engaging tourists as much as possible, as described here:

I’m very careful because me as a guide doesn’t feel what the other person is feeling. A lot of people don’t show it, so I always maintain a certain care and carefulness. So I show myself to be super, super interested in them, so that she doesn’t feel isolated. But after the experience, I feel that we became closer, that those distances between the worlds become smaller.

Yet, guides describe interactions with tourists that suggest disparities in status equality. As noted earlier, there are tourists who attempt to bargain down prices, or who are overly demanding. It can be inferred by these actions that these tourists feel they are in a position of power over the guides. Having power in and of itself, however, is not
necessarily an impediment to the tourist/guide interaction. For instance, the following tourist’s description of how he ended up on a tour with an indigenous guide reflects an acknowledgment of power in the relationship, but also how he used it to create a positive interaction.

And that’s how we ended up on this tour today. You know, is [a friend] knows these people and just say, hey, you know it’s genuine, it’s real, they’re good people, it’s an Indian tribe, they need the money, they need to try to sustain their life, let’s support them. And we’re like, yeah, that sounds good, let’s do that, so.

Overall, when tourists and guides perceived themselves to be at equal status level, interactions were positive. Tourists and guides indicated this through recognizing and respecting the knowledge of guides, through dressing in similar clothing suitable for hiking in the forest, and (for tourists) to show comfort and enjoyment with the amenities provided.

Communication and Language

Cohen (1983) found language barriers contributed to harmonious relationships between hosts and guests. Alternatively, Tucker (2001) did not perceive language as a constraint to host-tourist interactions. Results from this study do not support Cohen’s (1983) findings. While tourist-guide interactions were often described as positive despite language difficulties (consistent with Tucker, 2001), no data suggested language difficulties to be a facilitator to interactions.

For some tourists and guides, however, language was perceived to be a constraint to deeper-level interactions. For example, a tourist indicated: “I do think that the language is, is a big barrier for people who don’t speak Spanish, it is kind of hard.”
Another tourist remarked: “I guess, yeah, language skills. Of course… it would have been easier if he talked a little better English, and on my part, better Spanish.” Guides also expressed desire to learn English: “To know English, I sometimes come across people who don’t speak any Spanish and there’s a barrier between us that can only be crossed if I know English.” Thus, in general, tourists wished they spoke better Spanish, and guides wished they could speak English.

Using a translator helped to convey information, but did influence interactions, making them less direct and less spontaneous. For example, a tourist explained:

…the bilingual side of it would’ve helped a bit more, maybe. It’s quite difficult to make it spontaneous as well when [Guide] says something and then it has to be translated for us….So that’s definitely something that, if we improved on the Spanish, you’d be able to pick up straightaway, and it might keep things flowing a bit better.

Or, when asked if using a translator made it difficult to communicate to tourists, a guide responded: “Yes, because you end up not speaking directly to them, but to the translator.”

Whether language is perceived as a barrier may depend on motivation and desire. For some people, language barriers may not matter as much as to others, perhaps because the experience of living the indigenous lifestyle doesn't require in-depth conversation, and for some people the experience—the participation and the observation—may be enough to give them a sense of the lifestyle and customs and to feel an understanding of the people. But, for others, learning more about the indigenous lifestyle requires talking, having conversation; it's not enough just to be there, to observe, to participate.

Particularly, if tourists are focused more on learning specific, detailed information from guides, language becomes a constraint. For instance, a tourist described:

Things are easier if you are having conversation like, you know, little stuff, like what’s your name and all these things, but if you really want to know
what they’re thinking and how the community works, and, and value systems, all these details, yeah. I felt like I was limited by [not speaking Spanish].

On the other hand, if the focus is more on having an experience or having fun, language may not be a barrier to interactions. For example, when asked if language was a barrier in communicating with guides, a tourist explained:

Oh, only, only, only slightly. I mean, we also brought a few of the, a few of the kids from San Jose with us…and are, help in translating, but, you know, it’s funny, you can, you can get by. It’s interesting how you can get by if there is, if there’s a desire. And there is a desire here, by these folks, that they just, they just, they want, they want to be hospitable and helpful, and it’s just amazing how, without, even without knowing the language, you can be totally successful, being here, it’s just, it’s, it’s amazing, it really is.

Another tourist described her experience:

You know, of course if I, if I could speak Spanish and totally understand what they are saying, it would be much more, um, educational. But just for the experience, I think it’s just, amazing experience, I, I don’t think it, I don’t feel that my lack of Spanish language prevented me from having fun over there, having, learning a lot there, so.

Or, another tourist described his interaction with a guide as a “neat experience”:

Yeah, we talked, we talked for a little bit. I mean, my Spanish is not very good, and her English is non-existent, so it was really, a really neat, kind of a, kind of a, experience. But we came back together, and, and she calls me [a pet name].

In many cases, guides were able to use non-verbal means of engaging tourists in interacting with them and in learning about the environment; such as making animal sounds, pointing out wildlife, demonstrating usage of plants, inviting tourists to eat fruits from the forest, singing, or playing in waterfalls with them. I believe this contributed to the success of the experience for tourists.
In addition, guides and tourists can engage each other in learning the other’s language, which can be another means of getting to know each other and result in positive interactions. A guide described his interaction with a tourist:

She arrived in Bribri, very contented that I met her, didn’t speak a lot of Spanish….So I told her I didn’t speak very much English, mostly Spanish and Bribri. So I told her I was gonna teach her a little bit of Spanish, and a little bit of Bribri also, because she’s in an area where those two languages are spoken. And then, you teach me a little English. She said, Oh, very good!

Plus, there are ways guides can help tourists who don’t speak the language well:

We have experiences of people who have come here for six months, in some very few cases, one year, and people that come here and didn’t speak a word of Spanish, and they leave here speaking Spanish and understanding Spanish. And because of that, we learned that, it’s not that the people doesn’t want to talk, it’s maybe they don’t understand it, the language, the Spanish language. So we try to go out of our way and try to explain things very easily….Yeah, it’s important, and maybe that can limit, but we try to overcome that situation, that it doesn’t become to be a barrier, or create an isolation…we try to overcome that situation by speaking more slowly and clearly….

This can result in more positive interactions for tourists. On the other hand, interactions are impeded if guides do not attempt to help with language. For instance, a tourist discussed his interaction with a guide from another country:

…whereas the older guide really only spoke Spanish, and he would tolerate your Spanish and he would understand your Spanish, but he wouldn’t, certainly wouldn’t go out of his way to like, help you with your Spanish.

Seeing tourists try to communicate, or knowing that they want to even if they don’t speak the language well or at all, influences interactions for guides. Thus, it is important for tourists to attempt to communicate, even if what they say isn’t understood.

As described by a guide:
And he didn’t speak Spanish, but he was very happy, very effusive. He didn’t speak Spanish but he was happy. He talked a lot, I didn’t understand him, but that’s something I liked about him.

Guides perceive this to be positive for the tourists as well:

But people have come that don’t speak, definitely don’t speak, but they want to talk. They speak in English, and they tell us things, I have no idea what they are saying. I try to understand something to entertain them, but the thing that I like is that even though they don’t understand Spanish, he goes and talks to the children and the children repeat what he says, and he seems very happy. It’s like a motivation for him to spend time and talk to the children and the people.

However, guides also discussed the importance of a two-way exchange with tourists to establish friendship. Although other methods of communication can be used, the ability to communicate verbally clearly would facilitate the creation of deeper relationships and a deeper understanding of each other. But perhaps in the absence of language fluency, tourists can utilize other methods to convey information, much as guides do. For example, tourists can bring photographs of their homes and families, play music or sing, or bring crafts or arts to share with guides.

**Conclusion and Implications**

Through this study I sought to understand factors that influence interactions between guides and tourists. I did this by (a) focusing specifically on indigenous tour guides in ecotourism, (b) offering the perspectives of tour guides and tourists, and (c) utilizing the Contact Hypothesis, with additions and amendments based on tourism literature, as a framework.

Many factors influenced guide-tourist interactions. Specifically, small group size (Cohen, 1972; Smith, 1997); opportunities for intimate vs. casual contact (Allport, 1979;
Amir, 1998; Cohen, 1972; Heuman, 2005; Pearce, 1982a, 1994; Pettigrew, 1998; Prosser, 1994; Smith, 1997; Tucker, 2001; generation of a supportive environment (Allport, 1979; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998; Heuman, 2005) through various personality attributes like smiling, being open, friendly, and/or easy-going, and through using humor (Howard et al., 2001); showing interest in the other; and, perception of equal status (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998; Ap, 1992; Beeftink, 2004; Heuman, 2005; Pettigrew, 1998; Stevens, 1991) all facilitated guide-tourist interactions. In addition, some tourist and guide characteristics were also found to facilitate interactions; including having a desire to interact and meet people with different perspectives (Pizam et al., 2000), and having similar interests. These factors, which support certain aspects of the Contact Hypothesis, are summarized in Table 4.

However, the results of this study also indicate that many factors could be either facilitators or impediments, or could have little or no bearing on the interaction. For example, longer tours provide more opportunities for interaction (supporting Cohen, 1983; Tucker, 2001), but positive interactions occurred even on short tours (supporting Beeftink, 2004). In addition, engaging in interactions with guides who were of similar age was a facilitator for several tourists; for others, it did not seem to matter.

In some cases, specific factors were facilitators for guides, but impediments for tourists. For instance, tourists with prior knowledge could be a facilitator for some guides; while disparities in tourist level of knowledge were an impediment for some tourists.

Furthermore, tour activity was predicted to be a facilitator (Arnould & Price, 1993; Beeftink, 2004; Gale & Beeftink, 2004; Heuman, 2005), and in certain regards it was:
for instance, guides enjoyed sharing their knowledge with tourists, and guides and tourists had fun participating in activities such as hiking or swimming in waterfalls together. However, in some cases tour activity was instead an impediment, perhaps in part because the activities were not geared towards working together to reach a common goal, but also because the activities limited the ability to engage in conversation.

The influence of language difficulties on guide-tourist interactions also was context-dependent. Many guides and tourists noted that language difficulties may prevent deeper-level conversations and would have preferred being able to speak each other’s language more fluently; yet in many cases, these difficulties did not pose a barrier between guides and tourists or prevent a feeling of goodwill toward the other (as in Tucker, 2001).

Contrary to prior literature (Alreshoud & Koeske, 1997; Doxey, 1975), perceptions of cultural differences were not necessarily a barrier to tourist-host interactions. In fact, cultural exchange and learning about one another’s cultures formed the basis for friendship between many guides and tourists. In addition, while tours generally focus on tourists learning about the guide’s environment and culture, data from this study suggests it is equally important for guides to have the opportunity to learn about tourists’ cultures. To facilitate this, perhaps tour agencies can build in an exchange component, even for short tours, in which tourists are invited to share some aspect of their home life with guides. Making use of “down” time, such as meals (or evening hours during multi-day tours), and getting tourists involved in as many aspects of everyday activities, can provide additional opportunities for tourists and guides to chat informally and learn about each other on a more personal level.
Other techniques can be utilized to facilitate relationships between tourists and indigenous guides. Guides and tourists can help each other feel comfortable by smiling, being open, friendly, and easy-going; being prepared and willing to share information and participate in cultural exchange; using humor; showing an interest in the other by asking questions and engaging in conversation; making an effort to communicate regardless of one’s ability with the other’s language; being respectful and accepting of the other; acknowledging the other’s knowledge and skills; and being cognizant and flexible with regards to tourist physical ability. Additionally, tour agencies can play a vital role in helping tourists to: develop realistic expectations of the tour, understand the role of the tour guide, and be respectful of rules/guidelines associated with tours. They can also deal with payment, thus negating the issues of bartering with guides, etc. and keeping the nature of the interaction more in line with a traditional host-guest relationship (as in Heuman, 2005).

In sum, the results of this study further the understanding of factors that influence interactions between indigenous tour guides and foreign tourists. By employing qualitative methods of (a) in-depth interviewing with both guides and tourists, and (b) participant observation, I was able to expand current knowledge of guide-tourist interactions. For a summary of the extended and amended conceptual framework, see Table 4.

Going beyond identifying factors that influence interactions, I have attempted to determine why, and under what conditions, a factor either facilitates or impedes an interaction. These explanations and conditions are outlined as part of the extended conceptual framework in Table 4. For instance, short tour length of itself is not a barrier
(indeed, guides and tourists have fun doing activities together and can generate feelings of goodwill towards each other); rather, the lack of unstructured time that may occur in short tours specifically appears to limit the amount of cross-cultural exchange taking place (especially guides being able to learn about and from tourists). Alternatively, longer tours provide more opportunities for contact, but unless these are taken advantage of by involving tourists in aspects of everyday life, especially sharing meals together, these opportunities may be lost. Furthermore, depending on an individual’s focus for the tour, language difficulties may or may not be an issue. For guides desiring a learning experience from tourists, and for tourists interested in gaining a detailed understanding of the guide’s culture and environment, inability to speak the other’s language fluently presents a barrier. However, language ability seems to be of less consequence for those focused on having an adventurous experience and having fun, provided respect is maintained and some attempts at communicating, however poor, are made.

Moreover, I have identified additional factors that influence interactions for guides and tourists. For example, tourists may identify more readily with guides who are of a similar age or stage in life as them. Plus, guides and tourists may feel a greater affinity towards the other if they share common interests, philosophies of life, or life experiences; and this can be enhanced by ensuring opportunities to explore those interests together.

Some of these findings challenge previous research. Perceived cultural dissimilarity, for instance, was not found to be a barrier to interactions (as in Alreshoud & Koeske, 1997, and Doxey, 1975). Despite describing each other’s cultures as very different from their own, guides and tourists often formed relationships through learning
about each other’s culture. Furthermore, language barriers did not contribute to positive interactions (as in Cohen, 1983). Rather, as described above, although language presented some barriers, positive interactions also occurred despite lack of language ability (as in Tucker, 2001).

Consequently, I have proposed amendments and additions to the Contact Hypothesis in a tourism context (see Table 4). This extends the work of Allport (1979), Amir (1998), Pettigrew (1998) and others by suggesting amendments and additions to contact theory, which reflect the complexity of guide-tourist interactions. Given the extent to which tourism provides intercultural contact, and the repercussions of intercultural understanding (or lack thereof) on society, further examination of factors that influence intercultural interactions is warranted. For example, future research in different contexts would be of value as would accounting for varying tour lengths; group sizes, activities, and levels of involvement; and different indigenous groups. In addition, quantitative studies should be developed to encapsulate the factors in the extended framework, especially in different contexts. Finally, I have provided recommendations for tourism providers and educators with the hope that positive guide-tourist interactions will contribute to greater intercultural understanding between individuals, communities, and beyond.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Barriers/Challenges</th>
<th>Discussion/Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tour characteristics:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tour group size</em></td>
<td>Individual or small group size</td>
<td>Large group size (10 people too many)</td>
<td>Even small group size limiting for some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities for intimate contact</strong></td>
<td>Involvement in everyday activities, meals and evening</td>
<td>Meals and housing separate from guides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tour length</strong></td>
<td>Multi-day</td>
<td>Day tours with lack of unstructured time</td>
<td>Participating in activities; meeting new people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tour activity (Cooperation / common goal)</strong></td>
<td>Guides sharing knowledge; having fun together</td>
<td>Can limit ability to converse; tourist physical limitations</td>
<td>Cooperation not needed for tour activity; flexible for tourist ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Dynamics</strong></td>
<td>Opportunity to see from different perspectives</td>
<td>Discomfort with others; disparity in knowledge level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourist and guide characteristics:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Similar age</em></td>
<td>Identify more readily</td>
<td>Feel less in common if in different stage of life</td>
<td>Positive interactions regardless of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Similar interests</strong></td>
<td>Similar interest, approach to life, life experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>Requires opportunity to explore interests together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Tourist in group with prior knowledge</td>
<td>Tourist lack of knowledge</td>
<td>Guides enjoy sharing information; positive interactions despite lack of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivations and expectations</strong></td>
<td>Going with the flow; genuine desire to interact and share</td>
<td>Overly demanding; haggling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural similarity</strong></td>
<td>Exploring differences; sharing and learning from each other</td>
<td>Lack of openness to change preconceived images</td>
<td>Level of similarity does not matter; respect for and openness to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supportive environment</strong></td>
<td>Smiling; being friendly, easy-going; showing interest in and acceptance of the other</td>
<td>Being too serious, intense, disrespecting or demanding</td>
<td>Feeling comfortable, acceptance, openness, respect, sense of camaraderie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status equality</strong></td>
<td>Respect; recognition of knowledge; positive use of power</td>
<td>Being overly demanding; haggling</td>
<td>Concern over disparity in level of development can be overcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language barriers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can prevent deeper-level conversations, learning about each other</td>
<td>Positive interactions despite language ability, especially if focus on having an experience and fun, attempting to communicate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


CHAPTER 4
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The overarching purpose of this study was to understand indigenous tour guides’ and foreign tourists’ perceptions of their interactions with each other, and of factors that influence their interactions. This was done by exploring interactions between indigenous tour guides and tourists in an ecotourism setting, and accounting for the perspectives of both tour guides and tourists. This chapter is intended to summarize the findings and implications discussed in the preceding two chapters, and to highlight recommendations for future research on this topic.

Summary of Key Findings

I responded to four research questions. To address the first two research questions I examined the roles and relationships experienced by indigenous tour guides and foreign tourists. Based on the results, I expanded and amended and extended Cohen’s (1985), Weiler and Davis’ (1993), and Howard et al.’s (2001) models of guide roles. I did this by accounting for the additional roles experienced by indigenous, ecotourism guides; reflecting the complexity of their interactions with foreign tourists; and including tourists’ roles in the guide-tourist interaction, thereby reflecting the two-way nature of such interactions.

Findings support certain aspects of Cohen’s, and Weiler and Davis’ models. For instance, as with the “leadership” roles discussed by Cohen, guides act as caretakers, entertainers, and on-site motivators for tourists. As caretakers they provide direction, access, security, and safety. As entertainers and motivators, guides use humor, often as
way to get tourists to try new things and to have fun. The study findings also support Cohen’s “mediatory” role of teacher/communicator; that is, guides help tourists to experience and learn about the natural environment and indigenous life. They also act as “cultural brokers,” although in a different manner than discussed by Cohen. Cohen suggested that guides act as intermediaries between tourists and the local people. Indigenous guides, though, are members of the culture they are representing. Thus, they mediate more so by explaining their culture in ways tourists can understand (e.g., using analogies, doing demonstrations) than by negotiating between tourists and the local population (as in Cohen’s model). Further, in addition to being “teachers” guides are often “students” who learn from tourists about ecology and/or their cultures and environments. Furthermore, guides serve as personal “motivators” for tourists, motivating them to make changes in their lives at home.

Tourists also adopt the roles of “student,” “teacher,” and “motivator”. As “students” they pay attention (or not), ask questions, show interest, and actively participate in the tour. As “teachers” they share or exchange information about the environment or about their home culture. And, by enabling guides to speak freely, they fulfill the role of “motivator.”

Weiler and Davis’ (1993) model extends Cohen’s model by addressing resource management roles pertaining specifically to ecotourism guides. Findings from this study support these roles, but include modifications for indigenous ecotourism guides. For example, Weiler and Davis’ guide role of “on-site resource manager” is fulfilled by indigenous guides in this study through teaching tourists about the indigenous way of living with the natural environment, ecological challenges they face, and local
conservation projects they organize and participate in. Furthermore, indigenous ecotourism guides engage in the resource management role of “environmental interpreter,” as discussed by Weiler and Davis (1993) and by Howard et al. (2001). They do this by instilling both a long-term environmental ethic (ecotourism guide), and values related to indigenous communities and knowledge (indigenous guide). In the setting for this study, the roles for environmental and cultural interpretation complement each other, since BriBri and Cabecar indigenous values focus on environmental conservation. However, through their interpretation, guides also motivated tourists to help indigenous communities, and to preserve indigenous knowledge.

Tourists not only acted as “conservation supporters” and “community supporters,” but also as “motivators” in terms of environmental conservation. By showing their interest in and wonder of the natural world and culture with which guides are so accustomed (and perhaps take for granted), they help renew guides’ appreciation of their own environment and culture, thus further inspiring them to protect these assets. The motivation which guides and tourists provide for each other in terms of environmental and cultural appreciation can indeed have repercussions on environmental and cultural sustainability, both of which are aims of ecotourism (Honey, 1999).

Based on the study results, I also developed additional roles pertaining to the relationships sought by and experienced between guides and tourists. Guides begin to establish a relationship with tourists by “welcoming” them into their communities not just as sources of income, but as friends or family. They further “promote” this relationship by making efforts to get to know tourists on a personal level, and by encouraging tourists to open up and interact more fully with them, their community, and with the environment.
Tourists likewise “promote” a relationship with guides by making efforts to communicate and exchange information, by encouraging guides to open up and interact more fully with them, by making efforts to understand guides as human beings (not merely indigenous representatives), and by showing an appreciation for indigenous life.

The second two research questions in this study were addressed by exploring the factors that indigenous guides and tourists perceive influence their interactions as well as why and under what conditions a factor facilitates or impedes an interaction. I utilized a conceptual framework based on the Contact Hypothesis and on the tourism impact literature to guide my approach to these questions. The results were used to amend and extend the Contact Hypothesis to better capture interactions between indigenous tour guides and foreign tourists, and to reflect the complexities of such interactions.

Some factors found to influence interactions supported previous literature. For instance, small group size (Cohen, 1972; Smith, 1997); opportunities for intimate vs. casual contact (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Cohen, 1972; Heuman, 2005; Pearce, 1982a, 1994; Pettigrew, 1998; Prosser, 1994; Smith, 1997; Tucker, 2001); generation of a supportive environment (Allport, 1979; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998; Heuman, 2005) through various personality attributes like smiling, being open, friendly, and/or easy-going, and, through using humor (Howard et al., 2001); showing interest in the other; and, perception of equal status (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998; Ap, 1992; Beeftink, 2004; Heuman, 2005; Pettigrew, 1998; Stevens, 1991) all facilitated guide-tourist interactions. In addition, some tourist and guide characteristics were found to facilitate interactions, including having a desire to interact and meet people with different perspectives (Pizam et al., 2000).
I also identified factors not addressed in previous studies. For example, although previous literature suggested personality (Allport, 1979; Amir, 1998) and motivation (Pearce, 1982a, 1994; Pizam et al., 2000) influence interactions, I identified specific tourist or guide characteristics as influencers; such as having similar interests, being a similar age, and having a certain level of knowledge.

In addition, the results challenged previous assumptions about guide-tourist interactions. Previous literature suggests that cultural dissimilarity poses barriers for interactions (Alreshoud & Koeske, 1997; Doxey, 1975). However, I found that, as long as individuals come with an open mind and display respect, perceived cultural differences can be a basis for, and facilitator of, guide-tourist interactions. That is, in learning from each other about their ways of life, friendships are formed. Also, based on previous research, tour activity was anticipated to be a facilitator (Arnould & Price, 1993; Beeftink, 2004; Gale & Beeftink, 2004; Heuman, 2005), but in this study, at times, it was an impediment.

In addition, results revealed complexities that challenge the practice of simply labeling a factor as a facilitator or impediment. For example, longer tours provided more opportunity for interaction (supporting Cohen, 1983; Tucker, 2001), but positive interactions occurred even on short tours (supporting Beeftink, 2004). And, language difficulties prevented deeper-level conversations, but did not pose a barrier between guides and tourists, or prevent feelings of goodwill towards each other (as in Tucker, 2001). Furthermore, tour activity was often a facilitator—a means of having fun and exploring together—but it was also an impediment because it limited the ability for guides and tourists to converse. Thus, I was also able to clarify specific contexts or
conditions in which a factor may facilitate or impede an interaction, and highlight
differences between a guide’s and a tourist’s point of view.

For instance, short tour length of itself is not a barrier (indeed, guides and tourists
have fun doing activities together and can generate feelings of goodwill towards each
other); rather, the lack of unstructured time that may occur in short tours appears to limit
the amount of cross-cultural exchange taking place (especially guides being able to learn
about and from tourists). Since many guides highly value cross-cultural exchange, this
may limit the interaction, from a guide’s point of view. Alternatively, longer tours
provide more opportunities for contact, but unless these are taken advantage of by
involving tourists in aspects of everyday life, especially sharing meals together, these
opportunities may be lost. Moreover, depending on an individual’s focus for the tour,
language difficulties may or may not be an issue. For guides desiring a learning
experience from tourists, and for tourists interested in gaining a detailed understanding of
the guide’s culture and environment, inability to speak the other’s language fluency
presents a barrier. However, my study findings suggest that language ability may be of
less consequence for those focused on having an adventurous experience and having fun,
provided respect is maintained and some attempts at communicating, however poor, are
made.

**Implications**

Based on the results, I have outlined several practical implications for guide
training and for tourist education and preparation. To begin, tourists want to be involved
in everyday aspects of indigenous life, and respond well to a guide’s use of analogies and
humor during interactions. Thus (as in Howard et al., 2001), guide training in other indigenous settings should include techniques (e.g., use of humor and analogies) to fully engage tourists in the experience and to communicate about indigenous culture. Further, how to: (a) make use of “down” time, such as meals (or evening hours during multi-day tours), and (b) get tourists involved in as many aspects of everyday activities, should be reviewed. Using these techniques will result in additional opportunities for tourists and guides to chat informally and learn about each other on a personal level.

Results also indicated that occasional misunderstandings occurred between tourists and guides regarding expectations of the physical conditions of the trail and fitness levels. Hence, guide training should also include a review of cultural differences regarding fitness levels, how to set clear expectations regarding tour difficulty level, and steps for monitoring and setting the pace according to the needs of the slowest hiker. Furthermore, training can include guidelines for tour agencies that can help to promote guidelines for expected fitness levels on tours, including specifics on trail conditions.

While tours generally focus on tourists learning about the guide’s environment and culture, data from this study suggests it is equally important for guides to have the opportunity to learn about tourists’ cultures. Given that guides prefer a two-way interaction and cultural exchange with tourists, tour agencies should encourage tourists to ask questions and take an active role in the tour. Perhaps tour agencies and guides can also build in an exchange component, even for short tours, in which tourists are invited to share some aspect of their home life with guides. For example, during mealtimes or breaks, tourists can show photos of their home towns or countries; explain, show, or demonstrate leisure or recreation activities (e.g., sports, games, art, music, food); or talk
about an important cultural event or holiday they celebrate. Given the effect of two-way interaction on guides’ motivation and satisfaction, as well as tourists’ preference for spontaneous, non-scripted tours, it is in everyone’s best interest to keep each tour unique. Otherwise, a bored guide, lacking input from tourists, may simply recite the same stories in the same way, resulting in an unintended, and undesired, “script.” By tour agencies (and guides) encouraging tourists to ask questions and share information, tours can be more relevant and interesting for tourists, while also adding variety for guides.

Several other techniques can be utilized to facilitate relationships between tourists and indigenous guides. For example, guides and tourists can help each other feel comfortable by smiling, being open, friendly, and easy-going; showing an interest in the other by asking questions and engaging in conversation; making an effort to communicate regardless of one’s ability with the other’s language; being respectful and accepting of the other; acknowledging the other’s knowledge and skills; and being cognizant and flexible with regards to tourist physical ability. In addition, tourists as well as guides can use humor to maintain a friendly atmosphere.

Finally, tourists were sensitive to guide motivations in the interaction, especially pertaining to the exchange of money for services. In fact, for tourists, it is important to feel that guides have a genuine desire to interact with them, not just as a means to make money. Similarly, guides feel a better connection with tourists who are interested in sharing and interacting with them and have negative experiences when tourists try to haggle down prices or go on hikes free of charge. If tour agencies can deal with payment, this may help to negate the issues of bartering with guides and can keep the nature of the interaction more in line with a traditional host-guest relationship (as in Heuman, 2005).
Limitations

This study was limited by the amount of time I had to devote to data collection and the number of tours occurring during that time period. During the second phase of data collection, I only had two months from which to observe tours and conduct interviews. Because of the inconsistency of tours in the region, and the tendency for tourists to book tours only a day or two beforehand, I was not able to arrange participant-observation of tours or interviews with tourists in advance, or to secure a set amount of tours during the time allocated for the study. To deal with the situation, I adopted an opportunistic approach—to take opportunities when they presented themselves rather than relying on a prescribed plan. Further, I had intended to continue sampling and data collection until a point of saturation was reached (until interviews added no new information about a category, its properties, and its relationship to other categories). Although I was able to seek out confirming and disconfirming cases, my ability to reach data saturation was limited by time and number of tours.

In addition, I had intended to conduct pre-and post-tour interviews with guides and with tourists. Pre-tour guide interviews were proposed to examine motivations, prior experiences and relationships with tourists, and guide training. Pre-tour tourist interviews were proposed to examine motivations and expectations, prior travel and tour guide experiences, and pre-trip information used for planning. However, although some guides participated in two interviews—one prior to my participation in the tour, and the second following the tour; others only participated in one interview—either before or after an observed tour. And, some guides were interviewed, but I was unable to participate in their tour, or interview tourists who participated in a tour with them. In
terms of the foreign tourists, I was only able to secure post-tour interviews. As a result, I addressed the questions intended for pre-tour interviews during the post-tour interviews. Conducting only post-tour interviews with guides or tourists did not pose a problem in that I feel I was adequately able to address all the questions. However, while I obtained very useful, valuable information from the guide pre-tour interviews (those without an accompanying post-tour interview), as well as the guide interviews with whom I did not participate in a tour, I was not able to address specific issues that arose during a tour. Thus, I was not able to compare guide and tourist perspectives regarding a particular event, and, my understanding of the context was not as thorough.

Some of the guides spoke only Spanish and/or BriBri, which posed a problem as I have only a basic understanding of the Spanish language. Therefore, for most guide interviews, I used a translator. This may have resulted in a loss of detail in the data. Also, one guide interview (with a guide who spoke basic English) was conducted without a translator using a mix of English and Spanish. The recording of this interview was later reviewed by the translator and revealed limitations in the communication and understanding by both parties.

**Future Research Directions**

There are several recommendations for future research on guide-tourist interactions. By purposeful design, I utilized a sample of tourists who booked travel with a non-profit ecotourism agency that organizes tours directly with indigenous guides. However, results from guide interviews suggest there may be a difference in interactions with tourists who book their tours with this agency and those who come with alternate
tour operators or on their own. Some of the alternate tour operators incorporate tours with indigenous guides as part of a larger tour using a non-indigenous and, perhaps, non-local guide. In the future researchers should examine the influence of third-party guides on indigenous guide-tourist interactions, especially if their interests are associated with tourism impacts on local guides and communities and/or the effect on a tourist’s experiences with, and understanding of, indigenous people. Exploring potential differences between direct (i.e., the indigenous guide is the main tour guide) and indirect (i.e., the indigenous tour is mediated by a third party guide) interactions between indigenous guides and tourists can provide additional insight on these issues.

This study included different locations with varying degrees of remoteness. Some sites were located within a few miles of a nearby popular tourist destination and were easily accessible by road; others were further removed, yet still accessible by road; and some sites were only accessible by boat or by foot. Although I did not attempt to address differences in interactions based on location or accessibility, both may play a role in guide-tourist interactions. Thus, I recommend that in the future researchers include geographical factors in analysis. For example, future studies can account for ease of access to indigenous territory, as well as distance from more conventional tourist destinations.

Longitudinal research investigating longer-term effects of guide-tourist interactions is also recommended. If tourism is to be considered a force for peace, we need to understand not only the short-term effects of intercultural contact on tourists and hosts, but also the longer-term ramifications of these interactions. Following up with tourists at specific times after their experience can help researchers to assess if and how
much intercultural contact with indigenous guides influences tourists’ future decisions and interactions with culturally different others. Specific examples of questions that could be addressed through a longitudinal design include: Have they become more active as citizens of a global world? Do they seek out friendships with culturally different others? And, do they help others resolve interpersonal/intercultural conflicts? Likewise, future research can follow guides over a number of years. Do their feelings towards tourists change? Do they interact differently with tourists the more experience they get? And, do they approach their relationship with tourists differently over time?

I found that certain personality attributes, such as being easy-going, open, and friendly can facilitate guide-tourist interactions. I also demonstrated that whether or not a factor was perceived as a facilitator or impediment (or neither) could depend on one’s motivation for the interaction (e.g., language abilities). Based on these results, future research should be directed to expand and provide greater depth to the ways in which personality and motivation influence guide-tourist interactions.

Furthermore, this study was limited to tourists and indigenous guides in the Talamanca region of Costa Rica. Future research in other contexts and with different indigenous groups would be of value. For example, this study revealed similarities and differences in roles adopted by indigenous tour guides in this setting and those examined by Howard et al. (2001). In particular, indigenous guides in both settings used similar techniques to help tourists feel comfortable and to portray indigenous life. Yet, guide roles related to environmental interpretation varied. This result may be related to the unique environmental setting and type of tourism in that setting, and/or differing indigenous beliefs. Thus, qualitative research focusing on other indigenous groups and
contextual settings, especially considering the type of tourism and indigenous beliefs, can add to knowledge about the roles of indigenous guides and their relationships with tourists.

This study re-examined the influence of cultural similarity on interactions. Research can continue to explore this influence by comparing and contrasting tourists from different cultures as well as their interactions with indigenous guides. Such research should also consider tourists’ pre-conceived images of indigenous people, and both guide and tourist motivations for interactions. Quantitative studies can be designed to incorporate these variables and assess outcomes of the interactions.

Also, researchers can continue to explore the influence of tour length, group size, activities, and levels of involvement on guide-tourist interactions. In particular, quantitative studies can be developed to encapsulate the factors in the extended Contact framework, and be conducted with a larger sample. For example, different ecotourism activities (such as hiking, camping, horseback riding, paddling, cultural presentations, community projects, etc.) can be examined for their perceived level of teamwork involved and their influence on guide-tourist interactions in different settings.

Finally, utilizing participant observation followed by semi-structured interviews was particularly useful in this study for acquiring detailed, context-rich information. By referring to specific observations from a tour experience, I was able to ask interviewees direct questions related to that occurrence, thus promoting detailed rather than general responses. In addition, I was able to refer to a particular instance during both guide and tourist interviews. This allowed me to obtain different perspectives of the same event. Furthermore, participant observation contributed to an enhanced understanding of the
tour context, which aided and informed data analysis. Future research examining similar phenomenon would greatly benefit from using this combination of methods.


APPENDIX A

TOURISM SYSTEM IN TALAMANCA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not-for Profit, Local</td>
<td>ATEC: Asociación Talamanqueña de Ecoturismo y Conservación (Talamancan Association of Ecotourism and Conservation)</td>
<td><strong>Background information:</strong> ATEC was founded in 1989 by local residents who were concerned about rapid social, cultural, and economic changes accompanying increasing tourism due to development to the area when a new highway was opened. Opened an office in Puerto Viejo with international grants but is now self-sustaining. <strong>Main objectives:</strong> To promote the development of an ecological and socially responsible tourism in Talamanca. To promote ethnic pride and cultural expression among the indigenous and Afro-Caribbean residents. To promote the initiation and management of locally owned businesses and tourist services. To serve as a communication center to put visitors in contact with experienced native naturalist guides who offer a variety of interesting, educational field experiences. <strong>Other involvement:</strong> Funded training for 20 guides; currently represent over 100 local guides (Note: Local guides include indigenous and non-indigenous persons).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for Profit, Local</td>
<td>Red Talamanca Ecoturismo Comunitario (Talamanca Community-Based Ecotourism Network)</td>
<td><strong>Background information:</strong> The Talamanca Community-based Ecotourism network is an initiative of Talamanca-Caribe Biological Corridor. It was established in 1998 to promote the development of ecotourism activities in different conservation associations of rural (farm) and indigenous communities located in the Costa Rican South Caribbean Coast. At present, the Talamanca Network comprises 12 organizations. <strong>Main objectives:</strong> To promote environmental conservation and socioeconomic development of the local communities through community-based ecotourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for Profit, Local, Bi-National (Costa Rica)</td>
<td>Red de Ecoturismo Indígena de Talamanca (Indigenous Ecotourism Network)</td>
<td><strong>Background information:</strong> Indigenous Ecotourism Network of Upper Talamanca is made up of 17 community organizations</td>
</tr>
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</table>
**Rica and Panama)**

Network of Upper Talamanca) of Costa Rica and Panama. In 2004 the local communities began to organize in order to develop, strengthen, and implement ecotourism activities in the Talamanca region.

**Main objectives:** To create alternatives for the families, small businesses and community organizations of the region. To engage in activities that use the rich natural resources of indigenous territory in a culturally and environmentally sensitive way. To coordinate, manage, and control the tourist activity within the Indigenous Territory.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Not-for-profit, Local</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Asociación ANAI</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website: <a href="http://anaicr.wordpress.com/">http://anaicr.wordpress.com/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Background information:** Established in 1978. Initially, a loose coalition of founders with a very local focus; evolved into a consolidated organization with a regional focus, working with rural communities of all ethnic groups. Initially, played a major role in the design and execution of projects, while nurturing the capacity for planning and decision-making by local groups. Now, after success establishing organizations and programs, act as a facilitator, providing logistical, institutional, strategic, and managerial support.

**Main objectives:** To nurture locally based transformational processes leading to self-sufficient local (“grassroots”) organizations focusing on the achievement of sustainability.

<table>
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<th>Not-for-profit, National. Acts a tour agency.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ACTUAR:</strong> Asociación Costarricense de Turismo Rural Comunitario (Costa Rican Community-based Rural Tourism Association)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website: <a href="http://www.actuarcostarica.com">www.actuarcostarica.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Background information:** Established in 2001, a network of 30 community-based rural tourism enterprises in Costa Rica that have developed local tourism businesses to generate alternative income sources for the community and continue developing initiatives for environmental conservation purposes. In 2003, opened an office in San Jose. Members include environmental conservation organizations, farming and fishing campesinos, women’s organizations, and indigenous groups.

**Main objectives:** To promote the environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability of community-
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Commercial Tour Operators, Local</th>
<th>Terra Aventuras</th>
<th><strong>Advertised tours include:</strong> Canopy tours, Tortuguero National Park (overnight), Snorkeling and Hiking in Cahuita, Rafting in Pacuare River, Hiking in Gandoca Manzanilo, Quad tours, Indigenous tours.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial Tour Operators, Local</td>
<td>Juppy and Tino Adventures</td>
<td><strong>Advertised tours include:</strong> Kayak tours (river and lagoon), Hiking in Manzanillo, Indian reserve in Talamanca, combination tour of Indian reserve and kayak river, dolphin watching, snorkeling, fishing, birdwatching, waterfall, Tortuguero</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Commercial Tour Operators, Regional (based in Cahuita) | Willie’s Tours | Website: www.willies-costarica-tours.com/  
| | | **Advertised tours include:** BriBri Indian Reserve; Hiking, snorkeling, fishing, dolphin watching in Cahuita; Rafting Pacuare River; Tortuguero trip; Panama Bocas del Toro trip; Cacao house, BriBri handcraft shop; Canopy and Rappelling; Horseback Riding |
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCRIPTS AND QUESTIONS
Participant Observation Informed Consent Script

Thank you for your interest in this study. The purpose of this study is to help me document specific situations involving tour guides and tourists in ecotourism.

The information from this observation will be used in a paper which is part of my studies as a graduate student. It will not be used to evaluate guide performance. I will be observing several other tours in the Talamanca region of Costa Rica, and will combine the observations from all these tours when I write the results for this paper. This way, observations of situations that involve you will not be identified with you personally. In fact, your name and any observations associated with you will remain confidential.

After the tour, if you have any questions or concerns about specific situations I may have observed, or if there are any particular instances that you prefer to be kept out of my analysis, please just let me know. Also, if you have any questions about my role in this tour, please feel free to ask for further explanation. Pictures will not be used in the analysis. Remember, your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

Sincerely,

Karen Beeftink
Guide Interview Verbal Script (English)

Thank you for your interest in this study. The purpose of this interview is to help me understand the factors that influence interactions between tour guides and tourists. Because of your involvement in ecotourism as a guide, I believe you have a unique perspective on this issue. What I’m really looking for is your own personal perceptions of your involvement in ecotourism and your interactions with tourists on this tour.

The information from this interview will be used in a paper which is part of my studies as a graduate student. I will be interviewing several other guides from the Talamanca region of Costa Rica, and will combine the responses from all these interviews when I write the results for this paper. This way, your answers to the questions will not be identified with you personally. Nothing you say will affect your current or future employment as a tour guide. In fact, your name and affiliated answers will remain confidential.

During the interview, if there is anything you do not want to answer for any reason, please just let me know. You do not have to answer all the questions. Also, if you have any questions about what I’m asking or why, please feel free to ask for further explanation. The purpose of the interview is to get your insights and understand your personal experience with the tourists on this tour. If you don’t mind, I would like to use a tape recorder to make sure I accurately register what you say. If you would like to turn it off at any time, just say so. These tapes will remain in my personal possession or in a locked storage box at all times. After I transcribe the tapes, I will erase them completely. Remember, your participation is voluntary. If you choose to withdraw from the study at any time, this will not affect your employment.
Tourist Interview Verbal Script (English)

Thank you for your interest in this study. The purpose of this interview is to help me understand the factors that contribute to positive interactions between tour guides and tourists and your satisfaction with your tour. What I’m really looking for is your personal perceptions on your interactions with tour guides on this tour and your satisfaction with your experience.

The information from this interview will be used in a paper which is part of my studies as a graduate student. It will not be used to evaluate guide performance. I will be interviewing several other tourists who participate in a variety of tours in the Talamanca region of Costa Rica, and will combine the responses from all these interviews when I write the results for this paper. This way, your answers to the questions will not be identified with you personally. In fact, your name and affiliated answers will remain confidential.

During the interview, if there is anything you do not want to answer for any reason, please just let me know. You do not have to answer all the questions. Also, if you have any questions about what I’m asking or why, please feel free to ask for further explanation. The purpose of the interview is to get your insights and understand your personal experience with the tour guides on this tour. If you don’t mind, I would like to use a tape recorder to make sure I accurately register what you say. If you would like to turn it off at any time, just say so. These tapes will remain in my personal possession or in a locked storage box at all times. After I transcribe the tapes, I will erase them completely. Remember, your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time.
RQ1: How do indigenous tour guides describe their interaction with a foreign tourist or tour group?

Data collection tool: In-depth interview
Data collection period: Pre- and post-trip
Sample questions:

Pre-trip
1. What do you do? Can you describe what you do as a tour guide?
2. What characteristics do you associate with tourists?
3. Can you describe the relationship that exists between you and tourists?
4. Is the relationship always the same? If not, why not?

Post-trip
1. Please describe your interactions with the tourists on this trip.
2. In which particular situations were the interactions most positive?
3. In which particular situations were the interactions most negative?
4. Were you comfortable with the tourists? If no, why not? If yes, why?
5. What characteristics do you associate with the tourists?
6. How do you think the tourists perceived of you?
7. How do you think the tourists described you to others?
8. If you could change one aspect of your interaction with the tourists, what would you change?

RQ2: How do foreign tourists describe their interaction with an indigenous tour guide?

Data collection tool: In-depth interview
Data collection period: Pre- and post-trip
Sample questions:

Pre-trip
1. What is the purpose of having a tour guide?
2. What do you expect from your tour guide?
3. What type of interaction do you expect with the tour guide?

Post-trip
1. Please describe your interactions with the tour guide on this trip.
2. In which particular situations were the interactions most positive?
3. In which particular situations were the interactions most negative?
4. Were you comfortable with the tour guide? If no, why not? If yes, why?
5. What characteristics do you associate with the tour guide?
6. How do you think the tour guide perceived of you?
7. How do you think the tour guide described you to others?
8. If you could change one aspect of your interaction with the tour guide, what would you change?
RQ3: What factors influence tourist-guide interactions from a guide’s perspective?

Data collection tool #1: Participant observation  
Data collection period: During trip  
Types of observation to include: tourist-guide interactions, group dynamics, activities, general context

Data collection tool #2: Examination of guide training materials (if appropriate)  
Data collection period: Prior to pre-trip interview

Data collection tool #3: In-depth interview  
Data collection period: Pre and post-trip  
Sample questions:

Pre-trip
1. What characteristics do you associate with tourists?  
2. Can you describe the relationship that exists between you and tourists?  
3. Is the relationship always the same? If no, why not?  
4. How similar or different do you think tourists’ cultures are from yours? In what ways are their cultures different?  
5. Can you describe training you received about tourism and guiding?  
6. Why did you become a guide? Why do you continue working as a guide?  
7. What do you like about guiding? What do you dislike about guiding?

Post-trip
1. What characteristics do you associate with tourists?  
2. Can you describe your relationship with tourists?  
3. Did you learn anything from the tourists? About the tourists?  
4. In which particular situations were the interactions most positive?  
5. In which particular situations were the interactions most negative?  
6. Can you describe how you felt during these interactions? (This question and others may be further refined by referring to a specific observed instance during the tour).  
7. Why do you think that interaction was positive (negative)? What do you think contributed to that interaction being positive (negative)?

RQ4: What factors influence tourist-guide interactions from a tourist’s perspective?

Data collection tool #1: Participant observation  
Data collection period: During trip  
Types of observation to include: tourist-guide interactions, group dynamics, activities, general context

Data collection tool: Examination of pre-trip materials (if available)  
Data collection period: Prior to pre-trip interview
Data collection tool #2: In-depth interview
Data collection period: Pre and post-trip
Sample questions:

Pre-trip
1. What characteristics do you associate with tour guides?
2. What type of relationship do you expect with tour guides?
3. What prior travel experiences have you had?
4. What countries have you visited? For how long?
5. Have you used a tour guide before? If yes, can you describe that (those) experience(s)? How would you describe the guide(s)? What was the guide’s role in the tour?
6. Can you describe any information that you received (or used in planning your overall trip) about this tour and/or the tour guide?
7. How similar or different do you think the tour guide’s culture is from yours? In what ways?
8. Why did you choose to participate in this tour?
9. What do you expect from this tour?
10. Demographic information, including ethnic background and language(s) spoken will be assessed through a preliminary fact sheet.

Post-trip
1. What characteristics would you associate with the tour guide?
2. How would you describe your relationship with the tour guide?
3. Did you learn anything from the tour guide? About the tour guide?
4. In which particular situations were the interactions most positive?
5. In which particular situations were the interactions most negative?
6. Can you describe how you felt during these interactions? (This question and others may be further refined by referring to a specific observed instance during the tour).
7. Why do you think that interaction was positive (negative)? What do you think contributed to that interaction being positive (negative)?
APPENDIX C

ACCOUNT OF RESEARCH PROCESS
I developed two documents accounting the research process for this manuscript. The following booklet chronicles my experiences as a participant-observant during the first phase of data collection. A video documenting the second phase of my on-site data collection can be viewed at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Lg9ISDIQ_k.
Journey to Costa Rica:

A PhD student’s travels and experiences in the country of her research…

Chapter One – The Site Visit

The adventure all began with a phone call. “Hey Karen, WVU wants to run a field course to Costa Rica, are you interested?” This was really a no-brainer. Was I interested? Hell, yeah! It was September of 2006; I was in my last semester of course work for my PhD at Penn State, I was looking for a location from which to base my dissertation research, and my career goal and interest was to teach international field courses. It was quite serendipitous for this to fall into my lap, really.

After receiving and reviewing the initial ideas for the course, developed by a medical doctor with an interest in indigenous communities and a house in the Talamanca region of Costa Rica (Dr. Dave), and a PhD student from Michigan living in Costa Rica (Paul), it was time to check things out for myself. It was time for a site visit. I had never been to Costa Rica, although I had been interested in traveling there, which is evidenced by the fact that I had bought an adventure guidebook for Costa Rica a couple of years back. Finally I would get a chance to use it!

So, in early November of 2006, with funding and the backing of the Office of International Programs (OIP), I set off for Costa Rica. The plan was to meet up with a couple of Dr. Dave’s friends (Judy and Bruz), and stay with them at his house in Cahuita while scouting out areas and meeting potential contacts for the course. My initial landing into San Jose, Costa Rica was a bit bumpy, and I’m not talking about the flight. I was supposed to be picked up at the airport by Judy and Bruz, but they were nowhere to be found. Welcome to Costa Rica! Luckily I speak some...
Spanish, because I couldn’t reach them on the phone either. Outside the airport, I was approached by countless taxi drivers, all vying for my potential business. Although I was a bit wary, untrusting, and nervous, some very nice people tried to help me: offering to let me use their cell phone, giving me money to use the telephone, asking if I need help. I eventually ended up on my own in a taxi to the bus station with the intent on catching a bus to Cahuita. Snag number two presented itself when I discovered that the last bus for Talamanca had already left. I had to settle for a hotel nearby and the early morning bus the following day.

Day 2—Cahuita

My time for this site visit was limited, but I crammed as much into it as possible. I arrived into Cahuita mid-morning after a 4-hour bus ride from San Jose. Paul, who I’d been in phone and email contact with but had never met personally, picked me up at the bus stop in Cahuita. Paul is the graduate student from Michigan mentioned earlier, and had previously run a course for Fairmont College on tourism and sustainable development in the Talamanca area. He was living in Cahuita and working on his dissertation which pertained to economic and sustainability issues in Talamanca. He, his wife Trisha, and I spent the morning having a glorious breakfast at a local café, and then walked the very short distance (not more than 5 or 10 minutes) to the entrance to Cahuita National Park. It was a glorious sunny day and the beach was beautiful. The water looked a bit rough for snorkeling, but Trisha informed me that the best snorkeling is at the point, where you can get a guide with a boat to take you to the reef. Trisha also pointed out a sloth which was in the tree right at the entrance to the park. My first sloth sighting!

After a very brief look at the park, we drove to Dr. Dave’s house, which is quite close to the “Black Beach”. I couldn’t pass up a walk on the beach and a swim. The beach was completely empty. I walked along for a while, then turned around to see a herd of cattle being driven along the shore—heading straight towards me. Totally classic! After the cattle passed by, Paul and Trisha showed up at the beach. They were swimming, so I braved the water too. There was a bit of surf, but it wasn’t too strong, and the water was incredibly warm. After cleaning up, I

![Figure 1: Overview of Talamanca region](image-url)
headed to Paul’s for a brainstorming session. It was only 2pm. What a day! Paul was a wealth of knowledge about key environmental and social issues in the area, fluent in Spanish, and a great help to me throughout the course development process. During my 5 days in the Talamanca area, he brainstormed ideas for the course with me; helped transport me to potential course sites; translated during my meeting with indigenous individuals at the “Finca Educativa”; and made arrangements for me to travel by boat and stay overnight in the remote village of Yorkin with Guillermo Torres, a Bribri guide.

Excerpt from field notes:
Adventure really takes off tomorrow. Heading to Finca, then meeting with Guillermo (doesn’t speak English) for an overnight river trip on the Yorkin, then to Bocas for a night and return to Cahuita by bus on Tues. am. Whew! Hopefully I’ll actually get some sleep tonight. Raining like crazy now—hope it clears in the am.

Figure 2: Dr. Dave's House outside the town of Cahuita

Day 3 –Bribri Territory

Figure 3: Overview of Indigenous Territory within the Talamanca region (indicated by colored sections).

Figure 4: Close-up of areas where I spent time; dark orange colored sections indicate Bribri indigenous territory of Talamanca
The next morning, Paul drove me to the Finca Educativa, playing tour guide along the way by pointing things out and providing information about the area. The Finca Educativa, located in the town of Shiroles, started out as a working farm, but developed into an educational center for indigenous people. The tour of the Finca Educativa was fairly brief. Carlos, a Bribri guide who runs tours based from the Finca, took us around the center, showed us the accommodations, and explained the various tours that are offered. I also met Eusebio, or “Chorli”, an indigenous man who helped manage the Finca. My initial impression of Carlos and Chorli was that they were very nice. Although I attempted to speak a bit of Spanish directly with Carlos, I mainly deferred to Paul to translate for me. Undoubtedly, I was able to obtain vastly more information by taking advantage of Paul’s Spanish language skills; however, I felt a barrier between Carlos and myself as a result. I was utterly grateful for Paul’s ability to translate, but frustrated with my own lacking skills which precluded a more direct one-on-one communication.

And then I was on my own. Paul dropped me off in the tiny town of Bambu (“downtown” consists of a single sundry shop, an empty building, and a bus stop), where I met Guillermo Torres for my journey up the Yorkin River into the Bribri village of Yorkin. Guillermo seemed very nice, but I was a bit nervous traveling by boat into a remote village with a man who spoke no English, and with me speaking only very basic Spanish. I was looking forward to the river trip though, and felt excited to be out on my own. Scared, but excited. This, to me, was a real adventure. No more turning to Paul for translation; it was all up to me.
And what an adventure it was! First I met Ana, a tourism student from Spain who was working on her thesis, and traveled with us to Yorkin. She spoke a bit of English and translated for me at times. As for the river trip...Holy crapola! Going upstream is tough enough, but this was through some very tight spots with large rocks and a strong current. Guillermo said the river was low, which of course made it more difficult. Many times Guillermo and the other boat handlers (a young man named Justo and a young woman) had to get out of the boat to push it through low water. A couple of times Ana and I got out to help, but the 2nd time was very rocky and tough on my feet. After that, Ana and I gave up on helping to push the boat. The whole experience was pretty crazy and exciting and the views were beautiful.

I didn’t do much upon arrival at Yorkin. I just hung out in the dining area chatting with Justo and Ana. My main motive for traveling to Yorkin was to scope it out as a site for the course. Although I did not have much opportunity to check out the grounds, I got a good feeling for the river trip, for the accommodations, and more importantly, for the people. Over dinner, there was time to chat with Guillermo and his wife Tilia. It was difficult not speaking much Spanish, but they were incredibly friendly, patient, and open about their experiences with and hopes for tourism to bring in enough money for them to continue their village life.

Excerpt from field notes:
...they’re still in the early stages of tourism and are still developing ideas, etc. but they seem to have strong hopes and I’d love to capture that perspective—what does their idea life look like? One plan they have in the works was a suggestion from an NGO—to build another cabin for tourists; this one with more private rooms (privado was my major contribution to the conversation this evening—my Spanish speaking highlight)...
The atmosphere is very calm and peaceful. ... Full moon tonight and the only sounds are the insects and the animals. The adventure will continue tomorrow with a horseback ride back to Bambu! This is great! The people are very nice and friendly and really want tourism to give them enough money to continue their life here and progress.

Day 4 –Yorkin to Bocas del Toro, Panama

The following morning, Guillermo took me by horseback two hours back to get a dugout canoe ferry across the river to Bambu. I thought initially that we would both ride horses, but Guillermo led the horse and carried my pack while I rode. I felt a little weird about this arrangement, like it accentuated inequality between us, and would have preferred that he ride as well, but I must admit that it did help at times for him to lead the horse through sketchy sections of trail. The trail was a bit muddy and rough, and I was thankful that I had previous riding experience in Patagonia.

About midway to Bambu, I saw an unusual sight—something the most brilliantly blue I’ve even seen flashed through the forest and captivated me. What the heck was that? I asked Guillermo about it, frantically pointing and practically jumping off my horse, and it took about 15 minutes of attempted communication to work out that he was telling me the name of a type of butterfly: a Blue Morpho.
I didn’t even realize that it was a butterfly. All I saw were flashes of bright blue.

Overall, it was an exciting, yet relaxing trip. Perhaps a bit too short, but it accomplished what I needed and left me with a very good impression of the Bribris of Yorkin. It also accentuated the need I would have for developing a good risk management plan and for having a translator for the course and for my research.

Once in Bambu, a new adventure began. I was leaving the peace and comforts of the forest for the border crossing of Panama. One of Dr. Dave’s suggestions for the course was to spend some time in Bocas del Toro, but I had no contacts there. Getting into Bocas del Toro was a long process. Having spent almost 2 hours on horseback, I spent an hour on the bus from Bambu to the town of Bribri, and another hour or more on the bus from Bribri to Sixaola. There, I had to deal with immigration, get a tourist card, and cross the border with the assistance of a local Panamanian. The border crossing was a bridge that used to be part of a railway and was a bit sketchy to say the least. Boards were broken and the crossing required keeping an eye on where you placed your feet to ensure that you didn’t slip through a missing or broken board and end up in the river far below. Having successfully navigated the bridge, I then needed to get a taxi to take me to the water ferry, which would at last transport me to my destination.

Day 5 – Bocas del Toro

Bocas del Toro is known for snorkeling and scuba diving, and also manatee and dolphin sightings and sea turtle nesting. I anticipated using this site for a “marine” component of the course, so I wanted to check out potential activities and issues for discussion.

My first impression of Bocas was not entirely positive. Although the climate was very pleasant, and I was happy to see that kids were outside playing and people were out talking instead of inside watching TV, I just did not feel very comfortable. This could of course be because I just came from an isolated forest village and had entered urban territory—quite a change—and I am admittedly more of an outdoors, backcountry person. So I decided to check out another island, Bacimento, which had no roads and I thought might be mellower. Bocas in general, and
Bacimento in particular seemed to have a much stronger Afro-Caribbean influence rather than Spanish influence, which I found interesting, but my overall impression did not improve. Although the local hostel was very nice, the town itself was dirty. Walking along the island, I saw trash all along the shore, and kids asked me for money. The snorkeling was quite good though. Further off-shore, the ocean was clear, and the coral was vibrant. However, I was not unsure as to whether this would make a good course site. Seeing the trash was unpleasant, but might be a good learning experience, and there was good potential for boat tours for wildlife viewing and snorkeling. Still, I was not entirely comfortable with the idea of having a host of students staying either in the main area of Bocas or on Bacimento.

Excerpt from field notes:
I feel like my mind is fractured, like my Spanish. My journal writing reflects this. Maybe it’s because I’m trying to think in 2 different languages. I’m finding that my thoughts... [the excerpt abruptly ends here]

Day 6 – Bocas to Cahuita

Leaving Bocas was easier than arriving, except for the fact that I neglected to bring verification that I would be leaving Costa Rica in the near future. This presented a series of hassles, but which reaffirmed my positive impressions of the people in this area. For instance, I did not schedule a taxi to transport me from the water taxi to the border crossing, but all I needed to do was ask and others were willing to share their taxi with me, even if it meant cramming six people into a truck. Later, at the border crossing when I realized they wouldn’t let me back into Costa Rica, I unsuccessfully tried to make a phone call with my phone card, and a complete stranger gave me his phone card to use. Then, on the bus, I dropped an entire handful of change on the ground, and others helped me pick it up. Comedy of errors was on my side this day; I had a terrific audience.

Day 7 – Leaving Talamanca

Having successfully gleamed as much as possible out of a handful of days in Talamanca, I left for Turrialba to attend a Forum on Ecotourism. Here I met Marieloz, a Costa Rican educator who worked with me in developing and teaching the first few days of the course, and several other students and professors who provided me with information and ideas for the course and for my dissertation research.
It wasn’t until I was back in the U.S. that I “met” the person who turned out to be vital in organizing the Talamanca portion of the course and in helping me make contacts for my research. Paul had mentioned an organization called ATEC (The Talamancan Association of Ecotourism and Conservation) but had had no personal contacts there. Given the limited amount of time I had in Costa Rica, I was unable to make it into Puerto Viejo, where the ATEC office was based. But with the technological wonders of the internet, I fired away inquiries from the U.S. and my collaboration with Alaine Berg was born. Alaine is a U.S. citizen who has lived in Costa Rica for several years. We communicated back and forth via email numerous times in developing the course schedule, and she put me in contact with Susana Schik, who later provided translation during my interviews.

Chapter 2 – The Course

Having secured just enough students to run the course (five total), I returned to Costa Rica in mid-May. We spent the first three days in the Sarapiqui region, and the next two days in Tortuguero National Park, before heading to Talamanca. Our first stop in Talamanca was a Bribri community of Yorkin, where we stayed for three nights.

At Estibrawpa in Yorkin

Through ATEC, our arrangements in Yorkin differed from those during my site visit, although transportation was still by dugout canoe. ATEC did not work with the Torres family, but rather worked with Estibrawpa, a women’s group who developed tourism to their community. “Estibrawpa” means craftswomen in the BriBri language, and ATEC described this community in their pre-trip materials as follows: “It’s a remote community, although there is much western influence (dress and religion) they still live with many traditional ways”.

Figure 13: Estibrawpa community center. Photo credit: ATEC
In the town of Bambu, we met our “bi-lingual” guide, Cesar, who would work with us for several days. (Note: “bi-lingual” is in quotes because in reality, Cesar’s English skills were very basic.) Cesar is a Bribri man in his early 20’s. Upon meeting, I mentioned that I was also working on my Spanish language skills, but needed lots of practice. We were late in arriving to the river, and managed to reach the community center just before sundown.

Excerpt from field notes:
Estibrawpa is an interesting place. Not surprisingly, things don’t go according to plan. But, good stuff still happens. Our original schedule was to hike to the waterfall this morning, but the water was too high. So instead, we went to the high school (colegio) where there was a presentation. Kids from neighboring schools came (1 hour away) and a fair amount of the community was there as well—probably parents. Couldn’t really follow much of the adult presenters, but the kids’ presentations were pretty cool. They acted out the time when the Spanish invaded. They also danced—really cute. Kinda like recess. Some of the dances I think were just for fun; others were cultural. It was really hot in the school though, especially with all those people. I was actually dripping in sweat. Then we came back, went for a very refreshing swim in the river, had lunch. There was soup with chicken and green bananas, which taste nothing like yellow bananas. They’re more like plantains. Went to watch a soccer game, then Prisca talked to us about the Estibrawpa. Cesar is not translating all that much; perhaps because I told him that I needed to practice my Spanish and he seems to think I don’t need for him to translate. Communication is a bit difficult. I’m not really sure what it going on some of the time. Like, someone else is supposed to talk to us about the Red Indigena and Red Talamanca, but I don’t know when.

Figure 14: Community center and grounds at Estibrawpa

Something interesting that Prisca said—she sees the tourists as friends. She really welcomes the people coming here, because they are helping to provide for the community. Money goes for health, and supplies for education. Before tourism there was no employment in the village and people had to go outside to earn money. Now they’ve been able to build a secondary school (colegio). Many of the tourists are students; also, there are volunteers to help build structures, etc. Last year,
During our stay at Yorkin, there were four other visitors at Estibrawpa. One middle-aged man left the morning after we arrived. The other three visitors were together and arrived that same morning. They (two men, one woman) were all in their 20’s and had been volunteering in the Gandoca wildlife reserve for several weeks. They all planned to continue traveling after their time in Yorkin (in central America); and one of the men (from Canada) was to spend the next few months volunteering on a remote farm in Costa Rica. The woman, Julia, was from Canada as well, and the other man was from the UK. They all seemed to express a lot of interest in the project and the place. Julia spoke Spanish quite well, and was particularly helpful in translating for us.

On our second morning in Yorkin, we (the class plus the other three visitors) hiked to a waterfall in Panama. Cesar jokingly told us we’d need our passports for the border crossing. Although Cesar was our official guide, a young girl named Joanna (perhaps 13 or 14 years old) from the community accompanied us as well, taking up the rear and carrying a machete. This made one of the students a bit nervous, but she seemed quite capable and careful to me. On the way back, while navigating some muddy, slippery, steep sections of trail, she stopped and chopped off some branches and handed them to us to use as hiking poles. I thought this was particularly thoughtful of her. The sticks also came in quite handy when crossing the river back into the Costa Rican side of Yorkin.

Excerpt from field notes:
Falling into the lifestyle of the BriBri. It took a couple of days to settle in, but now feeling comfortable. It’s good that I’ve had this time to adjust because just now I feel like I can start making observations. Everyone is so friendly that I’m not sure why it’s taken me so long to relax, but perhaps it’s because of the extra responsibility of the students. But I’m definitely slowing down, enjoying the quietness and tranquility of the forest. At night it’s especially peaceful—hearing the sounds of the river, of the rain, and of the insects. I think that if my Spanish was better, that I would’ve relaxed sooner, but being in charge of translating is a bit stressful. Perhaps this is something I should ask the bi-lingual guides about, like Cesar. How does it feel to be in charge of translating? Do you feel that it influences your relationship with the visitors? In what way(s)?
Today has been so great because the kids are really interacting with us. They like to have their pictures taken and then to view them. They also bring the babies around. Only being here during the week would be a shame. Overall, I haven’t heard much complaining from the kids. The whole community takes responsibility for each other—bigger kids take care of smaller kids and everyone loves babies. The children are friendly and ask us questions. One little girl just asked me to read from my journal. I told her it was in English and she wanted to hear it. Then she asked what was written in the corner of the page (the date). She wanted to hear how to say it in English. Then I had to tell what time it was in English and in Spanish. So cute. Maureen and Dave also had kids asking them questions up in our sleeping area. One kid asked Maureen about all the stuff (toiletries) she had in a plastic Ziploc bag, and wanted to know what everything was for.

After three nights at Yorkin, it was time to move on. After traveling back down the river to Bambu, we caught a bus to the town of Shiroles, deep in the heart of Bribri indigenous territory, and to the Finca Educativa. Staff at the Finca did not speak any English, so Cesar traveled with us to help out.

Excerpt from field notes:
For me, language is definitely a barrier for communicating at a deeper level with these people. Though Cesar and I have worked out a terrific system of Spanglish. It’s getting to be a lot of fun actually, and I enjoy working with him. Being fluent in Spanish would definitely be a plus though, both for myself and for the students. It was great having Julia around, because she did such an excellent job in translating for us when we spoke with Bernarda at Estibrawpa. Lots of good information about the association and the different networks (red apparently means network) – Talamanca and Indigena, plus their experience with Actuar – a national organization for rural community tourism.

Notes for dissertation research: use the word “visitor” instead of “tourist”. Both Prisca and Bernarda mentioned they view the relationship with visitors in terms of friendship. Visitors are friends who come to learn about their culture and they contribute to their families. “Tourists” and “tourism” have negative connotations in that it is solely about money.
At the Finca Educativa:

ATEC described the Finca Educativa in their pre-trip materials as follows: “The Finca Educativa was created in 1992, in order to have an indigenous Educational Center for the people of and visitors to the Talamanca region. It is a place that receives national and international student’s groups, and other visitors, who wish to accomplish different activities in the area and learn more from the indigenous culture. The farm is located in Shiroles community (Talamanca), 17 km from Bribri. Shiroles is one of the largest indigenous communities in Costa Rica. It is located in the heart of The Talamanca Reserve. This community demonstrates the diverse indigenous culture of today. It is a combination of traditional culture and modern day life. They conserve their language, export agricultural produce, dance the Sorbon, and play soccer. The people combine traditional medicine and visits to shaman, with the science of modern medicine. Here, pure Indians live, as well as Indians mixed with African Caribbean and Latin peoples.”

A short walking distance from the Finca was the headquarters of ACOUMITA, a women’s cooperative that practices traditional (non-monoculture) farming and chocolate making. We spent the afternoon there, touring their farmland with three indigenous women (two were Bribri; the other was Cabecar) and seeing how chocolate is produced from start to finish; from cacao fruit (which tastes somewhat like sweet melon) to chocolate bar. This project was the only one we visited which was a collaboration between two different indigenous groups.

The next day, we visited the indigenous village of Cachabri. People in this village live without electricity and modern appliances, and maintain traditional practices including the Bribri language, dances, medicine, and construction. They only receive visitors during the day. To get to Cachabri, we took one bus to the Telire river, a ferry boat across the river, and then a second bus to Cachabri. The driver on the second bus entertained us by playing gringo 80’s music. We had told Julia that we would be going into the remote village of Cachabri and she was really interested as well. She ended up meeting us at the river and traveling with us for the day to Cachabri. Once again, we were thankful for her translation (and her company). Our talk took place in the Casa Conica, a traditional structure that is used mainly for ceremonies and particularly for when a trainee becomes an Awapa (medicine man). The Casa was dark and smelled like earth. I found it strange yet peaceful. We were supposed to have a demonstration of the traditional Surbón dance, but didn’t because the elders were not available that day. Instead, a man from the community (a grandson of one of the elders) described to us the extensive training required to become
an Awapa, talked to us about their spiritual beliefs including Sibo, their creator, and showed us aspects of their daily life, such as how they make bowls for eating out of folding very large leaves. They also had a display of arts and crafts for purchase, including carved gourds and woven baskets. In Yorkin, I felt ok about taking pictures, but here, even after asking and getting the go-ahead to take some photos, I felt awkward about doing so, especially of people. The picture of the man below is the only person-picture I took while in Cachabri.

![Casa Conica and our speaker in Cachabri village](Image)

Figure 18: Casa Conica and our speaker in Cachabri village

That evening, we returned to the Finca and spoke with two of the staff there about the Finca and La Amistad International Park.

Excerpt from field notes:
Regarding interactions with indigenous people and communication…
Had a great time talking with Eusebio tonight. Also with Carlos this afternoon. They are so forgiving and patient with my limited Spanish. Cesar is wonderful but probably needs more practice translating. For only having 3 months of training including English, in addition to guide stuff, he's doing incredible. But...if I spoke no Spanish, the level of information from Cesar alone would not be enough for a class like this.

Eusebio was very interested in the U.S. and asked many questions—about the Native Americans and if they were similar to them, about politics, about wildlife. At the Finca, they have the only library in all of Talamanca. Their hope is to develop this library with information on different countries and different cultures. A very worthy ambition. Found out that the Yorkin community extends into Panama as well and that the La Amistad International Park is within indigenous territory. They were the initiators, the TNC has provided some funding, and UNESCO is involved as well.

Regarding my role as participant-observer…
This is definitely the "participant" phase of my participant-observation. I'm not focusing so much on observing but rather just being a "tourist" myself. I'm having an absolutely excellent time! I've met several very cool people—Ticos, indigenous, and foreigners.

It will be difficult to switch gears into an observing role. I'm finding it hard to write much because all the thinking in Spanish is very tiring. My brain is dead by the end of the day after all the attempts of translating. This just reconfirms my initial thoughts on the benefits
of a week of Spanish immersion before starting any interviews. But also, I’ll have Susana, and I’m sure that her translation will be very good. Looking forward to meeting her tomorrow. 😊

Regarding the experience and effects on me…
3 am. My senses are reawakening. After 1 week of no TV, no loud cars continually going up the street, and no computers, I am coming back alive in a more natural state. I woke to the sounds of the insects and frogs, got up to use the bathroom, and was flooded with the sweet smell of the flowers in the farm. I am really starting to relax now.

Regarding thoughts on next research stages…
I think that my research is going to be super interesting, but my initial preconceptions will probably be shot down. For this context, many things in the “literature” probably don’t apply. I think that this is a special place—maybe it can be an inspiration for others. But right now I’m only getting the good. Perhaps some negatives will surface when I delve more deeply. One thing’s for sure, the people here (the BriBri) seem to be very open about what they think. Hopefully this will help and they will not try to tell me what I want to hear, but will truly give their views and feelings. There may, however, be an age factor—it seems the older people are the ones who are more concerned with issues, etc. But…we’ll see. This is all just preliminary thoughts. It does, however, completely justify the use of qualitative, because even the word “tourist” here means something different (at least according to Bernarda). Also, what they call a “guide” is more specific perhaps than what I had in mind. Guides have to have naturalist training and other training. It may be slightly different because our group has a specific agenda, but at Casa Conica, the “guide” or speaker really was a community member who was involved in tourism. I’ll have to rethink if I want to broaden the study to include some of these people (like Bernarda, Prisca, Carlos Cascante, etc.) Ah, the ever emerging design of a qualitative study.

I don’t think I’ll have a problem interviewing tourists either. So far, the people I’ve met have been “overnighters”. I just may have to rethink when the interview takes place—like can I do it the night before they leave?

Figure 19: Cesar (lower left) with the students
From the Finca Educativa, we continued traveling through Bribri indigenous territory to the small community of Watsi (also spelled Uatsu...places often seem to have more than one name or spelling, such as the town of Bambu is also called Bratsi, but generally only on maps). In Watsi, we met Timoteo, a Bribri indigenous man perhaps in his late 60’s or early 70’s, who has been involved in the anti-petroleum movement in the Caribbean-Talamanca region.

We sat in the building that housed handicrafts for sale, which was right off the main road through the village, and listened to his stories about the battles fought to prevent oil drilling off the coast and about Sibo, the creator of all life. Timoteo took us on a short hike around the forest across the street from the handicraft store, pointing out medicinal plants and discussing their uses (translated through Cesar).

The mosquitoes were thick and bothersome, the path was muddy and slick, but the hike was short. Then, back in the store, Timoteo sang to us a song in the Bribri language. His voice was deep and expressive. It resonated within the small building, and his body moved with the music, enhancing its expressiveness. The experience touched me in a way that only music can, affecting not my brain, but some part of my soul in a way that is indescribable. For those moments, I lost perception of where I was; for that brief time, the only thing that existed for me was the sound flowing through my being. Although I’d had many enjoyable experiences within Bribri territory, this was the most intensely moving to date for me personally.

Excerpt from field notes:
Certainly, one issue that I’ve noticed with this class has been the language barrier, although I’d still say that some genuine feelings of friendship have been felt. One
moment that stands out is seeing Bernarda and her husband on the bus when we were on our way to Watsi. Actually, we saw them twice. The 1st time we were both on different buses, but we all waved and smiled frantically at each other in passing. The 2nd time we were off our bus, but they were on their bus which was stopped. Mary actually ran up to the window and put her hand opposite Bernarda’s like they were touching through the window. It was like they were old friends who hadn’t seen each other for a bit, and were wildly happy to see each other again, even if only in passing. Perhaps good hearts can overcome language barriers; you can truly feel a connection with another person even if all your conversation has been limited and through a translator.

From Watsi, we said farewell to Cesar and headed out of indigenous territory into the coastal town of Puerto Viejo. Here we took a day to explore the coast before spending some time in the Këköldi indigenous reserve. It was at this time that I met Susana, who would serve as my translator for interviews.

Excerpt from field notes:

[Susana] is going to be excellent help with the dissertation research. Already, she is compiling a list of potential guides and people to interview. It was also such a relief to have a speaker in English. It was very difficult and a lot of pressure on me to translate. Cesar definitely needs more practice with his English, but he will learn. 😊 Definitely though, whoever runs this class needs to be bilingual, because otherwise so much is lost and a lot of time is spent just attempting to understand the basics. So far, that has been the greatest challenge for me.

In the Këköldi reserve:

The Këköldi reserve is located just inland from Puerto Viejo—a short 20-minute bus ride away. The reserve hosts several conservation efforts, including a scientific observation tower for monitoring migrating raptors and an iguana breeding project. According to ATEC, “The Këköldi Wak ka Köneke Association is a grassroots conservation and community development organization of the Këköldi Indigenous Reserve. Our objectives include conservation of natural resources, promotion of a better quality of life for the community, defense of land rights for its people, and the sustainable development through entrepreneurial activities.”

The Këköldi Scientific Center hosts volunteers, visiting scientists, and tourists, and the Këköldi Wak ka Köneke Association is actively trying to raise funds through tourism.
to purchase additional land for the indigenous reserve. The most common tourist activities include wildlife-focused hikes up to the scientific tower, which affords a spectacular view of the coast and into Panama, and explanatory tours of the iguana project.

Our guide during our stay in Kèköldi was Alex, a young man in his early-mid 20’s with a huge infectious smile. Alex spoke English quite well, much to my relief. On our first day, we hiked up the steep path to the Scientific Tower. Along the way, Alex pointed out some of the diverse plant and animal life in Kekoldi, such as poison dart frogs, leaf cutter ants, and walking trees. He also showed us a plant which dies your skin blue for up to a week; although he did not tell us about the blue part until after he had rubbed some of it on all of our hands. 😊 We all good-naturedly accepted the joke, and wore our blue marks with pride.

That evening after dinner, one of the leaders of the Kèköldi Wak ka Kôneke Association spoke to our group about the history of the area: how indigenous people came to live there, the role of banana companies, how the indigenous reserve was formed, how tourism started there, and their goals for purchasing private farms within the reserve. Alex had left for home, but there was a young woman with the volunteer group who was interested in the talk, and she helped translate for us.
We spent the night in the lodge along with a large group of volunteers, mainly teenagers from the U.S. in high school or entering college. The lodge was at full capacity, so much so that I had to share a room with three teenage guys. But it was a super nice facility, complete with hammocks.

That night, the rain came down. This wasn’t some little trickle of rain for a couple of hours; this was a solid downpour for 8 hours straight. The next day, we had to hike down from the lodge to the iguana project. Believe me when I tell you that you haven’t experienced mud until you experience Talamanca after a night of rain. The hike was more like surfing down a mud slide than actual walking. It is no wonder that the preferred footwear of the indigenous people is rubber boots.

Excerpt from Field Notes:
Service project at Kekoldi was harsh. Picking plants and feeding them to the iguanas was fine, as was washing the deck floor and stairs, but transporting rotting wooden structures teeming with termites and worse, biting ants, with no gloves was not cool. People were getting bit like crazy, it was crazy hot, and I guess I’d recommend work gloves for any project there.

After lunch, Alex walked with us the short distance to the road to catch the bus back to Puerto Viejo. We had reached the end of our time in indigenous territory. But, we met up with Alex once again in Puerto Viejo the following night. Some of the students bumped into him, and invited him to eat dinner with us. So we were able to share one last meal together, and show our appreciation to Alex by buying him dinner.

Concluding notes:

The class spent one additional day in Puerto Viejo before leaving Talamanca. Originally, I had planned to stay in Costa Rica following the course and begin my interviewing right away; however, my responsibilities with the class required me to travel back with the students. So instead of turning directly around and returning to Costa Rica, I spent five weeks back in the states, getting ready to move to England after I’d completed my data collection.

During this phase of my research, I spent the bulk of my energy running the course. Much of my notes during this time pertain more to thoughts about future courses than
directly to my dissertation topic. In my notes, I described myself as “falling into the moment” much of the time, which was great for me, but “not great for journaling though”. I struggled with attempting to communicate in Spanish and with the details of smoothly running a new course in a developing country. As I noted in my journal, at times “my brain [didn’t] want to function in order to write coherently.” I realized that my field notes were not as detailed as they would need to be in terms of observations regarding tour guide-tourist interactions for my dissertation. But I accepted and actively sought to be mainly a participant for this phase of the research. And in being a participant, I feel that I not only got a sense for being a tourist in indigenous Talamanca, but also formed relationships with some of the people I hoped to interview. I left happy with what I had done, and hopeful to the tasks I had ahead of me.

I am really content and totally happy with how everything went and with my own role. What a terrific experience this has been for me!

Hasta Luego…
APPENDIX D

SELF-REFLECTIONS OF PERSONAL BIASES AND PERSPECTIVES
I was raised in suburban Chicago by a middle-class family who values higher education, and who encouraged me to be independent and to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities. I took advantage of the opportunities available to me and was active in several sports and in music. As a young adult, I continued to study music and received a Bachelor of Arts in Music Theory/Composition from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It was during this time that I developed an interest in learning about other cultures and other ways of life, which stemmed largely from exposure to non-Western music. At this time, I played in a Javanese gamelan orchestra, and took a course on the music of Indonesia. From these experiences, I learned not only a deeper appreciation for the music itself, but also for the culture from which that music was developed.

Although I was immediately attracted to Javanese gamelan music, during this same time period, I was also challenged to develop an appreciation for types of music that I did not initially enjoy. I took courses on contemporary music, electronic music composition, and became involved in the Experimental Music Studios. The type of music that we studied in these courses was indeed experimental; it was progressive, strange, it was not necessarily “pretty,” and it challenged my pre-conceived notions of what is music. My first reaction to most of this music was one of disgust: “They call this music?” I found myself stereotyping all of it as “bad” or “ugly.” However, as time went on and I learned more about the music, listened to more of it, and even tried my hand at composing, I went through a process of acceptance: from intolerance, to tolerance, and finally, to appreciation. And, although to this day I cannot say that I enjoy all of this
“type” of music, I can listen to each piece without pre-judgment; I can look for its own unique value. I feel that these experiences taught me a valuable lesson: If I keep an open mind, I can find beauty in things I initially find ugly; I can challenge my initial perceptions and reactions and recognize the value of things which are “different.” Keeping an open mind when presented with the “new” or the “different,” especially if it conflicts with my current ideas or values, is something that requires continuous effort; it requires the patience to utilize an informed response instead of an involuntary reaction. As I go through life, I continue to strive to check my initial reactions, to listen and to learn, and to understand things from different perspectives.

Early family travel experiences also had a great impact on me. Most of our vacations consisted of visits to National Parks or other natural areas within the USA. I fell in love with the mountainous regions of the Western U.S., and it was largely these experiences which later inspired me to pursue work in the outdoors, and eventually, a Masters of Science in Recreation, Parks and Tourism Resources from West Virginia University. A couple years after finishing my undergraduate degree, I began working as an outdoor adventure educator. This entailed facilitating team-building and leadership development programs; observing group dynamics was a vital component of the job. Within the same time frame, I started working as a wilderness trip leader, a position akin to a tour guide, but mainly with youth populations (13-24 years old) and specifically focused on adventure activities in wilderness environments. These experiences not only further developed my love and passion for the outdoors and traveling, but also for seeking to understand relationships and interactions between individuals and groups; and for encouraging others to strive to do their best, to take on challenges, to stretch their
limits, and to recognize and appreciate the strengths of others. These experiences contributed to my knowledge of and insight into some of the challenges and issues associated with tour guide employment, and a skill base in observing interpersonal interactions. My passion for helping others and for facilitating positive individual and group experiences may present some advantages and challenges in terms of this research project, however. Knowing my tendencies to actively facilitate positive group dynamics, during this study I aimed to find a balance between facilitating as a participant, and letting things unfold as an observer. Throughout, I also sought to maintain an awareness of my own role and my influence on the group dynamics and interactions that I was observing.

Growing up in suburban Chicago, I had some contact with racial, ethnic, and religious minority groups but, as a Caucasian female raised in a Christian family, I was in the majority. Nevertheless, I have also experienced situations in which I was the “minority.” For example, while conducting research in Fiji I was definitely an ethnic minority. Conducting research with indigenous tour guides in Fiji provided inspiration and ideas for the proposed research project, as well as potential biases about tour guides, their roles, and their interactions with tourists.

I have fought to pursue my interests and a career in what was at the time a male-dominated field and uncommon in my place of residence. I have actively sought meeting and forming relationships with ethnically and culturally different others, from countries such as Fiji, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Zambia, India, Mexico, Bulgaria, Japan, and China. I have traveled to Europe, Central America, South America, and the South Pacific, and I have lived in the UK.
Thus, my research and travel experiences and my intercultural friendships have helped open my eyes to other perceptions of the world and approaches to life. They also have shaped the way I view the world and have helped me to understand myself. It is my hope that through sharing experiences and speaking with individuals during this research, I have come to not only a greater understanding of their perceptions and views, but also to a greater insight of myself.
Vita
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Education

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
Ph.D. in Leisure Studies (December, 2011)

West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
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University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
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Professional Experience

Assistant Professor. University of Maine at Machias. Environmental Recreation and Tourism Management, Division of Professional Studies. (August 2011 – present)

Co-Director of Study Abroad program. West Virginia University. (Summer 2007)

Publications


Research Presentations

Beeftink, K. and Bricker, K. The Better the Shoe Fits, the Easier it is to Wear: Job Compatibility with Tradition and Adjustments to Ecotourism. Paper presented at the Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium, March, 2006, Bolton Landing, NY.


Awards

Hoyt Teaching Scholarship (Fall, 2004)