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MANAGEMENT, AND STATE RESPONSES
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

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ABSTRACT

Most Southeast Asian states now embrace the language of sustainable development, environmental protection, and biodiversity conservation. But the impact of these new policies differs across political and economic systems. This paper compares the links between commercial forest management and community insecurity in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Sarawak (Malaysia), focusing in particular on the roles and responses of the state. Since the late 1980s, the Philippine government has decentralised environmental management, incorporating local governments, communities, and nongovernmental organisations. Although serious problems remain, especially in the areas that retain valuable commercial timber, compared to the years of President Ferdinand Marcos (1965–86), forest management is now far more transparent, inclusive, and responsive to the environmental security of communities. These changes were possible because of the collapse of the commercial timber industry, the fall of powerful logging patrons, and the emergence of democratic practices and a vibrant civil society. Sarawak and Indonesia have also reformed environmental and forest policies since the 1990s, such as raising forest fees, tightening regulations, and increasing the penalties for illegal and destructive loggers. But these new policies have had little impact on powerful, politically-connected companies. With substantial areas of valuable timber controlled by state–business networks, and with strong state controls over civil society, state and business leaders have managed to resist and undermine genuine environmental reforms. They have also disputed or ignored the evidence that environmental degradation is contributing to community insecurity. When Indonesia and Sarawak do link security and environmental degradation, the purpose is generally not to improve environmental management, but to justify and legitimise campaigns to increase control and suppress internal dissent.

ENVIRONMENTAL INSECURITY, FOREST MANAGEMENT, AND STATE RESPONSES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

*Peter Dauvergne**

This paper explores the links between commercial forest management and community insecurity in Southeast Asia, focusing in particular on the roles and responses of the states of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Sarawak (Malaysia).¹ I argue that state–business domination of lucrative timber operations in Indonesia and Sarawak leaves little scope for innovative and far-reaching responses to alleviate community anger at forest management practices or to tackle forest degradation and concomitant environmental insecurity. Tight controls on the press, political opposition, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), and communities further impede environmental reforms in the authoritarian state of Indonesia and the semi-authoritarian state of Sarawak. This suggests that as long as state–business alliances in Indonesia and Sarawak maintain a strong financial interest in timber production, as long as timber continues to hold significant commercial value, and as long as the state dominates civil society, even if forest management practices contribute to sporadic violence (such as the Dayak–Madurese ethnic clashes in East Kalimantan), resistance (such as from the Penan of Sarawak), or regional tensions (such as over the 1997 forest fires in Kalimantan and Sumatra), state leaders are unlikely to implement major environmental reforms, and NGOs,

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environment agencies within the state, and international organisations are likely to continue to have peripheral influence. Even more unsettling, instead of reacting to community anger and conflicts with genuine reforms, state leaders in Indonesia and Sarawak have made a self-serving conceptual link between security and forest management, using the language and policies of conservation to justify greater controls over dissident and outlying groups—what Nancy Peluso labels ‘coercing conservation’ (1993).

The situation in the Philippines was similar to Sarawak and Indonesia during the regime of Ferdinand Marcos (1965–86). Now, however, it is fundamentally different. There is little commercial timber left, eroding corporate influence and state resistance to reforms. Moreover, since 1986, under Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos, the Philippines has evolved into a lively democracy, with a critical press, strong political opposition, a large number of vocal NGOs, a vibrant civil society, and greater community participation. In this context, environment-oriented agencies of the state, international organisations, and NGOs have more input and influence. At an aggregate level, this has contributed to important improvements in forest management. It has also allowed more scope for alternative views and approaches to increase community participation, and decrease community insecurity. One example of this more inclusive and responsive approach is the Community Forestry Program. Yet not all is well in the Philippines. Many reforms have come too late. Many have failed. Rather than reducing local insecurity, some reforms have angered residents, even at times contributing to violent protests. And in pockets of the country that still contain valuable commercial forests, local loggers, sometimes in conjunction with political and military allies, continue to degrade forests and, as in the past, leave behind widespread environmental problems.

This paper is divided into two empirical sections: the Philippines; and Sarawak and Indonesia, where the patterns of forest management are remarkably similar. The Philippine section begins with some essential background, and then outlines the ties between state élites and loggers, state responses to forest degradation and community insecurity, and ongoing problems with forest management. The section on Sarawak and Indonesia also begins by sketching some necessary background. It then provides evidence of environmental insecurity, before outlining the ties between state officials and loggers, state responses to environmental problems, and state conceptions of, and reactions to, the links between forest management and community insecurity. Before proceeding to these studies, the next section defines state,

society, community insecurity, and environmental insecurity, all of which are central to the analysis.

State, society, and community and environmental insecurity: definitions

In the tradition of Weber, a state is an organisation that includes an executive, legislature, bureaucracy, courts, police, military, and in some cases, schools and public corporations. A state is not monolithic, although some are more cohesive than others. A society is the arena in which state and non-state organisations compete over the official and unofficial rules of the game. States aim to control societies; non-state organisations aim to restructure states; and both states and non-state organisations aim to control the economy (market). Inevitably, to varying degrees, state agencies and non-state organisations shape the interaction and structure of each other. By definition, a state has a legitimate monopoly over the use of violence and, therefore, has coercive tools to get individuals and groups within society to obey and conform. To preserve legitimacy and stability, a state also seeks to raise revenue, minimise domestic and foreign threats, maintain internal cohesion and coordination, and mediate and deflect societal pressures and demands. State output is a result of contests and compromises across agencies and levels of the state, and with relevant non-state organisations in society.²

Community insecurity arises when there is an absolute or relative deterioration in social relations and human security, which includes sustainable livelihoods, personal safety, shelter, human rights, health, education, and gender equity. It can also arise when a community perceives the actions of an ‘outsider’—such as the central government, a corporation, or an ethnic group—as unreasonable or unjust. These relative and absolute changes and negative perceptions sometimes trigger or fuel conflicts. But they can also just create a bubbling discontentment, a particularly difficult form of community insecurity to identify. Environmental insecurity is defined broadly, focusing on how environmental change contributes to community insecurity rather than on how war, conflict, or threats contribute to degradation. It includes conventional disputes and conflicts between states over environmental problems, such as water flows across borders, air pollution, and waves of environmental refugees. It also incorporates how environmental degradation contributes to internal

² These definitions are from Dauvergne (1997a). For similar definitions of state and society, see Migdal (1988), Migdal, Kohli and Shue (1994), and Grindle (1996).

security problems, including violence (such as insurgencies and ethnic conflicts), organised resistance (such as protests and blockades), and everyday resistance. Everyday resistance is unorganised, diffuse, individualistic, and covert resistance, such as trespassing, arson, illegal farming, and theft.³

Philippines

Background

The Philippines has about seven thousand islands with a total land area of thirty million hectares. Illegal and legal loggers have contributed to widespread deforestation. Less than nineteen per cent of the Philippines now has significant forest cover, down from 70 to 80 per cent at the start of the twentieth century. Only around 14.4 per cent is old-growth forest (805 000 hectares).⁴ With little accessible old-growth forest left, the commercial timber industry has collapsed and Philippine tropical log imports are now larger than domestic log harvests.⁵ Most of this degradation occurred during the Marcos regime.

Filipino elites and timber under President Marcos (1965–86)

Philippine logging peaked during the rule of President Ferdinand Marcos, reaching 11.6 million cubic metres in 1968, and averaging over 10 million cubic metres per year from 1965 to 1973.⁶ Marcos cronies, such as Alfonso Lim and Herminio Disini, had substantial timber empires. Some senior state leaders, such as Defence Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile and Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fabian Ver, were also directly involved in illegal logging (Vitug 1993a:16–24, 29–32, 44). With little supervision from the top, state implementors ignored violations in exchange for bribes, gifts, and personal security. In this context, loggers made windfall profits, in part by disregarding environmental and harvesting guidelines. In the 1960s and 1970s, the

³ The term everyday resistance is from Scott (1985). For a recent study of the importance of everyday resistance in diluting state control of forests in Asia (especially Burma), see Bryant (1997).

⁴ Based on data and interviews at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Quezon City, 28 July 1997. Also, see Poffenberger and Stone (1996:204). For recent Philippine government forest statistics, see Philippine Department of Environment (1996).

⁵ Based on data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, obtained by the author in July 1997.

⁶ Calculated from Food and Agriculture Organisation data, various yearbooks.

Philippines lost much of its remaining old-growth forests, which in turn triggered widespread deforestation. Over this time, deforestation in the Philippines was well over the average global tropical rate.⁷

Filipino elites and timber under Aquino (1986–92) and Ramos (1992–present)

When Corazon Aquino took over from Marcos in 1986, the Philippine timber industry was already in sharp decline. In the first half of the 1980s, as accessible stocks grew scarce, log production dropped steadily. By 1985 it was only 3.1 million cubic metres. By 1990, it had fallen to 2.2 million cubic metres. And by 1995, it was only 758 000 cubic metres.⁸ Annual deforestation also dropped from about 300 000 hectares in the 1960s and 1970s, to around 150 000 hectares in the early 1980s, and to less than 100 000 hectares in the early 1990s. To some extent, at least since the early 1990s, lower logging and deforestation rates reflect stronger laws and better management. But in many ways these changes are simply a result of fewer forests to deforest.

The fall of Marcos, along with the depletion of commercial forests, severed many of the ties between loggers and top political leaders. President Aquino did not have direct links to loggers during her term. At one time Fidel Ramos had logging interests, but he broke these before becoming president in 1992. As is documented later, however, some loggers did manage to survive the transition after Marcos, especially in pockets of the country that still contain valuable timber. In these places, loggers still have considerable political influence, sometimes through a member of Congress, provincial leader, or local mayor (Vitug 1993b:62–68).⁹ They are also still able to avoid and manipulate rules by bribing or coercing local implementors.

Philippine state responses to environmental degradation

During the Marcos years the state did little to manage commercial forests, conserve biodiversity, or impede deforestation. There was also little sense that

⁷ For background on logging and deforestation in the Philippines, see Kummer (1991).

⁸ The 1985 and 1990 figures are from Food and Agriculture Organisation, various yearbooks. The 1995 figure is from Forest Management Bureau, Department of the Environment and Natural Resources, Quezon City, Philippines (obtained by the author in July 1997).

⁹ Of 200 congressmen elected in 1992, seventeen were connected to logging operations (Coronel 1996:13).

commercial forest practices or environmental degradation was in any way a security problem, in part because officials and state agencies (including the military) were often key actors in logging forests quickly and recklessly. Since Marcos, forest management has improved. Many factors have contributed to these changes. Since the mid-1980s global concern for environmental problems has grown considerably. Environmental concern within the Philippines has also increased.¹⁰ International donors—such as the Asian Development Bank, the Japan Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund, and the World Bank—have provided substantial funds for environmental protection.¹¹ The institutionalisation of democratic practices have also had a significant impact. Environmental NGOs have proliferated, gaining increasing influence through a critical media and strong opposition political parties (Teehankee 1993; Ragragio 1993).

Relatively little valuable timber, fewer high-level political and military patrons protecting loggers, stronger internal and external pressure for environmental protection, greater concern with environmental problems, a more dynamic civil society, and the strengthening of democratic practices have contributed to major reforms to commercial timber management. The government has cut the number of logging licences, stopped issuing new licences, banned logging in the few remaining old-growth forests and in provinces with less than 40 per cent tree cover, collected more accurate forest statistics, increased commercial forest taxes, and implemented major reforestation programs.¹² To reduce illegal logging the government has also strengthened laws, seized illegal logs, rewarded informers, and prosecuted offenders. Although it is difficult to discern absolutely, compared to the Marcos years, state officials also appear to accept a broader understanding of the effects of commercial forest management and environmental degradation, including the impact on community security. Both the Aquino and Ramos governments

¹⁰ For overviews of the emergence of global environmental concern over the last thirty years, see Miller (1995) and Porter and Brown (1996). For the Philippines, see Magno (1993). For an analysis of the impact of the globalisation of environmentalism on forest management in the Asia-Pacific, see Dauvergne (1997b).

¹¹ For a discussion of the importance of international donors for promoting reforms, see Ross (1996).

¹² For example, in 1987 there were 143 timber licences; by 30 July 1997, only twenty were still active, although these still covered 1.2 million hectares. The 1997 figures are from the Forest Management Bureau, Department of the Environment and Natural Resources, Quezon City, Philippines (obtained by the author in August 1997).

have developed policies and programs to improve environmental quality, tighten environmental controls, and increase local participation in environmental management. Although the governments have not made most of these changes primarily for security reasons, many have the implicit objective of reducing community and environmental insecurity. Two Aquino government policies that have been especially important for reshaping the environmental management of forests are the 1991 Local Government Code and the Community Forestry Program. These also indicate fundamental changes in the attitudes of state élites towards communities and environmental management.

1991 Local Government Code and the Community Forestry Program

The 1991 Local Government Code devolved powers to provinces, cities, and towns. It gives communities the power to protect forests, control reforestation and natural regeneration programs, operate parks and nature reserves, and enforce environmental and forest management laws. It also allows local governments to manage community-based forestry projects. This Code has had significant effects on local environmental politics. In 1995, a government–NGO study found that local officials were now more active in environmental management, diverting more funds and staff to support environmental projects, including reforestation (Coronel 1996:11).

Besides this Code, the Aquino government also developed specific programs to increase the participation of communities and NGOs in environmental decisions, research, monitoring, and technology transfers. One of the more important initiatives for the environmental management of forests is the Community Forestry Program.¹³ The Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) started this program in 1989 to rehabilitate and conserve secondary and primary forests, shift from large to small-scale forest operations, increase local participation and training in forest management, make access to forests more equal and democratic, generate work in rural communities, and enhance the institutional capacity of DENR, Local Government Units, and NGOs. This project provides upland communities with 25-year Community Forestry Management Agreements, which can be renewed once. These agreements provide communities with timber management rights

¹³ The Community Forestry Program is one of many programs that comprise the Community-Based Forest Management Strategy and the People-Oriented Forestry Programs and Projects. See the Philippine Department of Environment (1995a) and Philippine Department of Environment (1995b).

conditional on approval from DENR. Communities must obey DENR guidelines and follow a plan to maintain sustainable yields (defined as the annual amount loggers can extract that will regenerate over the cutting cycle and provide equal commercial volumes in subsequent harvests).

The Program is divided into three phases. In the first phase, DENR—in conjunction with Local Government Units and communities—provides information, identifies sites, conducts forest inventories, and selects participants. In the second phase, DENR awards Community Forestry Management Agreements, develops alternative livelihood options, and helps train and organise communities. In the third phase, with DENR assistance and supervision, communities reforest, harvest, and regenerate forest areas. NGOs play a key role in this program. They assist in training, organising, planning, managing, and marketing. With funds from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, 48 projects were started in 1989; with funds from the US Agency for International Development another seventeen began in 1992 (Bennagen 1996:53–7; Philippine Department of Environment 1993:88–107).

Environmental failures, environmental insecurity, and pockets of resistance

Although the Philippines has taken important steps to make environmental management more inclusive and effective, considerable problems still exist. Decentralising environmental management and embracing communities and nongovernmental organisations have not always improved management or alleviated community insecurity. Many community reforestation sites, for example, have failed. Several studies show that after three years only 40 per cent of trees survived. Many trees have died; some are never planted. And occasionally, angry locals have ripped out or burned down plantation trees (see Korten 1994).¹⁴ In some areas decentralisation has, at least temporarily, made the situation even worse. In Agusan, for example, until his death in 1995, Governor D.O. Plaza, who funded his political empire with logs, used the new powers under the 1991 Local Government Code to increase his personal control. He took over logging checkpoints from DENR to conceal illegal logging by his allies and family (Severino 1996). Sheila Coronel argues:

¹⁴ For a study of some of the typical problems of community forestry, see Vitug (1996).

Agusan demonstrates the mixed blessings of democracy and devolution. It dramatises how, in many parts of the country, the right to make use of increasingly scarce natural resources remains in the hands of a rich and powerful few who also have privileged access to political office (Coronel 1996:12).

Illegal and destructive legal loggers also remain a serious problem. State capacity to monitor and control them is still limited by links between DENR officials and timber operators. Few staff, limited funds, and inadequate equipment, especially in remote areas that still contain valuable commercial timber, also hamper enforcement. In total, the Philippines only has around 4000 forest guards. Palawan, which contains about one-third of the remaining old-growth forests, only has about 135 guards. In this setting, illegal loggers, sometimes protected by political, military, and bureaucratic élites, continue to destroy primary forests and national parks. In Palanan, Isabela, for example, illegal logging has apparently accelerated since the 1994 ban on logging in protected areas (Robles and Severino 1997:21).¹⁵ As a result of practices like those in Isabela, illegal logs may well account for around half of Philippine total timber consumption. Besides illegal logging, other ongoing problems include tax evasion, inefficient processors, and bogus environmental NGOs. Government officials and corporate operators also continue to intimidate and threaten people who oppose forest management and reforestation projects, especially indigenous forest dwellers (Human Rights Watch/Asia 1996). Some environmental measures, such as plantations, have even triggered violence and upheaval, rather than alleviated community insecurity. For example, Alcantara and Sons Company (Alsons) ended up fighting the Matigsalug tribe over the development of a 19 000-hectare timber plantation in Tala-ingod, Davao, Mindanao. According to Federico Magdalena, 'the consequent conflict resulted in the death of many tribesmen and twelve Alsons workers in 1994. The conflict is still raging and no solution is in sight' (1996:120). The Philippines, then, clearly still has problems with forest management. Yet compared with Sarawak and Indonesia substantial changes have occurred, including changes to attitudes, decision making, policies and, to a lesser extent, practices.

¹⁵ For other articles that document similar problems in other parts of the Philippines see Robles (1997), Batario (1997), and Severino (1997).

Sarawak and Indonesia

Background

Like the Philippines, the states of Sarawak and Indonesia have legal control over official forest areas. Unlike the Philippines, however, expansive tracts of commercial forests still remain, although both are heading down the Philippine path. In Sarawak, loggers harvested around 30 per cent of Sarawak's forests from 1963 to 1985 (Hong 1987:128–9). By the end of the 1980s, old-growth forests only covered four to five million hectares.¹⁶ Sarawak now has about 8.7 million hectares of forests (out of a total land area of 12.3 million hectares). Around six million hectares are set aside for sustainable timber production. Commercial log production in 1995 was around 16 million cubic metres, approximately two and a half times higher than sustainable levels. At this rate, and under current harvesting practices, Sarawak will deplete its valuable commercial timber stocks in less than a decade, leaving behind widespread environmental problems (ITTO 1990).¹⁷

Indonesia, with a land area of 190 million hectares, is much larger than Sarawak. Officially, forestlands cover 143 million hectares, but there is more likely between 90 and 110 million hectares of natural forests. About 64 million hectares are classified as production forests, accounting for around 60 per cent of legal commercial timber in Southeast Asia. According to the International Tropical Timber Organisation, in 1995 commercial log production was around 35 million cubic metres. A recent World Bank study estimated that it was more likely over 40 million cubic metres, almost two times higher than sustainable levels (summarised in Della-Giacoma 1996). At this rate, Indonesia, which has one of the largest commercial tropical log stocks left in the world, could deplete this stock in about three decades.¹⁸ Even more troubling, commercial logging is the most important factor driving deforestation, which is now around one million hectares per year.¹⁹

¹⁶ Interviews, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Malaysia, Petaling Jaya, 10 March 1994.

¹⁷ Although some improvements have occurred since the International Tropical Timber Organisation conducted this study, it is still a reasonable estimate of the amount of accessible commercial timber left in Sarawak.

¹⁸ The Indonesian economist Rizal Ramli made this estimate in 'Timber' (1994:9).

¹⁹ For government figures and information on forest management in Indonesia, see Indonesia. Departemen Kehutanan (1992a), Indonesia. Ministry of Forestry (1993), Indonesia. Departemen Kehutanan (1992b), and Indonesia. Ministry of Forestry (1995).

Environmental insecurity in Sarawak and Indonesia

Forest management practices and widespread forest degradation in Sarawak and Indonesia have contributed to significant levels of community and environmental insecurity, triggering everyday resistance, protests, and even violence. The most visible conflicts in Sarawak have been between loggers (backed by the state) and the Penan tribe (Tsuruoka 1995:A10). Indonesia has similar security problems. As Charles Victor Barber notes, Indonesia's 'forests have become the arena for increasing levels of sometimes violent social conflicts' (1997). Conflicts are sometimes triggered by state and corporate actions (such as when loggers or plantation companies displace communities) and sometimes by environmental degradation itself. These conflicts often occur between state or corporate groups and local residents. For example, Yamdena (Maluku) islanders were furious when in 1991, with no consultation or notice, the government granted the company P.T. Alam Nusa Segar a 172 000-hectare logging concession, even though the 535 000-hectare island had been a protected area for twenty years. In late 1992, Yamdena islanders attacked the logging company, killing one person and injuring several others. Logging operations were suspended and as of 1996 the situation was still tense. This is not an isolated case. Conflicts and disagreements between locals and loggers (often with the support of state officials) have occurred in Bentian (East Kalimantan), Sugapa (North Sumatra), and Benekat (South Sumatra) (Barber 1997:62–6). Forest management practices and environmental degradation also sometimes trigger, or at least aggravate, conflict between ethnic groups. For example, according to Amri Marzali of the University of Indonesia, the 1997 ethnic clash in Kalimantan between the Dayaks and the Madurese, was in part a result of the social and psychological effects on the Dayaks of years of commercial forest exploitation. He explains:

Land has special meaning for them, not just in an economic sense but is inseparable from the social and religious life within Dayak communities. A vital part of their life has been taken by other people (quoted in Walters 1997:28).

Inappropriate state policies, corporate actions, and environmental degradation do not just contribute to domestic insecurity. Although not as common, these can also trigger regional and even international insecurity, as demonstrated by the regional crisis created by raging fires in Kalimantan and Sumatra in the second half of 1997.

Elites and timber in Sarawak and Indonesia

In both Sarawak and Indonesia, timber operators have close ties to high-level politicians, including Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud and President Suharto. Timber is the backbone of Sarawak's economy and timber money pervades the entire state structure. Chief Minister Taib is the Minister of Forestry, which gives him the exclusive power to grant timber concessions. He has used this power to distribute timber concessions to his allies, friends, and family (see Yu 1987; Institute Analisa Sosial 1989:73–4). The Minister of the Environment and Tourism, Datuk Amar James Wong Kim Min, runs Limbang Trading, which controls around 300 000 hectares of timber concessions in Sarawak. Datuk Tiong Hiew King, the head of the Rimbunan Hijau Group, is the largest logger in Sarawak, controlling about 800 000 hectares. His net worth is about M\$2 billion. Like the other six major Malaysian Chinese loggers in Sarawak, he has close ties to state leaders (including Chief Minister Taib and Environment Minister James Wong), providing money in exchange for licences, political protection, and bureaucratic favours.²⁰

The situation is similar in Indonesia. There are approximately 500 concessionaires, although most are tied to corporate groups, and according to a World Bank study, as a result, five or six conglomerates dominate timber production (World Bank 1993:27). Bob Hasan is the most powerful timber operator. He is the head of four timber organisations, including Apkindo (the Wood Panel Association), which controls the plywood industry (see Dauvergne 1997c).²¹ He also has logging rights to about two million hectares. The largest timber operator is Prajogo Pangestu. His concessions cover about 5.5 million hectares. He employs around 50 000 people and is one of the wealthiest businessmen in Indonesia. Both Hasan and Prajogo have close ties to President Suharto. They also have extensive networks of allies within the bureaucracy, including forest enforcement officers and customs officials (see Pura 1995; Schwarz 1994; Dauvergne 1997d).

Besides ties to politicians and bureaucrats, loggers have also had close ties to Indonesian military officers since the late 1960s. In 1967, Suharto distributed timber concessions to reward generals, appease potential opponents

²⁰ For background on some of the companies operating in Sarawak, see Pura (1993) and Pura (1994).

²¹ As part of a loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund, Indonesia agreed to dismantle the monopolistic controls on plywood by 1 February 1998. As of the middle of March 1998, however, informal controls still seemed strong.

within the military, and supplement the military budget. By 1978, the armed forces controlled at least fourteen timber companies (Robison 1978:28). Since then, military involvement in timber operations has declined somewhat. There are still, however, substantial timber operations run by the military. For example, the International Timber Corporation of Indonesia operates the largest concession in Indonesia (600 000 hectares in East Kalimantan). The armed forces controls 51 per cent of this company; a conglomerate chaired by Suharto's son, Bambang Trihatmodjo, controls 34 per cent; and Hasan controls fifteen per cent (see ITCI 1992). With such powerful interests behind logging, it is hardly surprising that the states of Indonesia and Sarawak have angered marginalised indigenous groups and responded to widespread environmental degradation with half-hearted measures.

State responses to environmental degradation in Sarawak and Indonesia

Under pressure from international critics, Sarawak and Indonesia have developed new environmental and forest policies since the early 1990s. Sarawak has strengthened enforcement agencies, passed stronger penalties for illegal loggers and smugglers, and hired more forest guards. In Indonesia, the government has rescinded some licences and punished a few illegal loggers. Despite these changes, however, in both places many loggers still ignore environmental and harvesting guidelines and the overall impact on log production and harvesting practices has been minor. The Sarawak and Indonesian governments have mostly pursued small-time loggers or swidden farmers rather than large well-connected companies. Not surprisingly, tight restrictions on civil society—combined with the interests of powerful élites—have left little scope for alternative or more inclusive approaches to forest management. As a result, although Sarawak and Indonesia have social and community forestry programs, these are not nearly as comprehensive or inclusive as ones in the Philippines.²² Unlike the Philippines, there is little concern that forest practices are contributing to community insecurity. In the case of Indonesia, Barber argues that even though local conflicts over forest resources 'are pervasive, they do not particularly disturb the government. Local conflicts are largely treated as local matters.' He maintains that:

²² For background on social and community forestry in Indonesia, see Sarido (1996:111–21). For background on Malaysia, see Kamis and Hamzah (1996:175–90). An increasing number of state officials in Indonesia do appear to recognise the need for more community participation, although so far this has not led to far-reaching reforms (Barber 1997:47).

...a cohesive alliance of timber firms, local governments, and the local police and military apparatus controls the communities in question through a combination of repression and cooptation offers of land compensation, jobs, or outright bribes (1997:67).

Also, unlike the Philippines, there is little sense that improving environmental management could enhance security.

State conceptions of environment–security links in Sarawak and Indonesia

Both Sarawak and Indonesia strongly resist the idea that environmental degradation leads to insecurity—or that it in any way contributes to community tension, resistance, and violence. Instead, the governments in both places have linked security and environmental degradation, not to improve environmental management and enhance community security, but to use environmental language and policies to control dissident and outlying groups. For example, the Sarawak and Indonesian governments partly justify measures to confine and control indigenous groups by claiming that slash-and-burn farmers are the primary cause of deforestation and widespread fires. Of course, Indonesia and Sarawak are too sophisticated and intricate to employ environmental measures to just increase control. Some environmental reforms are genuine attempts to protect the environment. There are also, of course, diverse views within Sarawak and Indonesia, although the voices that support better environmental management, for any reason, are relatively peripheral.²³

Conclusion: environmental insecurity and Southeast Asian states

As environmental problems become more acute, as global environmental concern mounts, and as international and local funds increasingly support environmental measures, the rhetoric of Southeast Asian states is shifting in support of sustainable management. Most states now employ the language of sustainable development, environmental protection, and biodiversity conservation. But the effect of this new rhetoric differs across political and economic systems. In the Philippines since the late 1980s, a free press, an independent judiciary, democratic practices, and strong NGOs have

²³ The Philippines is also too complex and multifaceted to implement environmental policies just to improve environmental management and enhance community security; some measures are also simultaneously, or even surreptitiously, designed to increase control.

contributed to substantial, although inconsistent, changes to the process of environmental management. The Aquino and Ramos governments have been more open and accountable. Public opinion has also shifted, and now strongly opposes environmentally destructive industries like logging. The central government has decentralised environmental management, and integrated local governments, communities, and NGOs. Involving a broad base of local people has to some extent diffused tensions and contributed to improving the basic needs of residents. More and more local politicians have come to power who support environmental protection, or at least no longer have direct ties to environmentally destructive enterprises. The Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources has also undergone major reforms and to some extent at the national level it 'has shown that it can act as an impartial administrator and arbiter of environmental disputes' (Coronel 1996:13). Although it is difficult, if not impossible, to isolate the main reasons for these changes, they appear partly motivated by new environmental attitudes, and partly by a need to appease vocal international and domestic NGOs and angry local communities. Whatever the underlying reasons, however, as the Community Forestry Program demonstrates, it is clear that forest management in the Philippines is now far more transparent, inclusive, and responsive to community needs than in Sarawak and Indonesia.

To some extent, then, the Philippines has moved to alleviate some of the community and environmental insecurity prevalent during the Marcos era. Yet it is equally important to emphasise that many of these changes have come too late. Moreover, considerable problems remain. Widespread corruption, incompetence, and straightforward mismanagement continue, especially in local DENR offices. Decentralisation has also produced some mixed results. In some cases it has even increased insecurity as local élites fought over control and rewards, as local environmental programs (such as plantations) triggered resistance or violence, and as local NGOs and communities struggled at cross-purposes.

Some changes have also occurred in Sarawak and Indonesia, especially to the *content* of environmental and forest policies. Both states have increased forest fees, tightened regulations, and launched campaigns to crack down on illegal and destructive loggers. But these changes have had little impact on large, well-connected companies and, overall, there have been few changes to logging rates or harvesting practices. This suggests that as long as valuable timber remains, as long as tight state-business alliances exist, and as long as the state overwhelms civil society, state and business leaders are likely to

oppose and undermine far-reaching environmental reforms. They are also likely to continue to ignore or resist the evidence that environmental degradation is contributing to community insecurity, even when it leads to violence and protests.

Perhaps the most disturbing finding is that when Indonesia and Malaysia do link security and environmental degradation it is generally done to justify and legitimise campaigns to increase control in outlying regions, not to improve environmental management. In this way, these governments simultaneously employ environmental ideas to increase international legitimacy and suppress internal dissent.²⁴ This suggests that, although in practical terms it is useful to encourage governments to accept the links between environmental degradation and security and therefore channel funds allocated for security to environmental protection, this task must be pursued with great care to avoid inadvertently bolstering the tools of suppression in the authoritarian and semi-authoritarian states of Southeast Asia.

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²⁴ A similar pattern is found in Burma. See Bryant (1996).

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