Letters to editor
(Continued from p 5066)

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The first murmurs questioning the applicability of Keynesian economics to underdeveloped countries started in the early 1940s in a classroom at the University; contributions to Indian Economic Journal, Indian Journal of Economics, J K Review of this period give ample evidence of research in economic theory and empirical subjects. Desai talks of location of industries; in 1944 A K Dargadupa points out the attention this matter deserves in any scheme of post-war planning in India (A K Dargadupa, 'Location of Industries', Investment and Finance, Annual, 1944).
That was almost 60 years ago. Like Ashok Desai I too feel joy at the progress we have made, at the opportunities, choice, sense of freedom, and confidence we have achieved since then. Yet there is a sense of regret and failure. The raging fire from the lumbar yards of Mahim in January 1993 seemed alarmingly like an extension of similar scenes in Dacca of 1945-46. Subsequent events unfortunately did nothing to dispel this fear.
The crucial expression in Desai's article is 'social consciousness' but not just at the level of CEOs and managers.

It must percolate down to the individual at the grass roots level. And again, not for altruistic reasons but for her own gain; she must realise that the garbage dumped in front of the neighbouring house will only exacerbate the pollution and germs back to her; that lighting the lamp outside her home can result in positive externalities that are actually more than just a convenience to passersby. In a multicultural society, which most of the world is today, social harmony and concern go towards building of social capital, an essential ingredient for economic growth.
I am reminded here of the two masterpieces of 14th century frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Sienna Town Hall where the windows are tightly shut and people go by without interaction, the trees are bare, the fields are dry; there is an overall feeling of death and decay. The scene opposite depicts a society where windows and doors are wide open with breeze flowing in, children play in the parks, neighbours chat, gossip and work; there is a general air of camaraderie. Here the fields are green, trees full of fruits and flowers and people are happy. It has indeed been a journey in time – time changing at every turn, exciting, depressing, challenging. If we 'act together', another vital expression used by Desai, we may be able to drop the 'depressing' part and get on with the business of building the nation.
Situating Resource Struggles
Concepts for Empirical Analysis

To analyse resource conflict, this article proposes a conceptual framework which operates at two levels: a conceptualisation of power in terms of sovereignty, governmentality and politics; and a repertoire of terms (projects, practices, processes, positions) that enable the empirical examination of particular sites of struggle. The framework is applied to conflict over a national park in Sulawesi, Indonesia.

In Indonesia since the fall of Suharto in 1998, resource conflicts have generally been classified into two types: 'vertical' conflicts that pit rural people against the state or state-sponsored corporations, and 'horizontal' conflicts that pit one social, ethnic or religious group against another. This classification is problematic on many counts. Vertical conflict involves a model of 'virtuous peasants' versus 'vicious states' (Brenner 1999) that neglects to specify the diversity of peasants' interests, and positions peasants as pure subjects receiving power from the state. It does not account for the diversity of state projects, many of which are not intentionally vicious but aim to bring about some kind of 'development' or improvement. The concept of 'horizontal conflict' takes differences between social groups as given, rather than inquiring into the processes through which identities are constructed and oppositions formed. Government policies and programmes often play a role in creating conflicts between groups, usually as a by-product of projects that had 'improving' goals. Vertical relations are implicated in horizontal conflicts in ways that binary classification obscures.

The concept of 'stakeholders' appears to offer a way into the complexities of resource conflicts, but it too has limitations. It takes the positions that people hold and the projects they pursue as given, and abstracts them from the practices in which they engage, and the processes in which they are embedded. This article proposes a framework that makes projects, processes, practices and positions the focus of analysis. It then applies this framework to the analysis of a resource conflict in the uplands of Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, in which farmers have occupied the corner of a national park.

Governmentality, Sovereignty and Politics

Conflicts over natural resources are situated rather obviously within the logic of capitalism, as various parties struggle to control the means of production. They are situated within the logic of sovereignty, or rule by command, where the landlord-state (Corenll 1997) assumes the right to use, allocate and profit from resources, and exercises coercive control to that end. But they are also situated within the field of power Foucault labelled governmentality, in which experts in and out of state machinery attempt to enhance the quality of the population, rearranging landscapes, livelihoods and identities according to techno-scientific criteria (Foucault 1991, Gordon 1991). The bounding of territory into zones designated for farming or conservation, the resettlement of populations from one place to another, and efforts to 'develop' rural livelihoods are interventions of a governmental kind.

As Foucault recognised, governmental rationality does not displace but rather coexists with the logic of sovereignty. In Indonesia as elsewhere, the state-as-sovereign allocates land and other natural resources as gifts to the regime's favoured clients. The interweaving of the logics of profit seeking, sovereignty, and governmental rationality creates a complex field of power. State patronage is key to gaining access to resources for private profit, and governmental projects described as improvement are always tinted with the suspicion that they are masks for elite gain.

Governmental rationality is anti-political: it seeks to displace the political process of debating, and struggling over the question of how to live by applying techno-scientific rationales and managerial procedures. Yet in practice, governmental interventions politicise (Moore 1998): at myriad, particular sites where governmental projects collide with layered formations of landscape, livelihood and identity, a space opens up for people to challenge the truths in the name of which they are governed. Practices of patronage also politicise, still more so when they contradict the claim to rationality and improvement. So too do the tensions and pressures set up by processes of capital accumulation and displacement which are refractory to the apparatus of planning. The identifications around which people mobilise are correspondingly complex, situated, contingent and relational, as people form communities or connect to ideologies (be it nature-loving, indigeneism, 'development' or radical Islam) that help them make sense of their situation (Li 2000).

Projects

Drawing from the conceptual scheme outlined above, projects can be classified into three kinds. First, there are governmental projects, which seek to rearrange landscapes, livelihoods and identities according to technical criteria and the logic of improvement. Besides government agencies, many so-called non-government organisations are engaged in projects to 'conduct' the conduct of others, contributing to broad assemblages of knowledges and power. Second, there are economic projects aimed at gaining control over resources for private gain. These range from the efforts of farmers to secure access to resources for current and future livelihoods, to appropriations aimed at capital accumulation on a large scale. In both cases, but especially the latter, access often routes through the authority and coercion of state apparatus. Third, there are political projects, intended to contest the logic of government or the reality of resource appropriation, questioning the hegemony of these overlapping...
Rights of power. Political projects also have varied proponents—
growing rural producers rich and poor, activists and intellec-
tuals and disaffected members of the ruling apparatus. They
are mediated in words and actions, including debates over
monetary, the practice of cutting or planting trees, and mass rallies
against others.

Positions

In keeping with the dynamic nature of projects outlined above,
I am useful to consider people as taking or being assigned positions,
other than fixed identities. Identities, as Stuart Hall argues, ‘come
from somewhere, have histories. But far from being eternally
fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous
play of “history, culture and power”’ [Hall 1990:225]. They are
“susceptible points of identification or susrare ... Not an essence
but a positioning’ [Hall 1990:226]. History is crucial since, as I
indicated earlier, there are no subject positions outside the reach
of power, only positions within its “continuous play”. Positively
asserted on the one hand, positions are also limited and pre-
figured by the “places of recognition” which others provide
[Li 2001]. The formation of alliances and the making of con-
nections depend crucially upon assuming or filling positions
assigned. Note too that the term position usefully signals the
spatial dimension of identification: people are occupying particular
kinds of landscape are expected to behave in “appropriate” ways,
and their actions are evaluated accordingly.

Practices

Practices follow from projects and positions, making them concrete.
They need to be examined ethnographically. Govern-
mental projects, for example, are associated with practices of
research, planning, the implementation of specified procedures,
evaluation and so on. But they are also associated with the practice
that I have elsewhere described as compromise: the tacit agree-
ment to look the other way when rules are broken, the failure
to gather information that contradicts the premises upon which
an intervention is planned, the construction of data to demonstrate
imminent “success” [Li 1999]. These are observable practices crucial
to the longevity or failure of the performance of projects, and although
they are external to the formal plan they too have significant
effects. Economic projects come associated with practices that
can be read in multiple ways: is a person who cuts down a tree,
making a garden, degrading the environment, or stealing timber
revenues from the forest department? Political projects also
unfold though practices that become routinised and recognised.
In Indonesia, activists seeking to challenge relations of rule
engage in policy critique, legal drafting, advocacy, facilitation,
and “accompanying” rural people engaged in direct conflict. The
political practices of rural people include making links with
activist supporters, staging demonstrations, seeking media
coverage, writing letters and statements to officials, occupying
land, blocking roads, burning buildings, and many more.

Processes

Processes highlight the unplanned effects of numerous, un-
coordinated projects and practices as they unfold across time and
space. The most notable process is, of course, the uneven
accumulation of capital and resources that we gloss with the name

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modern' wet rice agriculture and accessibility to education, health, transportation and other facilities. In practice, however, they had no such benefits and had been promised only for each family, and even the land assigned was not of good quality. It was prone to flood, and could not be irrigated. To meet their livelihoods, they had to drink coffee under the forest canopy behind the resettlement site, an arrangement that had worked well until the forest was designated as part of Lore Lindu national park. The park managers promised them to harvest the coffee they had planted within the new park boundaries, but not to clean or extend the coffee groves, which were expected to exist only on the former farms. The farmers and their families were also forbidden from collecting rattan and other forest products they had used for subsistence purposes and to supplement their incomes. Exclusion from the park was thus a second point of contention, and the occupation of park land for farming can be read as a political critique of a conservation agenda pursued at their expense. The actions of the farmer group was supported by several NGOs based in the provincial capital, Palu. They highlighted both the livelihood needs of the farmers, and the political significance of the occupation as a protest against government policies of imposed resettlement and conservation. They argued for a more democratically based solution. They would negotiate a opportunity to debate and negotiate both the purpose and the tenure of any programmes designed to transform or improve their lives. At a minimum, park borders and land use zoning should be established through a participatory process that takes into account their farming claims and needs, as well as anticipated livelihood needs. They challenged the entire park-based conservation approach, by which they labelled 'eco-fascist'. It was, they said, an inappropriate import that had also devestated livelihoods in its original site, Yelowone [Sangaji 2001]. The NGOs supporting the farmer occupation had a track record of supporting communities in conflict with the park, including several located within the park borders that had been threatened with compulsory resettlement. Their arguments had emphasized the communities' claims as indigenous people whose relationship with the land and forest was governed by ecologically based, customary resource management systems. These claims were supported by a set of maps and documents that carefully delineated the traditional wisdom of the 'indigenous' groups, and their deep knowledge of, and attachment to, their landscape. Facing with a number of villages rejecting resettlement, and documented proof of their conservation-compliant practices and commitments, the park managers declared their relationship as an 'incomparable component of the park management system', with the right to continue to live and farm in their customary ways [Sangaji 2001]. So in doing, he was able to integrate them into the network of organizations which he could work with communities and NGOs and forge new democratic practices for conservation suited to the post-Suharto era of reform.
quick profit. As one of their demonstrators in Pala, they brought bundles of freshly harvested corn and cassava to the parliament building, emphasizing the link between land and livelihood. Thus the farmers' activism is driven by a sense of responsibility as custodians of the land, and an online, and an orientation to sustainability and sustainable resource management.

The protests of the government agencies were remarkable mainly for their omissons. Crucially, it should be noted that although they threatened to violently expel the farmers' group, for most of the time they did not carry out this threat. When smaller groups had attempted to occupy the same site, they had indeed been expelled by the park patrol backed by police and military, with the participation of the FKTNLN. On this occasion, however, the occupation was well organized and on a much larger scale, and the group very quickly began to change the landscape by clearing land, building huts, and planting corn and cocoa. When the threat of violent expel seemed imminent, demonstrations, media coverage, and the support of various organizations for the farmers' position expressed through public statements and letters made it very clear to the authorities that hardship (besarakan) would make the government look very bad.

The Suharto era and since, NGOs were often accused of manipulating guilty, uneducated masses for their own purposes, provoking and exaggerating conflicts for media effect. In addition, critics from within and outside the ruling apparatus often hint that NGOs are, in part, refractory to the naysayers because NGOs receive a "free of charge" and she or they are actually pursuing economic gain. In the case of this land occupation, it was suggested that the farmers' group and their supporters in league with timber barons seeking to rob the park for profit.

The pro-farmer faction responded that they had merely supposed to temporarily protect the farm group in their struggle. They had said that the farmers themselves had both led and initiated the practice of pendampingan (offering assistance and solidarity) as part of the habitus, the routine behaviour and positioning of Indonesia's NGOs movement. It located NGOs not as the vanguard of the people, but as their associates, ready to offer help as needed. This might be help on technical matters such as agro forestry or mapping community lands, or help in organising community meetings, mass demonstrations, or negotiations with government officials.

The line between accompanying, educating and leading is obviously a fuzzy one. Some of the critics of the role of the NGOs take the position that to do so would only be to stir up conflict, to imply a kind of imperialist theft and pillage. If this practice punctuates the idea of the governmental state that operates according to technocratic rationality, then it will undermine the state versus people dynamic. The conduct of illegal logging draws together a complex assemblage of individuals, institutions and ideologies. High level policy is therefore defined and subordinated to the legal framework which seeks to define and reify the divides.

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A rush among smallholders for access to land on which to plant this brown gold [Li 2002b]. Precisely because it recognised the urgency of addressing the root causes of land and, the potential of cocoa production to dramatically improve the lot of ordinary smallholders, the park authority could not concede to the farmer occupation. How smallholders, making livelihood claims would be the land brokers, offering ready cash. Since it became accessible by paved road in the mid-1990s, lots of people, including the original park officials and government officials at all levels of the hierarchy, had become interested in taking or buying a piece of the park for cocoa. Another process set in motion by the cocoa boom was smallholder immigration: in some of the villages bordering the park, including the resettlement villages that had been home to the former group, up to 50 per cent of the population comprised of Bugis migrants from south Sulawesi who had arrived in droves in the period 1997-2001. Prospective migrants had rented buses and toured the highlands of Central Sulawesi looking for suitable land, and making deals with land brokers, government officials, and individual farmers for its acquisition. Many relatively impoverished farmers, tempted by the quick cash and not looking to recapture the potential of cocoa, had sold up and found themselves landless and poor land, looking on as the migrants began to go for their land. To understand why farmers would sell up their already meagre land resources, it is necessary to locate the process of land accumulation and displacement in the context of the unintended effects of an array of government programmes and interventions already layered into this landscape. The farmer group now occupying the park was not the only group that had benefitted from government fiat—so too had almost all the residents in the park. For example, several villages located on the northern slope, between 1990-40, the Dutch had forced many groups out of the hills into the adjacent valleys, and others had scattered from centralised settlements to the forest edge to plant coffee to pay colonial taxes. People moved again during the Japanese occupation and in the first decades after independence when regional rebellions brought violence, famine, forced conversion or religious conversion. As a result of this unsettled regional history, the populations around the park are heterogeneous, and they maintain connections to various ancestral homelands up the northern slope. If they are displaced from their present homes, or they sell up, they hope to begin again and prosper somewhere elsewhere.

For many people in the border villages, a tenacious sense of belonging to their current village location is compounded by their fragile tenure security. The provincial government does not recognize customary land claims to be 'state land' for use by corporations, for resettlement sites, and the national park. NGOs have identified seven corporations controlling more than 500,000 hectares in different parts of the park, most notoriously Hasfares, the enterprise of Suluhro crocodile farm (WALHI 2003b). On a smaller scale, and especially in the context of the central Sulawesi context, many have often sold co-villagers' customary land to incoming migrants with no risk of arbitrary appropriation, selling land to a migrant or broker offering cash makes sense. In the minds of the smallholders, capitalist processes of uneven accumulation, sovereign appropriation and the impact of governmental interests intersect. They shaped what happened, where and how.

Finally, it is worth stating the obvious: that trees once cut down will take a long time to grow again. The process of landscape transformation initiated by the farmer group cannot easily be reversed. The site of the occupation is no longer a biodiverse forest, but de facto a farming settlement planted with cocoa and coconut as well as timber for the purposes of commodity production, and the local inhabitants are now more likely to see the forest as a potential source of livelihood. The eviction of the farmers and a replanting effort that would be continuous with the previous development. Anxieties have already destroyed park offices, information centres and justice courts on the ground. [Anon 2002]. At the intersection of processes of landscape colonization, the displacement of government, and capital accumulation, efforts to enforce park boundaries are weak and lacking in legitimacy.

Positions

In the context of the polemics surrounding this case, positions are formed, argued for, or simply stated in media and activist newspapers. Unfortunately but perhaps inevitably, simplified and often blunt black-and-white or white and black simplifications were the norm. In this case, the battle lines were drawn in the uncompromising language of the media: 'we' and 'they', 'us' and 'them', 'good' and 'bad', 'villages' and 'developers'. The farmers' group could not become the new colonial masters of the landscape, nor could the developers dominate the villages. The occupation was not a simple process where a group of people took over a vacant space, but a complex interaction of local and international actors who, for different reasons and under different conditions, determined the outcome of this conflict. What is clear is that the park remains a contested landscape, where the outcome of the conflict is far from certain.

Notes


2. I have examined the dilemmas of indigenous livelihood in LI, 2002a).

References


Sangaji 2001. At the site of the occupation, the 'indigenous' claimants had made no such investments, but labour had been invested by some members of the farmer group. While working together in the tobacco fields even before they deserted it earlier, they had planted coffee trees and continued to nurture them, an activity that gave them customary rights. The purpose in examining the various positions attributed to, or disputed by, the protagonists is not to adjudicate or draw conclusions about how diverse objectives – conservation, livelihood improvement, and tourism – can best be achieved. It is to emphasise the contingency and mutability of positioning, as not an outcome of unfettered 'choice', but as is it configured within the continuous play of culture, power and the historical context. Unlikely and for a different set of conditions, different coalitions, alliances, and oppositions could have been made, as they will be in future as the conjunctures shift. Looming on the horizon is the bloody clash between Muslims and Christians in the town of Poso less than 100 km away, a conflict setting refugees on the move, evacuating villages, and uniting fractious highways as a solid Christian Block. It is also transforming the landscape, notably the landscape of the park, the favourite spot for contractors building displaced refugee housing to get cheap timber [YAKES 2002]. Taking advantage of the NGO movement's current disarray, provincial officials are revising the plan to build a hydro plant within the park, a threat that will again rework the lines of alliance and opposition.

Conclusion

To move beyond the limited optimism of powerful and resistive orders, virtuous peasants and vicious states, or 'stateholders' bearing fixed interests, identities and ideologies, this article focused on the process of the clash and its outcomes. Its analytical framework proved robust enough to expose the dynamics of a resource conflict in the highlands of Sulawesi, and readers will judge whether it is helpful in developing an understanding of the threads of resource conflict in south Asia and beyond.

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Letters to editor

(Continued from p 5006)

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What is amazing though is the kind of academic work that went on at least in the social sciences despite the tensions and insecurity.

The first murmur questioning the applicability of Keynesian Economics to underdeveloped countries starts in the early 1940s at a classroom at the University; contribution to Indian Economic Journal, Indian Journal of Economics, J K Review of this period gives ample evidence of research in economic theory and empirical subjects. Desai talks of location of industries; in 1944 A K Daga Gupta points out the attention this matter deserves in any scheme of post-war planning in India (A K. Daga Gupta, "Location of Industries", Investment and Finance, Annual, 1944).

That was almost 60 years ago. Like Ashok Desai I too feel joy at the progress we have made, at the opportunities, choice, sense of freedom, and confidence we have achieved since then. Yet there is a sense of regret and failure. The raging fire from the lumbar yards of Mahim in January 1993 seemed alarmingly like an extension of similar scenes in Dacca in 1945-46. Subsequent events unfortunately did nothing to dispel this fear.

The crucial expression in Desai’s article is ‘social consciousness’ but not just at the level of CEO’s and managers. It must percolate down to the individual at the grass roots level. And again, not for altruistic reasons but for her own gain; she must realise that the garbage dumped in front of the neighbouring house will only collect the pollution and germs back to her: that lighting the lamp outside her home can result in positive externalities that are actually more than just a convenience to passersby. In a multicultural society, which most of the world is today, social harmony and concern go towards building of social capital, an essential ingredient for economic growth.

I am reminded here of the two masterpieces of 14th century frescoes by Ambrogio Lorineti in the Sienna Town Hall where the windows are tightly shut and people go by without interaction, the trees are bare, the fields are dry; there is an overall feeling of death and decay. The scene opposite depicts a society where windows and doors are wide open with breeze flowing in, children play in the parks, neighbours chat, gossip and work; there is a general air of camaraderie. Here the fields are green, trees full of fruits and flowers and people are happy.

It has indeed been a journey in time—time changing at every turn, exciting, depressing, challenging. If we ‘sit together’, another vital expression used by Desai, we may be able to drop the ‘depressing’ part and get on with the business of building the nation.

ALAKNANDA PATEL

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