

Introduction

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The papers collected in this issue of *Cakalele* are about issues of resource management in Maluku, and the prospects of sustainable development as the province experiences rapid economic growth, high rates of immigration, and, now, tragic cultural conflict. As the peoples of Maluku are being exposed to the complex processes described by the euphemism of “globalization”—investment by multinational capital, improvements in transportation and communication technologies, commercialization of the economy, the expansion of consumer culture, and the “stretching” and intensification of social relations across space—what has long been imagined as idyllic backwater is now a resource frontier. As these papers document, forests are destroyed for timber, or to make way for plantations, aquaculture, and resettlement sites; marine resources are depleted to meet the demand of overseas consumers for tropical fish, shrimp, sea cucumbers, and shells; and whole ecosystems are endangered by open-cast mining, urban development and industrial and urban pollution.

At the same time, or perhaps in its wake, “globalization” also brings an international conception of human rights, and of particular rights of indigenous people over their traditional territories and resources, together with international organizations who mobilize legal and academic discourses, alternative or oppositional, to the dominant discourses of the nation-state and economic development. Non-governmental organizations, for example, bring with their cosmopolitan personnel and multidisciplinary perspectives, the knowledge, skills and material means to enhance local control and strengthen the institutions identified with “community resource management” or an “indigenous conservation ethic”. Unfortunately, as a result of the recent conflict in the province that has made refugees (and sadly some victims) out of many faculty at Universitas Pattimura, and turned the attention of what is left of NGO organizers to more immediate concerns of saving lives, several papers taking local perspectives were never completed. Nevertheless, the authors of the pa-

pers in this issue are all more or less explicitly concerned with these issues.

In the first article, Alyssa Miller, of the University of Hawai'i, provides a historical overview of urban development in Ambon, documenting the particular degradation of the marine and fluvial environments as a consequence of the intensification of agricultural production and industrialization of primary industries, particularly timber and fisheries. As the major center of trade and finance on the resource frontier, virtually a "boom town", Ambon has attracted speculative capital and large numbers of relatively poor immigrants, while as the center of regional government and finance, it has witnessed the expansion of a local middle-class. The resulting pressure on urban space and resources, and increasing socioeconomic inequality, has had progressive debilitating effects on the natural environment as well as recent devastating effects on ethnic relations and political stability. Miller's field research reveals the enormous difficulties of sustainable resource management by community and even local government under conditions of rapid urban development.

Irene Novacek and Ricky Palyama of Yayasan Huolopu describe the development of the mining properties in Haruku by a joint venture of international and national capital, and the national government, in a form of development that conflicts with both the regional and local conceptions of development. Local populations face relocation and long-term and severe environmental degradation, but have not been consulted by the corporations or government. Local NGOs, however, have provided education and assistance, and the communities have organized, drawing upon *adat* traditions and rituals, together with very modern forms of political protest (the petition to parliament and the Human Rights Commission), to prosecute their case for the rescinding of exploration permits. Novacek and Palyama thus suggest that in the context of a relatively stable and close-knit community, it is at least possible to raise environmental consciousness.

Irene Novacek, again, and Ingvild Harkes, of ICLARM, Manila, draw upon an extensive survey of Christian fishing communities of the Lease Islands to assess the prospects for an indigenous marine resource management. They find that although the institutions of *sasi* and *adat* law have been weakened in most villages, particularly those closest to Ambon, and

apply to only limited marine resources, their adaptability and capacity for local control suggests that development agencies and government at least conduct further studies of their operation and effectiveness in marine resource management. Novacek and Harkes find that the persistence of *sasi* depends upon strong leadership and collective investment in the three bases of church, state, and traditional law, presupposing, of course, a relatively homogeneous population and sense of community. Their research, however, shows an increasing proportion of Muslims among younger fishers, even within Christian villages, and documents increasing socio-economic polarization between subsistence, artisanal and commercial fishers. Perhaps this is a case where we have to rely upon the optimism of the will, and the energy of the NGO community, to counter the pessimism of the intellect.

The final paper by Jennifer Leith, of the University of East Anglia, is based upon extensive fieldwork in Kao, Northern Halmahera, presently undergoing massive resettlement of transmigrants. Most of the transmigrants are from Java, of course, but consistent with national policy, a proportion are local. She provides an interpretation of an incident that powerfully affected a group of Modole transmigrants, a seeming accident that sheds light on the conflicting ways in which they interpret the process of modernization. Ironically, the event that precipitated this local crisis of meaning was the felling of a banyan tree. The tree is sacred to the Modole people, but as Leith notes, it is also appropriately the symbol of Golkar, the political party, and of national unity. Pruning of the limbs of the overspreading "tree" of Indonesia, has led to death and injury to many already, and must surely provoke all Indonesians, of whatever ethnic identity, to question the national imagery and the social compact that so subordinated local culture and environment to economic development in the New Order years.

When the violence in Maluku ends, as hopefully it soon must, the question is just what combination of international, national, and local institutions will provide a framework for culturally and environmentally sustainable development. *Sasi* and other indigenous forms of community-based management, ritual, myth, and local knowledge, are vital but clearly cannot by themselves provide a means to confront multinational capital and its demand for natural resources, particularly where what seems to

be traditional community is progressively undermined by modernization and continued high rates of immigration.