PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION?

COMMUNITIES, CONTESTATION AND CONFLICT IN KOMODO NATIONAL PARK, INDONESIA.

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Abstract

With the failures of many large scale conservation projects, conservation sites have become sites of conflict over resources and discourses. This thesis looks at situation of Komodo National Park, in Flores, eastern Indonesia where an international Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with a private company, has developed a 25 year Management Plan for the park amidst great opposition from local communities and local NGOs. I explore the bases for conflict and contestation of this plan and discuss how it fails to consider the real plight of park residents, penalising them instead and promoting the interests of the wealthy and powerful. Hajer puts forward the argument that environmental conflict provides a symbolic umbrella, an inclusionary device, that confines the political debate and ensuing discourse production to specific actors and institutions. Thus, the debate has become a discursive one, revolving around interpretation, rather than dealing with the physical nature of environmental problems. (Hajer 1995: 14). Despite the ensuing media attention due to the shooting of two fishermen in 2002 by patrol forces, I show how the use of multiple storylines continues to obscure the real issues of survival that continue to challenge park residents.

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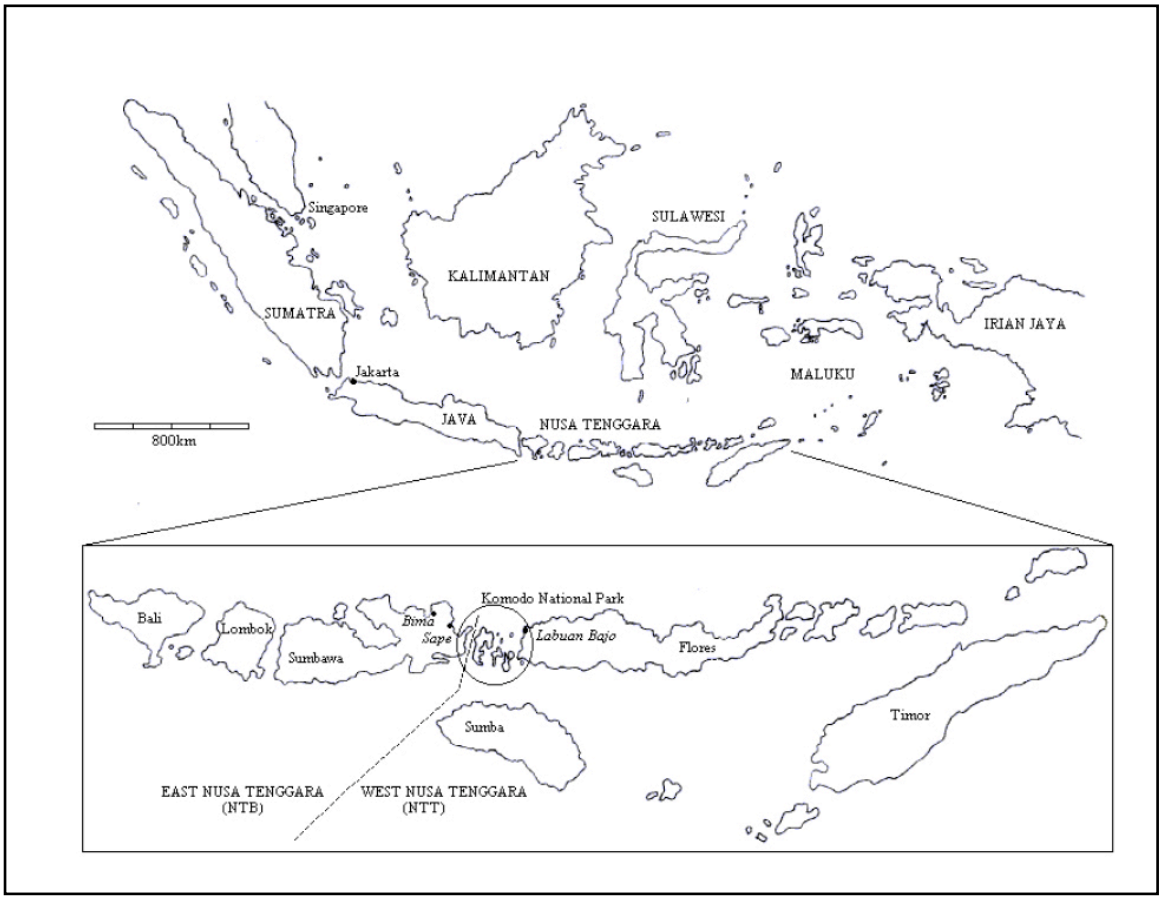
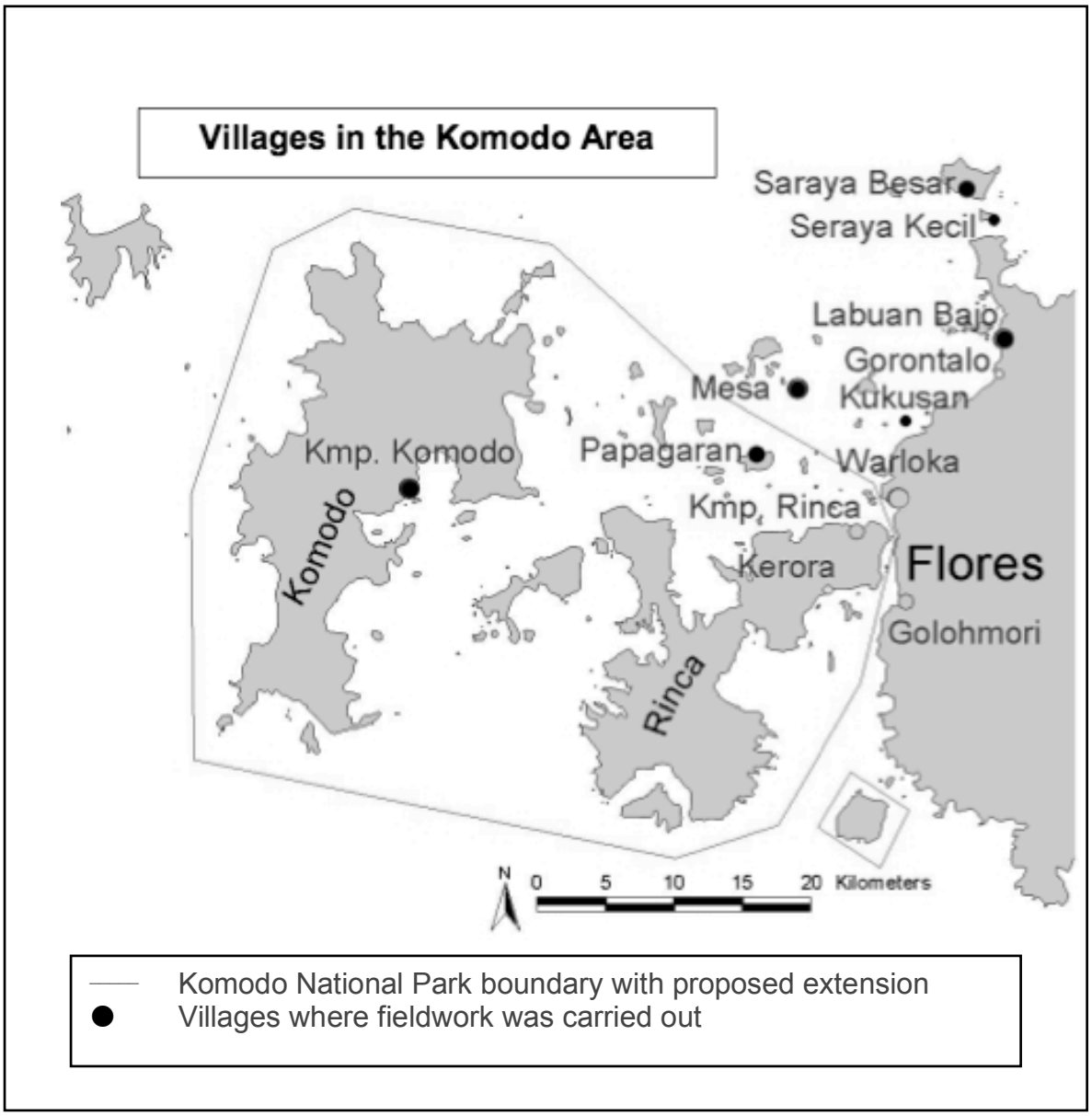


Figure 1: Map of Komodo National Park (Walpole and Goodwin 2000: 562)



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Chapter 1 'Storylines': Unravelling the Politics of Conservation in the Komodo National Park

Introduction

The Komodo National Park (KNP), located in Eastern Indonesia, just west of the island of Flores, became the focus of media attention in Indonesia in late 2002, when two unarmed fishermen were shot dead by ranger patrols for allegedly fishing illegally within the park boundaries. At the centre of the storm was an American Non Governmental Organization (NGO), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), that had funded the patrol boats in the park. These patrol boats were just one of several measures, considered draconian by some, that limited park access and curtailed fishing activity in KNP. These various new measures, introduced by The Nature Conservancy were seen by opponents as indirectly leading to the shooting of the fisherman.

Earlier in 2002, in the Komodo National Park, considerable concern had been raised because of the TNC's proposed 'joint venture' with a private company (Putri Naga Komodo), to manage the Komodo National Park for twenty-five years (Dhume 2002, Borchers 2002, Erb 2005). Arriving in Labuan Bajo, the town on the western coast of Flores, where the Komodo National Park headquarters is located in early 2003, not long after the shootings, and still in the thick of considerable controversy over this incident, many people were reluctant to answer questions regarding The Nature Conservancy. Speaking to boat operators and tour guides, there seemed to be a climate of uncertainty about TNC's future path of action in the face of the shooting of two unarmed fishermen. Respondents were unwilling to commit themselves to an opinion on TNC, short of saying that at that point in time, the TNC regulations had had little impact on their lives. Respondents did express concern about the heavy handed measures TNC had used against unarmed fishermen, and had some opinions as well as about the emergence of Putri Naga Komodo, and the management collaboration with TNC that might attempt to monopolise and regulate activities within the park. Because of my considerable interest in conservation, I was sympathetic to the TNC's work, and wanted to unravel what were the problems that had been emerging in the Komodo National Park. Why had there been so much controversy surrounding the TNC? Why had there been particularly so much controversy surrounding this particular national park?

As my research in the park unfolded over the subsequent months, I came to question whether or not this park could be considered a success or whether the considerable conservation efforts of the TNC itself, though often praised on the one hand, could actually either be said to be successful. Additionally, my research efforts uncovered many different agendas, as they were held by different members of the Labuan Bajo community. Many

people living in the national park, or in the town took the opportunity to oppose the TNC, but were their reasons for opposing the TNC simply because they saw them as being too heavy-handed in their enthusiasm to conserve the "Earth's Last Great Places"? After awhile I found the cacophony of voices increasingly perplexing, and the motives of individuals increasingly opaque.

In order to make sense of the conflicts that have occurred in the Komodo National Park, as well as the differing positions held by actors within and around the park, I have found that Maarten Hajer's concept of "story-lines" (1995) has helped me to put the debates and conflicts into perspective. Hajer argues environmental conflict provides a symbolic umbrella, an inclusionary device, that confines the political debate and ensuing discourse production to specific actors and institutions. Thus, the debate has become a discursive one, revolving around interpretation, rather than dealing with the physical nature of environmental problems (Hajer 1995: 14). To better understand the discursive environment that surrounds environmental problems, Hajer operationalizes the effect of such discourses on practice through the use of story- lines (ibid: 52). A story-line is a convenient means for actors to understand the diverse discourses that surround physical or social phenomena, consequently positioning themselves as subjects within social structures. According to Haajer, story-lines become an important form of agency as they shape the discursive order (ibid: 56).

> Story-lines…not only help to construct a problem, they also play an important role in the creation of a social and moral order in a given domain. Story-lines are devices through which actors are positioned, and through which specific ideas of 'blame' and 'responsibility', and of 'urgency' and of 'responsible behaviours' are attributed. Through story-lines actors can be positioned as victims ……, as problem solvers, as perpetrators, as top scientists, or as scaremongers (Haajer 1995: 64-65).

"Story lines" are thus a political device that provide a semblance of coherence for discourse closure. Storylines reduce discursive complexity by becoming easily accessible through frequent use in the discursive debate. By invoking a storyline, the main storyline in the discourse can be recalled. Over time, the storyline becomes ritualized as a metaphor that lends credence to and rationalizes the debate. (Haajer 1995: 62-63)

Story lines are central in what Haajer calls the argumentative approach to environmental conflict, where politics is conceived as a struggle for hegemony. (Haajer 1995: 59) Actors who are attracted to and use similar story lines (though they might have different interests) while taking part in practices in which this discursive activity is based are part of

"discourse- coalitions". Discourse-coalitions are thereby formed when a common discourse connects previously independent practices in a single political project (ibid: 65).

In the case of the Komodo National Park, the formation of discourse coalitions of resistance specifically centres around the prevailing discourses within Indonesian national and regional politics, and in this sense, cannot be considered independently. Recent upheavals in the political order and the declaration of regional autonomy provided a political space for negotiation and resistance that previously did not exist. The ousting of the Suharto regime in 1998, on the basis of gross human rights abuses and corruption popularized the notion of "people power" and democracy. The defining feature of the New Order government was its rule from the centre (i.e. Jakarta) but this was supposed to change with regional autonomy, where control over natural resources was relinquished to regional governments across Indonesia. In this way, decentralization plays a key in the creation of Komodo National Park as a site for collective action, in particular, as we will see, the central government's refusal to relinquish control of the park, whilst working within the discourses of democracy and regional autonomy.

As story lines must be recognisable and located within the dominant discourse, they are a good starting point to tease apart the various interests that surround each one, as they allow for a wide variety of possibly competing interests. They also provide insight into the processes of knowledge production on an individual level (Hajer 1995: 66-7). Each story line had a familiar theme, one that aimed to resonate with its targeted audience - that of human rights infringements ala Ordre Baru, the neo-colonial struggle against the Western oppressor, but in the form of 'bio-centrism' (respondents in NGO circles often used the term) or the theme of resistance (be it of imposed identities, regulations etc). Story-lines is also a useful departure point for analysis as methodologically, people often use these storylines in interviews to position themselves within the debate about TNC. The choice of story-line concurrently was dependent on how respondents positioned themselves in the prevailing social structure, showing how they felt constrained or enabled by it.

Dragons, Conservation and Tourism: The Formation of a National Park

The island of Komodo lies between the major islands of Flores and Sumbawa. Together with the islands of Pandar and Rinca (and now, everything in between), they form what is known today as the Komodo National Park. The major attraction in the Park has traditionally been the Komodo Dragon (*Varanus komodoensis*), touted as the largest lizard in the world. The fecund waters around this archipelago of islands are also a burgeoning site for dive tourism. Aside from its obvious economic value as a tourist destination, the waters and islands around

Komodo also have much cultural and historical value, as they lie between former centres of power in the region, the Bimanese Sultanate and kingdom of Manggarai. The relationship of Komodo to these centres of power had a large role in the formation of the communities that now reside in the park.

However, the most famous inhabitant of the park must be the Komodo Dragon. This large monitor's occurrence in the archipelago has resulted in many acts of legislation that have primarily been to protect its numbers. However, since its discovery in 1910, the archipelago has also undergone immense social change, in part due to the changing political climate in Indonesia, but to a certain extent because of external influence from the international community in the creation of Komodo National Park. The focus in legislation has reflected these changing concerns, where the locus of legislation has steadily grown larger, initially focusing on just the dragon, expanding to include its terrestrial habitat, and finally expanding to include the waters and islands off Komodo, Rinca and Padar. Along the same vein, legislation has also grown steadily exclusive in nature for the humans in the park, where communities find themselves increasingly subject to such legislation, limiting their access to resources in and around the park.

Komodo was depicted as a place of exile in the 19th century as well as a slave settlement. Located between Manggarai and Bima, its role as a tributary of Bima as an interim area that criminals were held before receiving punishment, likely under guard/ watch by a representative from the Sulatan of Bima. Komodo thus became a subordinate in Asi, a tributary of the Kingdom of Bima. According to Verheijen, during his visit to Bima in 1947, he had heard that the ancestors of Komodo had also fled to Bima due to pirate attacks (Verheijen 1982: 4).

Komodo's harbour was described as being peaceful, strategically located between the trading route of Dutch colonized Manggarai and Sumbawa. According to one of Verheijen's respondents, Abdulrajab, boats bringing tribute to Bima annually, would stop by Komodo. Tribute included harvests from other tributaries, as well as slaves. Komodo also offered tribute of candles, the alcohol of lontar palm and pearls to the Sultan of Bima. Assam was also an important export in the trade with Bima (Verheijen 1982: 5).

In 1905, Bima was incorporated into the Netherlands East Indies. The relationship between the Dutch VOC and Bima had been, prior to this, maintained by a series of trading contracts. However, with the collapse of the VOC on the Dutch stock exchange in 1798, the Dutch government took control over its assets, and in this way, the Netherland East Indies was born. (Hitchcock 1996: 34- 35) However, the relationship between the Dutch and the Bimanese Sultanate continued to be defined by contracts throughout the 19th century. In 1905, the boundaries of the Sultanate were redrawn as Bima was incorporated into the Netherlands

East Indies, relinquishing control of Manggarai and Komodo to the Resident of Timor. The modern boundaries are largely based on those set down by the Dutch (ibid: 35).

During this time, the Komodo Dragon, rather than the territory of Komodo, had been the subject to some legal protection. In 1912, the Sultan of Bima, then ruler of Komodo and its surrounding areas, at the behest of the Netherlands Indies Society for the Protection of Nature, issued a decree forbidding the hunting and capture of the lizard. Another decree was issued in 1926 by the authorities in Manggarai, Western Flores, becoming effective in 1930 when Bima relinquished jurisdiction of Komodo to the colonial government. (Hitchcock 1993:304) In 1938, Pulau Padar and Rinca were declared wildlife reserves (*suaka margasatwa*). Pulau Komodo was only declared a reserve in 1965. The three islands were declared as Komodo National Park in 1980. In 1991, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) announced KNP as a World Heritage Site, and subsequently, under Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia No. 44/ 1992, the Komodo dragon became a protected animal under law.

The first step towards the creation of a park was the demarcation of Komodo as State territory, when the State assumed ownership of all land under the 1945 constitution, by suppressing adat law and refusing to recognize customary ownership of land and resources (Baines and Hendro 2000: 136). To solidify and maintain the integrity of the new Republic Indonesia, this move would have made sense to prevent further interference by the Dutch as the Dutch had attempted to retain colonial control by creating a puppet state, Negara Indonesia Timur (Hitchcock 1996:36).

Peluso notes that

> the late colonial period in Southeast Asia… is notably characterized by the emergence of an increasing number of territorial states. Using land and forest laws, these colonial and nascent national bureaucratic states establish territorial mechanisms through which states and state agencies could control both resources and the activities of their subjects seeking access to those resources. (Peluso 2003:231)

With Indonesian Independence, the force of the nation state and its mechanisms began to define the form of Pulau Komodo. The *desa* system was implemented, carving out the various villages into enclaves, each accountable to a hierarchy of leaders, enabling the State to have better control over the vast archipelago. During this time, several rebellions broke out against the Nationalists in Sulawesi, as well as Ambon, resulting in some migration to the islands around Komodo. Legislation pertaining to the Komodo continued to be enforced by the Indonesian government after Independence with ‘equal vigour’, preventing

Western collectors such as David Attenborough from taking the animals that had been trapped. (Hitchcock 1993: 305)

However, in recent times, focus of conservation efforts by international agencies has shifted to protection of the marine biodiversity in and around the park. Presently, The Nature Conservancy, an American Non Government Organization (NGO) is the largest international stakeholder in KNP.

TNC was invited by the Indonesian Government to find a long-term private sector financing solution for the KNP that would 'ensure the environmental health of the park and benefit the local economy' (Leiman 2002: 1). Since 1996, TNC has gone about developing a management framework, promoting alternative livelihood programmes and capacity building for local communities. TNC has an annual budget of US$250, 000 for this project and expects to pump in another US$5 million during the next five years. The budget for 1996 to 1997 was $US360 000 (Wells et al 1999: 101). In 2000, in co-operation with the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (*Perlindungan Hutan dan Pelastarian Alam*/ PHPA), The Nature Conservancy has drafted a 25 year Management Plan for the park (Leiman 2002: 1).

Research in the Park

It was under this climate of suspicion that I entered KNP to find out more about community perceptions and experiences with this formidable International NGO. In April 2003, I spent 2 months in KNP visiting several villages and talking to fishermen living around the park, as well as interviewing some people in the nearest town, Labuan Bajo. It was not easy to glean information from the any of the people at that point of time—many were suspicious that I was a 'spy' from TNC, others admitted later that they did not want to risk being associated with saying anything negative about TNC as they were concerned that their access to resources might somehow be curtailed (through new (selective) laws or harassed by patrols), but the majority of fishermen at that point of time had adopted a wait and see attitude with regards to the promises and plans of TNC and the park authority (*Taman Nasional Komodo* / TNK). However, despite the reports of widespread opposition, I felt that though TNC was regarded with some suspicion, most fishermen did not want to have anything to do with them and just wanted to be left alone to get on with their lives.

What was significant about the shooting incident was that it had opened a can of worms, in that this flagrant and unnecessary use of violence provided opponents to TNC's programs a space to contest the right of TNC to operate in KNP. Previously, TNC had used the discourse of science, scientists and other experts to negate and argue for their

programmes, marginalizing local voices in the process and avoiding negotiation with the local communities. However, with the shooting of the fishermen from Sape, a whole new discourse was now available to opponents of TNC. The discourse of human rights (*hak assisi manusia*) which had been extensively used in the mass media in the overthrow of Suharto was now used by activists and locals alike to decry the heavy handedness of TNC.

In this way, the local communities were able to rally somewhat effectively against TNC. It is also against this backdrop that many local NGOs and activists emerged to lead various groups in the call for the withdrawal of TNC from KNP. I seek to examine the 'conservation encounter' of local people with such activists and local NGOs. Through interviews with a local NGO, I see how such discourses are shaped to frame and articulate community concerns. Besides the use of discourse at a NGO-Community level, I also examine how power holders in community use discourse to articulate their dominance over other members and in this way not only further solidify their positions but might also stymie efforts to effectively engage these members of the community.

Communities within KNP

To better understand the dynamics of each village as well as the reluctance to openly discuss TNC, I conducted many interviews and conversations about the origins of park residents. I asked them where had they come from, how long had they lived in the park as well discussed their future in the park. As an outsider, this gave me some understanding of village dynamics, politics and identity within these villages. The interplay between individuals and groups of different ethnicities, economic and social positions also revealed differences in the framing and perception of not just TNC policies but how each group framed their relationship with each other.

I also examine the introduction of a new Coastal Zonation Policy (CZP) in 2002. To date, little has been done in terms of enforcement on the ground as there are considerable logistical difficulties. I examine the importance of the use of boundaries to order and control resources in a conservation project to managers of such projects, even though such boundaries are technically meaningless to day-to-day users. I also would like to contrast this to show how once boundaries are set, are generally difficult to revoke and this has severe consequences on how property within those boundaries are managed. I look at the case of Pak Steph, who despite clear legislation pertaining to national park boundaries, is fighting an ongoing battle for the past 20 years for compensation of lost property due to the drawing of park boundaries. What are the implications for KNP should the park compensate him for taking over his orchards, gardens and hoofstock? What are the implications for other residents of KNP?

Despite the widespread opposition and open criticism of TNC tactics, I also examine the structural obstacles to change in TNC, as well as the situation of INGOs in the global climate of fund raising and project management. The corporatization of INGOs also has significant implications for the future of environmental protection. How did these organizations begin and how have they managed to grow? What were the historical conditions that allowed INGOs like TNC to flourish? Along the same thread, the pattern of failure of conservation programmes point to larger, structural issues that confound the process. What are these issues and *are* conservation INGOs the best organizations to lead such projects?

Methodology

Besides detailing the methodological issues that I faced during this project, I also would like to address my experiences in KNP. Throughout this project, I felt great discomfort as an outsider coming to disrupt the activities of fishermen to glean information for this dissertation.

> As Sanders observes,
>
> Field research… requires people to carry out tasks which run against the grain of earlier socialization and social experience. Thus, it is difficult to avoid the fear of being a stranger, the fear of rejection when seeking personal details about people's lives and the fear of violating the normative standards of those being studied (Sanders 1980 in Lee 1993: 121).

During the course of this project, I saw how my position as a researcher affected respondents' interactions with me, through their previous experiences, expectations and perceptions of researchers.

Fieldwork was carried out over five months in March to April 2003, September to October 2003 and again in March 2005. Primary research was in the form of participant observation and unstructured interviews due to the sensitivity of the subject. As much of the literature and media featured TNC management and other prominent community leaders/ NGOs, I sought to determine if the situation painted in the media reflected the realities of villagers living in and around the park. The subject of TNC management in KNP was considered sensitive as such alliances were rumoured to entail economic gain and perceived resistance was thought to involve some sort of sanction or economic loss. More importantly, the uncertainty of TNC's role in the park's future was a major disincentive for people to speak out (in the event that TNC might have greater say in park regulations that might curtail

village livelihoods). There was suspicion that TNC had its 'people' in certain villages, well placed to report dissent. For example, TNC had purportedly co-opted certain villagers who had benefited from tourism in the park as 'model villagers' to represent TNC's efforts in the park to visiting officials and other important visitors (Borchers 2002: 48). Direct questioning would reveal or be perceived to reveal political alignments of respondents; political in the widest sense to refer to the vested interests of powerful persons or institutions, or exercise of coercion or domination (Lee 1993: 4).

People were very reluctant to make their views of TNC known to me, an outsider with possible hidden agendas. Early attempts at direct questioning led to non-committal and evasive answers as well as suspicion on the part of respondents on my true intentions. I did not declare my status as a graduate student interested in the TNC- community conflict initially as I thought covert research would avoid the problems of reactivity (Lee 1993: 193). However, I realised that views about TNC were mostly couched in rumour, following pro-TNC or by anti-TNC storylines, and did not reveal any particular information about livelihood situations or community interactions with TNC. I began to realise that as a newcomer such information would not be easily available to me.

Fieldwork experience was extremely isolating as data collection proved difficult as respondents were unsure of my purpose in KNP and I lacked access to a reliable gatekeeper. Ironically, my 'access career' (Lee 1993: 122) was started by an acquaintance from a TNC staff member who was keen to present a holistic picture of TNC- community relations. Access was a constant renegotiation process, where my presence was at times clearly only tolerated. As one respondent observed, " you have stayed more than two weeks here, therefore you cannot just be a tourist!" Interviewing effects were a serious consideration due to my social position as a non-local, female, graduate student (or perceived position as TNC employee or reporter) as well as the initial pressure to obtain data directly pertaining to TNC-community interactions (due to its dearth and my limited time in the field), which also shaped my expectations of the interview itself (Lee 1993: 99).

Methodologically, I realised semi structured interviewing and probing unconsciously tended to echo my assumptions about the situation in TNC. As fieldwork progressed, I found that focussing on TNC might be myopic as TNC played only a marginal role in the actual day to day lives of respondents. By repositioning myself as a graduate student interested in learning about the social and cultural history of the park and its inhabitants, respondents were much more willing to share their views with me and this in turn enabled me to better understand community dynamics.

In view of this, I decided to use a grounded theory approach. A grounded theory approach "explores and examine research participants' concerns and then further develops

questions around those concerns, subsequently seeking participants whose experiences speak to these questions. Grounded theory methods keep researchers to their gathered data rather than to what they may have previously assumed or wished was the case" (Chamaz 2002:148). Data was collected using participant observation and informal interviewing, mainly in the form of guided conversations. I found that informal interviewing with less structure and control, helped to build rapport and uncover new areas of interest (Bernard 2006: 211). With subsequent interviews, trust was built with certain respondents, enabling them to feel comfortable enough to share their insights into the TNC situation or introduce other respondents who might be able to help in my research.

Secondary sources of information in the form of newspaper articles, reports and internet resources were also consulted.

Summary

In the following chapters, I will trace the historical emergence about concepts such as 'nature', 'participation' and how they inform present debates about conservation. In particular, the persistence of the wilderness preservation tradition that informs current conservation practice. I attempt to show how this failure of large scale conservation programmes is predicated on a neglect of the unique social political contexts that face each conservation site.

In Chapter three, I will also examine the Indonesian political context that has shaped environmental policy, in particular the impact of Suharto's New Order regime and the subsequent transition to decentralization on the position of local and international NGOs. I also introduce some background to TNC and its partnership with the PHPA in the management of Komodo National Park. Chapter 4 explores the reaction to TNC's 25 year Management Plan and its implications for local communities. I also look at how the simmering resentment becomes a backlash of anger when two fishermen are shot dead in the park in 2002. As will be shown in chapter 5, the shooting became a symbol for many things that were wrong with TNC's management and the use of storylines, in particular, that of bio-centrism and human rights violations, were actively used by INGOs and other local NGOs as rallying points to mobilize opposition against TNC on a regional and national level. However, these campaigns have made little impact on the daily lives of park residents as storylines are also hijacked by actors for personal and political gains and little has been done to improve their position in KNP. In chapter 6, I conclude that conservation efforts in KNP will continue to fail as competing storylines obscure the actual issues that compromise the livelihoods of KNP residents.

Chapter 2 Conservation and Community Story Lines

Introduction

In this chapter I will trace the historical emergence of what I am calling 'story lines' about 'nature' and 'participation' as they intersect in concerns about conservation. These 'story lines' must be unravelled historically in order to make it clear how ideas of nature have been constructed and how these particular ideas have come to inform 'conservation' strategies that are being applied globally in the contemporary world. In recent decades concerns about unjust conservation have lead to about ideas about local community participation. But what is community and what is participation? These also are ideas that are not straightforward, and have been the source of contestation, particularly as they intersect with notions of 'conservation'. Hence, as we will see, national parks have come under close scrutiny in the last few decades, due to the multitude of actors and institutions that have come to be encompassed in the national park process. However, the use of national parks as a conservation tool is informed by various ideologies, and it is this aspect that is worthy of investigation. Though research on national parks is diverse and wide-ranging, research on social processes of national parks have generally followed several themes such as social justice (concerning the loss of rights of people living in protected areas), eco tourism, gender issues and political economy. Less attention has been paid to how national park issues have been absorbed into larger discourses resulting in their rising or decreasing prominence in national and international discourses.

What is "Nature"?

"[T]he environment is as much constructed as it is discovered, catalogued, identified, and classified. Environmental truths are made rather than found. We see the environment as less of a backdrop to social action and more as a narrative whose meaning is changing, unstable and subject to contestation, negotiation, and conflict…(Benton & Short 1999: 3,4)"

The formation and justification of national parks is intricately linked to the production of nature as a discourse, its perceived function and role in human society. National parks, in particular, are good examples of how human beings struggle to define, control and manage the discourse of nature. National parks are not just spatial boundaries that define where nature begins and civilization should end, they are also boundaries of action and practice where each space is governed by separate ideals and rules.

The problem with national parks is that historically they are a Western/European product that has changed little in form in the last 200 years. National parks are a unique cultural product that has represented a specific spatial relationship between people and nature. Their form and function are contingent on the use of exclusionary categories that separate human society from nature. This particular articulation of nature, the dichotomy between the urban and rural, has had profound effects on the shaping of environmental discourse and the physical landscape. Vandergeest and Du Puis (1996) trace the transformation of European perceptions towards nature as being treacherous, distant and dangerous to an object of a nature mythology, that is nature as Eden or utopia, explicitly as a critique of industrialization by poets and artists of the Romantic era. Additionally early theorists identified faraway places in the non-Western world with an unchanging nature and tradition, and later anthropologists came to represent native societies as people without time and history. Thus, Nature was placed along a continuum where 'modernity' is in the present and 'rurality' in the past. In this respect nature became associated with timelessness (Wolf 1982 in Vandergeest and Du Puis 1996). In this way nature became separated both spatially and temporally from secular human activity in 'modern' society.

National parks and protected areas are to a large extent the product of the changing relations between people and their environment in North America during the early nineteenth century and the legacy of the actions and ideals of North Americans such as Gifford Pinchot and John Muir. Though the idea of restricted wilderness areas is not new-- the Moguls in Assyria had restricted large spans of wilderness for royal hunts as early as 700BC, as did the Normans in 11AD (Westoby, 1987 in Colchester 1997: 100)—the underpinnings of the North American national park system went beyond excluding locals from wilderness areas for the pleasure of elites, it laid the foundations of new ideology/ies of how nature could be perceived, used and 'managed'. Boyd and Butler (2000) detail how the importance of the images of wilderness in art and literature shaped early perspectives of wilderness and the environment in the formation of national parks. In particular, rapid industrialization brought about material and social changes, shifting perceptions of nature as primitive, uncivilized and frightening, to one that was exotic, fascinating and inspiring, as opposed to the routine and monotonous demands of city life (Smith 2001: 118). They also single out factors such as the need for recreational space, in the face of rapid urbanization, and the perceived economic benefits of tourism that affluent European and American tourists would bring with the extension of the railroad (Boyd and Butler 2000: 14-15). Changing ideas of nature in North America were associated with not only rapid industrialization and economic growth, but also as a form of cultural expression.

Individuals such as John Muir, together with the Sierra Club, lead the charge of the 'Wilderness Preservation tradition', which was concerned with conserving nature 'for its own sake', articulating their vision in predominantly religious and aesthetic terms. Muir's notion of 'wilderness' as completely uninhabited has come to play an ever more important role in conservation ideology. The creation of National Parks in the USA because of the vision of men like Muir, is often traced to Yellowstone National Park (created in 1872), referred to as the model for all other National Parks in the world, which have been created in other countries since. When Yellowstone was established, parks and reserves were seen as places to be kept pristine and people if they were living there (as was the case with the Shoshone Indians in Yellowstone) had to be evicted. National parks originated according to a logic of exclusion (Clad 1988, p. 324), except of visitors, that is tourists.

Smith draws upon the work of John Urry to illustrate the power of tourism and its gaze in shaping the consumption of nature, the pivotal aspect of the tourist gaze is the dichotomy drawn between the ordinary and extraordinary (Urry 1990: 188). The power of the gaze stems from the visual consumption of the environment (referred to as "environmental consciousness"), how the environment is 'read, how it is appropriated, and how it is exploited (ibid: 183). The means and ability of the urban upper classes, and later the middle classes, to travel between the urban and rural environments, enabled them to gaze upon more environments, focusing their gaze selectively on the idealized differences between city life and country life. With the shift from the relations of production to one of consumption concerned with aesthetics, the widespread development of the 'romantic tourist gaze' was accelerated. According to Urry, the romantic tourist gaze thus feeds into and supports attempts to protect the environment (ibid: 191). This gaze polarising human society from nature consequently transformed attitudes towards nature and consequently justifying the means of its protection.

"When nature is understood in this way, it becomes extremely important to save it, and almost any means can be justified. Moreover, because nature is not dynamic and changing, but a timeless heritage, it must be preserved without change for future generations, often in strictly delimited territories. In the hands of the government, this vision has produced the national park: land claimed by the government with the justification that it is defending nature against human encroachment (Vandergeest and Du Puis 1996: 14-15)."

Whilst romanticism led to the establishment of a preservationist tradition, materialist concerns led to a different but compatible emphasis on the conservation and management of natural resources (Smith 2001: 121). Unfettered industrialization and the rapid consumption

of natural resources caused concern in certain quarters that the degradation of these resources, in particular forest resources, would compromise future economic growth. These concerns formed the basis of what Rodman terms the 'Resource Conservation' movement.

" The original thrust of the Resource Conservation movement was to enlarge in space and time the class of beings whose good ought to be taken into account by decision-makers, and to draw from that some conclusions about appropriate limits on human conduct… In retrospect, the Resource Conservation standpoint appears to have been an early ideological adaptation on the part of a society that was still in the pioneering or colonizing stage of succession but had begun to get glimpses of natural limits that would require different norms of conduct for the society to become sustainable at a steady-state level (Rodman, 1983 in Sessions 1995: 123)."

The precursor to the modern day paradigm of Sustainable Development, the Resource Conservation movement laid the foundations for several concepts. Firstly, centralization of management and the marginalization of local knowledge through the use of scientific methods of mapping and measurement; secondly, the utilitarian assumption that maximizing the total sum of benefits should take precedence over local claims to resources. This tenet, in particular, has been effectively tied to centralized, production-based management, as well as shifts toward higher levels of political control. In addition to increasing commodity production, it has helped to bring about a radical shift in land tenure regimes and political authority, thereby disrupting and diminishing local subsistence practices all over the world (Smith 1997: 118).

A direct response to the romanticism of the Wilderness Protection Movement was the 'fortress conservation' model consisting of strictly enforced protected areas. On the other hand, the Resource Conservation movement turned to science for its solutions, putting the management of protected areas in the hands of scientists and administrators, effectively deepening state control over agriculture and land based economic activities. This paradigm of nature conservation had wider ramifications as it also informed colonial policy in other parts of the world, such as South Africa, where colonial political ideology legitimized the restriction of peasant farmers to marginal lands, triggering major social changes (see Buscher and Wolmer 2007: 4-5).

The defining characteristic of the modern approach to nature preservation is the drawing of strict boundaries across diverse groups of people in space and the use of technical knowledge to coercively reshape landscapes to mirror these boundaries (Vandergeest and Dupuis 1996: 4). In the process, other cultural categories and local histories are subsumed and

ignored to serve external interests. Drawing from world systems and dependency theories, Vandergeest and Dupuis show how the ahistorical assumptions underlying a "modernization approach", which is behind the formation of national parks, where 'nature' is set apart from the 'modern', have not just enabled institutions in the core and in cities (such as state agencies and multi-national companies) to define and shape the rural periphery, but have also influenced "the way that people think, speak, and write about the country" (ibid: 6).

Vandergeest and Du Puis also draw attention to the spatial and social gulf that separate local inhabitants from outsiders such as state agencies, activists and intellectuals, that attempt to represent them. Inhabitants often have differing aspirations, perspectives and agendas from outsiders. However, their wishes and positions are often ignored in the face of differing interests and agendas of the outsider who is politically and economically stronger. The obsession with the protection and management of specific places, predominantly by urban centres of power, further simplifies global environmental problems, and focuses on the production of pristine uninhabited images of nature to be protected, shifting attention away from the problems created by developed countries through their rapacious consumption of global resources. Hence this discourse of separation privileges political and economic interests of those living in urban centres, silencing inhabitants who inhabit national parks, often located in peripheral areas (Vandergeest and Dupuis 1996: 8).

Sanctioned under scientific authority and governed by global interests, the number of protected areas continues to grow. According to the World Commission on Protected Areas, there are some 30 000 protected areas, covering 12.8 million square kilometers, equivalent to 9.5% of the earth's terrestrial area (IUCN 2000: 2). The number of protected areas is poised to increase in size and number- trans-frontier conservation areas and corridors, networks of protected areas across national boundaries, are now not only expected to fulfil development and conservation goals, but those of peace and 'international understanding' (in Wolmer and Buscher 2007:11). Protected areas remain integral to the conservation storyline and in the next section, I will attempt to unravel the historical persistence of protected areas as an international policy tool that enables it to retain its salience despites its blatant shortcomings.

Conservation ideologies

The 1970s marked the beginning of the aggressive politicization of environmental issues on an international level. The environment became an additional item on the development agenda, as failures in the modernization paradigm were understood to be detrimental to both people and the environment (Sachs 1999: 34). In 1972, the Club of Rome published *Limits to Growth*, highlighting the possible input limits to further industrial development.

Industrialization had resulted in a wealthy elite, whilst the majority of third world populations were no better off than they had been prior to the start of the development project. The development world now switched from the use of 'economic growth' as an indicator of success, to the concept of fulfilling 'basic needs'. As some of the world's poorest were living in environmentally fragile areas, the new development object was irretrievably linked to the environment.

In the same year, the UN held its first conference on the Human Environment. This conference focused on natural resources management, as well as on the environmental side effects of industrialization such as air pollution and acid rain, as both resource depletion and pollution were seen as potentially jeopardizing development (Chatterjee and Finger 1994:7). Other events such as the oil crisis, made governments aware that continued growth depended on not just capital formation or skilled manpower, but also on the long term availability of natural resources. " Foods for the insatiable growth machine—oil, timber, minerals, soils, genetic material—seemed on the decline and concern grew about the prospects of long-term growth. This was a decisive change in perspective: not the health of nature but the continuous health of development became the centre of concern" (Sachs 1999: 34). A reformulation of the development strategy, incorporating the developing world and its environment (and its problems), was urgently needed.

Story-lines about conservation emerged at this specific economic, social and political juncture in the 1970s, heralding the age of what Hajer calls 'ecological modernization' (Hajer 1995: 26-27). Ecological modernization represented a new policy oriented discourse in environmental politics. Prior to this, environmental politics was considered secondary to industrial politics, concerned with pollution clean up and abatement legislation by separate bureaucratic structures. Many western countries set up organizational structures such as ministries (to police the air, water, soil) to compartmentalize the task of managing the environment.

Ecological modernization changed the dynamic of environmental politics by bridging this gap in policy in several ways. Firstly, ecological modernization recognized the structural nature of the environmental problematique but also assumed that political, economic, and social institutions could internalize the care for the environment. Secondly, ecological modernization framed environmental problems in monetary units combined with discursive elements derived from the natural sciences, making environmental damage calculable and measurable. Thirdly, environmental problems were seen as a management problem, a result of a lack of collective action, with no real obstacles to resolution in an environmentally sound society. Finally, ecological modernization assumed that economic growth and resolution of environmental problems can be reconciled (Hajer 1995: 25-26). The strength of ecological

modernization rhetoric lies in its positive approach to environmental policy, using the language of business, conceptualizing environmental pollution as a matter of inefficiency, whilst operating within the boundaries of cost-effectiveness and administrative efficiency. It does not address social contradictions inherent in the discourse nor does it call for any structural change, creating more business opportunities and a market for waste abatement technology (ibid).

Along this vein, the World Conservation Strategy of 1980, and later the Brundtland Report on Sustainable Development both re-worked the notion of growth and environmental degradation, focusing on 'sustainable' utilization of species and ecosystems, making technological progress the solution to overcoming the obstacle of environmental degradation to growth. Nature could now be constructed, ordered and administered by bureaucracies of the modern nation states, scientists and corporations. By imposing corporate administrative frameworks on Nature to meet the demands of the national or international economy, "[n]ature is reduced to a system of systems that can be dismantled, redesigned, and assembled anew to produce its many "resources" efficiently and in adequate amounts when and where needed in the modern marketplace" (Luke 1995: 79). Such "Resource Managerialism" further entrenches the position of the nation state as it becomes the conduit for the exploitation and management of resources, subjecting more natural resources to centralized state conservation programmes (ibid: 78-79).

Subsequent international interventions to improve global environmental health have resulted in the development of networks and production of new sites of knowledge between developed countries, their scientific communities and corporate interests. In particular, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), one of the key agreements signed during the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, has continued to be the driving force in the push to create more protected areas. Three main goals were established in the agreement- the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.[1] With the creation of the Global Environment Facility (see next chapter), a financial mechanism to administer biodiversity projects, biodiversity protection became the new storyline to justify even larger, more ambitious protected area projects.

Biodiversity storylines and networks

[1] For the text on the Convention on Biological Diversity, see <http://www.cbd.int/convention/guide.shtml> , last accessed 24/11/07.

Together with the publication of the Global Biodiversity Strategy, published jointly by the World Resources Institute (WRI), International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the CBD can be identified as the textual origins of the emergence of biodiversity in conservation discourse (Escobar 1996: 54). Though derived from concrete biophysical parameters, Escobar contends that biodiversity does not exist in an absolute sense but is a recent discursive invention. Biodiversity is seen as a response to the problematization of survival, precipitated by the loss of biodiversity (ibid: 55).

Analysed as a series of networks, biodiversity can be understood as

> …chains of sites characterized by a set of heterogeneous parameters, practices and actors. Each actor's identity is affected by and affects, the network. Intervention in the network is done by means of models (e.g., of ecosystems, conservation strategies); theories (e.g., of development, restoration); objects (from plants and genes to various technologies); actors (prospectors, taxonomists, planners and experts); strategies (resource management, intellectual property rights); etc. These interventions effect and motivate translations, transfers, travels, mediations, appropriations and subversions throughout the network (ibid: 55).

The development of these biodiversity production networks and the consequent growth of vast institutional apparatuses that regulate the production of knowledge and power through strategies and programmes, linking international organizations, NGOs, universities, botanic governments, research institutes in both first and third worlds to a multitude of experts located in dominant sites in the network (ibid: 56). "According to actor-network theory, the biodiversity narrative created obligatory passage points for the construction of particular discourses. This process translates the complexity of the world into simple narratives of threats and possible solutions. The aim was to create a stable network for the movement of objects, resources knowledge and materials (ibid: 56)."

As storylines and biodiversity are formulated and articulated in dominant sites in the network, local contexts and priorities take a back seat in the creation of protected areas in the name of biodiversity as they do not resonate within the dominant discourse. Developing countries often occupy a marginal position in negotiations, due to the political economy of debt in developing countries. As the GEF is administered under the auspices of the World Bank, developing countries are also pressured into implementing environmental and

conservation policies, under the threat of termination of World Bank/ International Monetary Fund (IMF) bridging of adjustment and project loans (Taylor and Buttel 2006: 414).

Another important site in biodiversity discourse production networks is International NGOs, as they are a major channel of biodiversity funding from the developed world to the developing world. INGOs emerged as important conduits of aid for official development and humanitarian assistance in the 1980s. This role expanded in the 1990s, where official aid flows declined overall, and both directly (bilateral and multilateral) and indirectly via INGOs. In 1990, official grants to INGOs fell from 2.4billion US dollars in 1988 to 1.7 billion US dollars in 1999. Private donations, including individual, foundation and corporate contributions, increased from 4.5 to 10.7 billion US dollars, underscoring the significant expansion of INGOs in the 1990s (Anheier and Cho 2005: 4).

A paradigm shift in global civil society played a part in the growing visibility of INGOs in the development field. By analyzing the various manifestations of global civil society, Anheier and Cho offer insight into the trends in INGO function and formation (Anheier and Cho 2005). Most notably, the new public management expression, which is replacing conventional development assistant policies; an approach which is driven by the inadequacy of the state in the management of its welfare, development and environmental problems, and the view that INGOs are better equipped and more efficient in handling service provision. INGOs take on the role of a sub-contractor, as an instrument of privatization for national and international welfare state reform (ibid: 7). There is also the growing trend of corporatization and professionalization of NGOs, as an increasing number of business partnerships are made, encouraged by the resource-poor international community, as well as meeting western consumers' demands for social responsibility (ibid: 7-8).

This has serious implications for local communities who come under the management of such 'sub-contractors' as INGO interests are often located within the dominant discourse. One example of the production of knowledge within the network can be seen in Juanita Sundberg's study of the creation, interaction and shaping of competing discourses --"the conservation encounter" (Sundberg 2003: 53)—between INGOs, the local communities and the polity in the Maya Biosphere. She traces the ways NGOs construct and impose a moral authority using biodiversity discourse by claiming that science is a 'truth' and a value free reality that should be used to define and order 'appropriate' ways of life for the Biosphere's inhabitant (Sundberg 2003: 64). As INGOs are ultimately accountable to donors or donor nations in the developed world, local priorities are often subsumed under such international conservation storylines, contributing to the shortcomings and failures of conservation programmes that will be outlined in the following section.

Why and When does conservation fail?

The failure of large-scale conservation programmes in Southeast Asia (and indeed the developing world) is increasingly common. A number of problems then can be identified as to the reasons why there has been so much difficulty implementing successful conservation programs. The highly politicized relationship over natural resources and biodiversity conservation discourses is highlighted by Piers Blaikie and Sally Jeanrenaud (1997), who show how there has been an evolution of conservation discourse from the early approach of 'nature preservation' where there was little regard for human welfare and resistance from local populations were dealt with through coercion. The classical approach to conservation was problematic as it imposed romanticized, Arcadian notions of nature from affluent cultures upon foreign peoples and environments (Blaikie and Jearnrenaud 1997: 60-64). More often than not, elitist interests have been instrumental in the establishment of national parks, often as playgrounds for the rich, in which local people's statuses were changed to those of trespassers, poachers and squatters (ibid: 62). The recognition that this approach was a failure lead to the emergence of a 'neo-populist' or people-oriented approach. Participatory projects such as Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs), as well as joint-management projects, were aimed at involving the politically marginalized majority. This was to be achieved through the setting of agendas through dialogue, adapting plans to local conditions, and facilitating conservation through participatory action and enabling policies at international, national and local levels (ibid: 64).

However, participatory approaches, where projects invoke words like 'participation' and 'community' to sanitize environmental projects need to be closely examined. A distinction commonly made is participation as a *means* (to accomplish a project) or participation as an *end* (where the community or group sets up a process to control its own development). The label 'community participation' may help legitimize development projects, used for instrumental, rather than transformative purposes and may be confined to the levels of information sharing and consultation, rather than joint decision-making or initiation and control by 'stakeholders' (Mc Gee 2002: 105).

First launched by the World Wildlife Fund in 1985 as its 'Wildlands and Human Needs Programme', Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs) now number approximately 300 world wide, absorbing the majority of international conservation funding (Hughes and Flintan 2001: 4-5). The fundamental premise of ICDPs is that as communities 'develop', their dependency on natural resources will decline. In this way, however, local people are also assumed to be the primary threat to natural resources in protected areas. However, recent literature suggests that "development tools to achieve conservation

objectives- was neither understood by implementing counterparts in national and provincial government, nor sufficiently integral to ICDP design and practice (ibid: 6)."

ICDP design is closely linked to prevailing development paradigms. As a product of earlier failures of the modernization development paradigm that in turn determined classical conservation approaches of protected areas, ICDPs are closely linked in particular to Sustainable Development approaches that are popular in environmental policy. The imposition of the environmental agenda by developed world policy makers also reflects a chasm in understanding of peoples in developing countries. From a political economy perspective, core understandings of the environment are persistently being imposed on countries in the periphery, despite their lack of relevance and applicability in a third world context. The imposition of foreign paradigms of nature and exclusion, have been shown to be a major thread in the globalization of a conservation 'story line'. What that paradigm has done, in several different guises, is marginalize the inhabitants of places that are being 'conserved'. This ignores the fact that these places have in fact never been 'pristine', and have evolved in conjunction with human use.

Programs that attempt to elicit 'community participation', however, have had their own problems. One of these is what the meaning of 'participation' is supposed to be in regards to communities. As Pretty and Vodohuhe have shown, participation ranges along a continuum from passive participation to self mobilization (Pretty & Vodohuhe 1997). At one extreme is the top-down approach, while at the other end the community has full autonomy. In the middle are the participatory and co-management approaches. However communities themselves are also not homogenous units, and members do not all have the same interests and goals. Communities are constantly changing; Carlsson and Berkes (2005) call them multidimensional, cross-scale political units with unpredictable behaviour. Although this fact is a common theme in much of the literature on co-management, there is still not sufficient attention paid to local and community politics (Mahanty and Russel, 2002). In a recent paper Moeliono (2005) has shown how complex the issue of 'participation' has in fact been in Indonesian conservation agendas; often because of the legal emphasis on participation drafted by the Ministry of Forestry in Indonesia, local communities are expected to 'participate', but there is in fact no clear benefits for them for doing so. Their legal rights to the land have been taken away, but they are held responsible for 'participating' in the protection of the lands against outside incursion. This perhaps is the most ironically unjust twist in the 'participation' paradigm. As will be seen, this is indeed part of the 'story line' that is present in the Komodo National Park.

The case of Komodo National Park

The Komodo National Park is one such conservation project where a multitude of interests collide and jockey for resources and power. The high profile shooting of unarmed fishermen in November 2002 catapulted the park into the national media spotlight. At the centre of the storm was an American NGO, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), that had funded the patrol boats in the park for their introduction of draconian conservation measures that limited park access and curtailed fishing activity in KNP, new measures which were seen as indirectly leading to the shooting.

In 1995, TNC had entered into a partnership with the Indonesian Department of Forestry and Conservation (*Perlindungan Hutan dan Pelastrian Alam*/ PHPA) to manage KNP for 25 years. TNC's subsequent partnership with a Malaysian businessman in this collaboration was subject to great local scrutiny, as TNC's larger objectives seemed to be commercial, and the lack of transparency in the partnership and subsequent programmes suggested that this collaboration was far from altruistic. TNC's large budgets and ambitious projects, also suggested that the local park authority was being manipulated to ratify laws and accomplish the goals pre-determined by TNC.

TNC is the richest not-for-profit conservation body in the United States. Its funds are largely obtained through membership fees from a member base of more than one million in the US.[2] TNC also receives substantial contributions from major corporations, foundations as well as wealthy individuals. Traditionally, TNC's approach to conservation has been to buy up parcels of land which have been assessed by its scientists to have substantial ecological value. By preserving large tracts of land and protecting them from urban development, TNC hopes to protect native animal and plant species from extinction. TNC also sells these parcels of land to private developers, on the condition that the proposed land use is compatible with conservation objectives.[3]

The work of TNC is largely preservationist in nature—they seek to preserve the 'original' wilderness of an area. Luke has critically assessed the TNC approach to 'preserving the world's last great places', by suggesting that these 'last great places' are like cemeteries, graveyards for nature (1997). Is the assumption behind this stand that, in the rest of the world nature is dead and that their job is to preserve those few remaining places? This view allows to go un-criticized the abuse of the natural world by big businesses (which sponsor TNC), but instead targets local communities in the vicinity of these 'great places', who end up carrying

[2] TNC website, < http://www.nature.org/aboutus/>

[3] See http://www.nature.org/aboutus/howwework/conservationmethods/privatelands/

the burden of responsibility and loss, because these places have become 'preserved'. As will be discussed in the next chapter, environmental protection in Indonesia has been full of the contradictions associated with the type of views held by INGOs such as TNC.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to show that 'conservation' has developed into a 'story line' that has multiple different meanings. Different people can mean different things by it, that can often end up being contradictory. The two main contestations within the 'story line' of conservation, that has implications for national parks in Indonesia, and the Komodo National Park in particular, are what I have shown to have historically been there from the beginning; the concern with preserving a 'pristine' nature (as outlined by Muir and the wilderness preservation tradition), and the idea of nature as a 'resource' that should be conserved for exploitation. These two views in the contemporary world can best be illustrated by the 'biosphere reserve model', advocated by TNC, where certain zones of nature must be strictly cordoned off and excluded from use, versus the sustainable use model, where people should be allowed to live in protected areas, but use them carefully and sustainably.

The contradictions and tensions in these two different views of conservation can be seen to come to a head when the question of 'participation' of 'communities' is raised. 'Participation', and 'communities', I argue, are also two words that can be ambiguously understood, lending themselves to different interpretations, and thus to being the subject of differently understood 'story lines'. Those who advocate a strict cordoning off of nature, talk about participation and community, but have a different understanding of what this means, than those who advocate sustainable use.

Ultimately it can be seen that globally conservation programs have sought to control access to biological resources through the establishment (and enforcement) of exclusionary national parks and protected area systems. National parks and protected areas privilege the notion of boundaries as exclusive and permanent, denying legitimacy of a pre-existing spatial discourse. Like maps discussed by Peluso (2003), which are used as tools of the state and its control (see also Andersen 1991), protected areas also become instruments by which state agencies draw boundaries and establish the claims enforced by their courts of law, thus producing territories (Peluso 2003: 234). As a favoured tool in biodiversity conservation, the protected area systems approach attempts to create human-free wilderness in the name of environmental protection. However, this narrow conception of what is fundamentally a resource allocation problem often ignores the social issues of resource use and pits the developed world's environmental agenda against the daily needs of the developing one.

Unsurprisingly, many of such projects have failed, despite generous injections of foreign aid. However, as we will see in the next chapters, these programmes have continued in Indonesia, despite growing recognition in policy circles that there is a need for a more humanistic approach to conservation that espouses participation of local people in all aspects of planning and implementation. The ideas of 'participation' and 'community' however, have been differently understood by different parties, and it is argued from some quarters that local involvement still remains largely in name, rather than in practice.

Chapter 3 Indonesia and Conservation

Introduction: Political Change and Focus on the Environment

Conservation policies in Indonesia need to be understood against the background of foreign policy and political alignments in Indonesia over the second half of the twentieth century. After Indonesian Independence from the Dutch in 1945, Sukarno had pursued an aggressive foreign policy and had fostered close ties with the eastern bloc. These ties were not looked upon favourably by western countries, nor various elements in Indonesian society itself. After an alleged communist coup attempt was aborted in 1965, Sukarno was deposed and replaced by General Suharto in 1965 (Suryadinata 1992: 81). Foreign and domestic policy changed radically under Suharto's "New Order" government, forging an economic orientation that was outward looking, authoritarian and 'virulently anti-communist' (Anwar 2005: 201). This change in policy gained favour with Western governments, led by the United States, since at this time, at the height of the Cold War, they were eager to court developing countries that were anti-communist. Hence much support was offered to Indonesia, such as economic aid, military packages and political support; this ironically legitimized the rule of the authoritarian regime of Suharto (ibid: 201). Through legitimizing Suharto's authoritarian regime, space for negotiation and contestation on all levels was quashed, under the rhetoric that economic development could only be achieved if there was political stability (ibid: 203).

In the 1990s, the environment in Indonesia increasingly became a bargaining chip in trade relations between Indonesia and the West. Western countries, feeling the threat from rapidly growing economies in ASEAN and Asia, began to pursue a generally protectionist trade policy, raising non-trade barriers against goods from developing countries. Western labour unions, various NGOs and interest groups, pressured Western governments to link these non-trade barriers to labour rights, environmental protection, as well as issues of political freedom and human rights in general. Anwar suggests that such non-economic conditions have increasingly become criteria for Western aid loans to developing countries (ibid: 209). At the same time, the 1990s saw the institutional bases of environmentalism multiplying throughout Southeast Asia. The number of environmental NGOs, addressing diverse issues, increased rapidly, with strong links to each other, as well as with international environmental organizations (Hirsch and Warren 1998: 7). With the advent of large-scale multi-lateral funding from the World Bank, Asian Development Band and UN agencies, Indonesian NGOs found greater scope to engage in independent organising and policy advocacy helping to erode the hegemony of the Indonesian state (Clarke 1998: 41). It was in

this period, of the late New Order, that The Nature Conservancy entered into Indonesia, initially partnering with an Indonesian NGO to begin surveying the Komodo National Park.

With the end of the New Order in 1998, and the onset of *reformasi* (reform) and decentralization in 1999, policies towards the environment became rather chaotic. Legislation devolved many powers and authorities over various areas to the local regional governments, however jurisdiction over protected areas was to remain in the hands of the central government, under the Directorate-General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (*Directorat-Jenderal Perlindungan Hutan dan Konservasi Alam*/ PHKA) within the Ministry of Forestry (Tan 2007). The confusing part of this devolution of power, as Tan points out, is that production areas, such as production forests, were to be controlled by the regions, so as to foster their fiscal autonomy, but conservation areas were not. Another ambiguity in the law, which was only resolved in a 2004 law on fisheries, was that marine protected areas were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Forestry, and not under the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (Patlis 2007). These various ambiguities in the laws and powers that were devolved to different institutions, has led, in the era of decentralization to widespread environmental abuse in Indonesia, much of it being instigated by political elites at local, regional and national levels (Patlis 2007, Tan 2007). At the same time as exploitation of the environment has increased, the concern of international conservation organizations over abuse and preservation of the natural environment in Indonesia has also grown. In the era of regional autonomy and decentralization, these organizations have been put in the situation of having to negotiate with multiple levels of government in order to gain access to protected areas. In the next section I look more closely at the legislation which has been developed over the last several decades in Indonesia to specifically control the environment and create areas of protection.

The creation of a protected areas programme in Indonesia

Legislation pertaining to protected areas was first drawn up during the Dutch occupation. Subsequently after Indonesian Independence in 1945, the State assumed ownership of all land under the 1945 constitution, suppressing traditional (or *adat*) law and refusing to recognize customary ownership of land and resources (Baines and Hendro 2000: 136). Prior to the early 1980s, legislation pertaining to environmental protection was still under laws created during the Dutch colonial period, primarily under the 'Nuisance Ordinance' (*Hinderordonnantie*) of 1926. One of the first international conservation organizations to be involved in conservation efforts in Indonesia was the World Wildlife Fund, who worked together with the Dutch government to help maintain wildlife. They worked together with the Indonesian Directorate

of Wildlife Conservation (*Direktorat Perlindungan dan Pengawetan Alam*/ PPA), until 1980, when efforts were made to reduce the amount of foreign influence (Baines and Hendro 2000:138). During this time, a national survey of conservation needs was made resulting in a seminal National Conservation Plan that would guide subsequent biodiversity conservation efforts in Indonesia. However, little government support for the PPA meant that efforts toward biodiversity conservation were continually frustrated (ibid).

The creation of protected areas was in part a response to the need to preserve the rapidly vanishing biodiversity of Indonesia that was coming under severe threat due to untrammelled resource exploitation, particularly in the forestry sector. Despite earlier attempts to reduce donor influence, external pressures from foreign donors, notably the World Bank and Asian Development Bank had a sizeable influence on the environmental policies in Indonesia at the time, due to Indonesia's heavy dependence on foreign aid for its economic programmes (Warren and Elston 1994: 7, 10). Growing international pressure for the creation of protected areas also resulted in the third World Parks Congress being held in Bali in 1982.

The changing political context also had great implications for the increased media exposure and public pressure on environmental issues. The Environment Ministry and its respected minister at the time, Emil Salim, helped build political pressure to address environmental issues, which subsequently influenced greater awareness and action in the institutional sphere (Warren and Elston 1994: 10). Salim was the first minister when the Ministry of Environment was created in 1978, and was a supporter of environmental NGOs. During his tenure, the basis of all present day environmental legislation, Act 4 of 1982, "Basic Provisions for the Management of the Living Environment", was drawn up. Though basic, this act of legislation is central to subsequent present day legislation on environmental management, providing a legislative framework for enforcement of environmental protection (ibid: 8).

Indirectly through his support, the number of NGOs flourished from 78 in 1978 to an estimated 750 during the mid-1990s (Sakai 2002: 171). During his reign as Minister, the 1982 Environmental Management Law was drafted, officially recognizing for the first time the role that NGOs played as agents of development. Despite this law being restricted to the field of environmental issues, it recognized the complementary role that NGOs could also play on multiple levels, in other fields such as poverty alleviation and education in relation to environmental protection and degradation (ibid: 169).

Come the late 1980s, concerned NGOs, academics and research institutions had begun to question government policies and programmes that promoted the unsustainable extraction of natural resources. The devolution of environmental management, as well as the opening up of spaces for negotiation and contestation, generated much demand for greater

accountability for environmental protection from the government. Growing public awareness of the economic and social costs of environmental degradation, the rise of a middle class, and the connection between environmental questions and other hotly contested political issues such as conflicts over land tenure and resources, rights of workers, farmers and indigenous minorities, the demand for democratization and greater press freedom all played a part in moving the environment to centre stage (Warren and Elston 1994: 7).

Such awareness also resulted in the strengthening of the environmental movement in Indonesia, and the creation of the national forum, Friends of the Earth Indonesia (*Wahana Linkungan Hidup*/WALHI), founded in 1980 and comprising a large number of diverse NGOs, committed to both environmental and broader social agendas. The decision of member groups to commit WALHI to a higher profile advocacy role at the organisation's 1992 conference signalled a concerted move beyond public awareness campaigns and lobbying toward judicial activism (Warren and Elston 1994: 12). The lack of government support for PPA's conservation efforts resulted in lobbying for stricter controls on development using environmentally compatible practices, as well as integrated system of protected areas that would enable local communities to access resources in a sustainable way. Through sustained pressure from civil society, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was eventually brought in to formulate and support conservation plans for several protected areas. (Baines and Hendro 2000: 139).

Indonesia adopted its Biodiversity Action Plan (IBAP) in 1991 and published it in 1993. The plan focused on protected area and species conservation, but was seen by some as being inadequate for protecting other vital biodiversity management needs (Baines and Hendro 2000: 131). Its implementation by an authoritarian regime also meant that stakeholder commitment, understanding and support was most likely to be limited and inadequate (ibid). Subsequent action plans continue to be fraught with difficulties ranging from insufficient capacity of implementing agencies, internal disagreement between multiple agencies over differing priorities to lack of stakeholder commitment and local participation, as well as external contexts of the economic crisis and political upheaval (ibid).

International funding climate

The failures of global conservation programs world wide often follow a similar pattern- large capital investment, little regard for local contexts resulting in poorly conceived goals, a lack of public participation nor ownership, top down implementation and a failure to address root causes of biodiversity loss. The perpetuation of this specific model of programme planning, implementation and execution necessitates the analysis of the power relations within INGOs

and the donor community. What are the inherent power relationships that have caused the acceleration and burgeoning of the conservation/ development NGO 'industry'? These power relations are as important, if not more important, when INGOs start taking over state functions of funding, managing and implementing environmental protection in many areas (Sundberg in Zimmerer and Bassett 2003: 52, Warren and Elston 1994). Ironically, what happens is that the creation and imposition of conservation discourses by INGOs appears to be separate, if not entirely oblivious, to individual local contexts. This seemingly wilful neglect of local complexities is closely tied to the political economy of global conservation funding. These factors combined, I want to suggest, is a major part of the problem of why conservation efforts have been failing, and why it can be argued that they have failed in the Komodo National Park, despite claims to the contrary. (As will be discussed in chapter 5, KNP is one of their great "success" stories).

The international funding economy has a large role to play in the chronic mismanagement national parks, and of the situation in KNP. Even though the failure of conservation programmes world wide have been subject to similar criticisms, be it unrealistic objectives such as the continued linkage of environmental and development goals (as noted by Hughes and Flintan in the previous chapter) or poor understanding of local contexts (as noted by Vandergeest and Dupuis in the previous chapter), a critical dimension that is seldom mentioned is the process of how international monies are disbursed and the role of International Non-Government Organizations (INGOs) in the procurement of such funds. In the following section, I examine how a major environmental fund, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), actually contributes to the continued creation and implementation of unsuitable conservation programmes through its project evaluation process and donor obligations, resulting in a preference for large scale projects, short project cycles and subsequent failure to resolve root causes of biodiversity loss.

Availability of money

Currently, the Global Environment Facility is the world's largest source of multilateral assistance for the protection of biodiversity (Horta et al 2002). As the financial mechanism for the UN convention on biodiversity, GEF has spent more than 7.4 US dollars and generated 28 billion US dollars in co-financing, supporting 1950 environmental projects in 160 countries, concentrating on 4 major areas of concern- ozone depletion, international

waters, climate change and biodiversity.[4] From 1991 to 2001, biodiversity projects have formed the bulk of the GEF investment portfolio (ibid).

Proposed by the French government in 1989 with an initial commitment of 100 million US dollars at a World Bank and International Monetary Fund development committee meeting, the GEF was to be administered by the World Bank, rather than as an independent entity. The establishment of GEF prior to the 1992 Earth Summit would pre-empt any alternative proposals for a green fund by Southern governments (Horta 1998). The GEF was formally established by a World Bank resolution with a billion dollars initial investment in 1991. Voting in the GEF was to be based on the size of donor contribution, thus leaving southern nations with little or no say in GEF fund allocation (ibid).

Subsequently, the United Nations Development Plan (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) were invited to form a tri-partite structure with the GEF. In this structure, the World Bank, as the overseeing agency, would manage the GEF secretariat, GEF investment portfolios and trust fund, while the UNDP would provide technical assistance and the UNEP would provide scientific guidance. Later, other UN agencies (such as the Food and Agricultural Organization/FAO, UN Industrial Development Organization/UNIDO and International Fund for Agricultural Development/ IFAD) and development banks (Asian, African, Inter American and European) would come on board as GEF executing agencies (Horta et al 2002).

GEF project ideas are proposed to the UNDP, UNEP or the World Bank who will subsequently evaluate their suitability. Projects must fulfill two criteria; firstly, they must reflect national or regional priorities and are supported of the countries involved. Secondly, the project must improve the global environment or advance the prospect of reducing risks to it. Countries are eligible for funding if they have ratified the relevant treaties pertaining to biodiversity and climate change. Countries with economies in transition can borrow from the World Bank or receive technical assistance grants from UNDP if they are parties to the appropriate treaty.[5]

The primary tool of evaluating financial obligations at the GEF is the incremental cost principle.

The reason for developing an approach for estimating incremental cost is that incremental cost is pivotal to the operational strategy and financing policy of GEF.

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[4] GEF website, < http://www.gefweb.org/interior.aspx?id=224&ekmensel=c580fa7b_48_124_btnlink>. Last accessed 19/11/2007.

[5] See GEF website for more details on criteria and eligibility for GEF funding <http://www.gefweb.org/interior_right.aspx?id=16674>

> The only financing role for GEF -- in fact its special mandate -- is as the financier of agreed incremental costs of measures to achieve agreed global environmental benefits in the focal areas. It is important to retain this specific focus and not to lose the distinction between GEF financing and traditional development assistance. GEF does not finance non-incremental costs (GEF 1996[6]).

In other words, GEF will only finance the cost increment that will achieve global benefits- the difference between benefits that will accrue to a given nation and those that will accrue to the world at large (Horta et al 2002). The incremental cost tool favours technological, market-based solutions as they can be more easily quantified. Thus, projects that emphasize low cost technology, indigenous knowledge, local stewardship or public education, though meeting the criteria of contributing toward 'global benefits' do not fit easily into the framework of the incremental cost formulae. Additionally, the battle over 'whose benefits' are to be funded became endemic to the GEF process as debt laden recipient governments needed to meet domestic priorities (ibid). A recent report by the GEF's Evaluation Committee found the use of the incremental cost principle was "confusing, non-transparent and [added] very little to project design, documentation and implementation. Of special concern is the fact that amongst GEF entities, the understanding of the concept and principles of the incremental cost is weak and that diverse views exist" (GEF Secretariat: 2006[7]).

In a joint report[8] by Environmental Defense[9] and the Halifax Initiative[10] (Horta et al 2002), the GEF was found to face immense pressure to implement large-scale projects quickly to justify financial allocations and satisfy budget cutting parliaments or congresses of

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[6] Available for download from GEF website <http://www.gefweb.org/council/council7/c7inf5.htm#useof>, last accessed 17/11/07.

[7] Retrieved from GEF website http://www.gefweb.org/Documents/Council_Documents/GEF_30/documents/C.30.ME.3ManagementResponse_IncrementalCostAssessement.pdf

[8] The complete report is available for download from the Environmental Defense website. http://www.environmentaldefense.org/documents/2265_First10YearsFinal.pdf.

[9] Environmental Defense is a US based non profit organization and advocacy group that is concerned with the protection of environmental rights using market based solutions. See http://www.environmentaldefense.org.

[10] The Halifax initiative is a Canadian coalition of development, environment, faith-based, human rights groups that is primarily concerned with the transformation of the international financial system and its institutions. See http://www.halifaxinitiative.org.

donor governments. Consequently, donor agendas often eclipsed the goals of recipient countries, leaving little room for community participation. Short project cycles also meant that projects were driven by the implementing agency, whom in turn relied on an international community of economic and environmental consultants, rather than local expertise familiar with particular government or ecological concerns. Narrow timelines, coupled with "… a diplomatic reluctance to pay too much attention to problems and underlying issues" meant that little time was left for public consultations, translation and addressing local resistance to projects. GEF's accountability to the World Bank and donor treasuries ultimately undermined its goals as it did not challenge the often anti-environmental priorities of its donor governments or the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization. "[Such] pressures conflict with the need to build local capacity, project ownership among and between government officials and local communities, and long term support for environmental initiatives through enhanced public participation… results in a cookie cutter approach that does not address those needs" (ibid).

GEF and International NGOs

More than 150 GEF-financed projects are executed or co-executed by, or contain contracts or subcontracts to, nongovernmental groups.[11] The Nature Conservancy is one such group. In 2001, with the support of the Indonesian government, and a co-financing agreement of 11.6 million US dollars, TNC managed to secured a GEF grant of 5.375 million US dollars for its project "Indonesia: Komodo National Park Collaborative Management".[12]

Increasingly, with greater public interest in biodiversity and conservation, international NGOs such as TNC, find themselves in a turf war for biodiversity hotspots to not only channel their funding but to also garner additional financial support from major international donors. Large INGOs are dependent on their visibility and reputations to canvas funds in developed countries. INGOs find themselves competing with each other for large grants from international bodies such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the European Union. Often, major international donors are not particularly concerned with the details of projects, but rather that a portion of the funds has been allocated towards 'conservation' or 'environmental' objectives, as green band aids to camouflage larger issues such as greenhouse gas emission or fossil fuel development (Horta 1998). As seen in the example of the GEF, there is great pressure to spend the money

[11] See GEF website for list of accredited NGOs <http://www.gefweb.org/interior.aspx?id=114>

[12] As listed on GEF website < http://gefonline.org/projectDetails.cfm?projID=1144>.

before donor governments withdraw funds prematurely due to budget cuts or reallocation. The close relationship between accredited INGOs and implementing agencies facilitate short project cycles as both are subject to accountability of treasuries, auditors and funding cycles. The disbursement of large sums to INGOs lightens the administrative burden of implementing agencies, shifting the responsibility of allocation and monitoring of funds to these INGOs, who in turn will take on the implementation, monitoring and auditing of projects.

In this way, large INGOs often are able to garner ample funding because of their extensive administrative infrastructure to manage many projects in different countries. Well-heeled INGOs such as World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), with their considerable resources and roots in civil society, lend much credibility to conservation programmes. They are thus very important in ensuring the continued injection of donor money from both their membership base as well as funding agencies such as GEF. INGOs often pick biodiversity areas with unique species, in particular charismatic megafauna, as the high conservation value are essential in soliciting funding. Their imminent extinction creates the necessary urgency to 'save' such species ('donate now!'). However, the public must also be able to identify with such species, and thus habitats with charismatic megafauna such as tigers, rhinoceroses and Komodo dragons, are preferred conservation targets. Invertebrates and reptiles seldom are the focus of large-scale conservation projects due to their lack of popular appeal. Marine habitats are gaining increasing visibility because of the popularity of SCUBA diving through mass media such as movies like the 'Little Mermaid' and 'Finding Nemo', as well as the growing awareness of declining fish stocks and sea pollution in Northern countries. In this way, large scale projects in high biodiversity areas are as much a public relations exercise to boost 'brand' awareness in the eyes of northern policy makers, taxpayers and politicians over accountability to local inhabitants who have to live with its consequences.

This scrabbling for the rights to work in biodiversity hotspots has conversely created an unhealthy climate for conservation. INGOs find themselves 'paying' for the rights to work in an area, either by remuneration through salaried positions and contracts, incentives (such as money for 'study tours' and 'conferences') or direct pay-outs. According to a conservation project manager in Vietnam, such an 'investment' also ensures that a particular INGO has monopoly over all conservation projects in the area. Other INGOs hoping to be involved in conservation in the same area will have to invest the same amount or more if they want to implement any projects in the same area. Thus, bidding for the 'rights to conserve' or 'conservation concession' is akin to bidding for any other concessions to access resources in the area. It is also rumoured that INGOs such as WWF and TNC are now jostling for the sole rights to manage the various biodiversity areas in Indonesia.

The Nature Conservancy: Saving the Last Great Places

As mentioned in the previous chapter, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), is the richest not-for-profit conservation body in the United States. Traditionally, TNC's approach to conservation has been to buy up parcels of land which have been assessed by its scientists to have substantial ecological value. By preserving large tracts of land and protecting them from urban development, TNC hopes to protect native animal and plant species from extinction. TNC also sells these parcels of land to private developers, on the condition that the proposed land use is compatible with conservation objectives. This became a point of controversy in Indonesia, which was used by some local NGOs to try and blacken the name of TNC, as will be discussed below. The work of TNC is largely preservationist in nature—they seek to preserve the 'original' wilderness of an area. As discussed in Chapter 2, wilderness preservation first came to the forefront of habitat protection in the late nineteenth century and was the impetus for the formation of the first national parks.

In 1995 TNC entered into a partnership with the Department of Forestry and Conservation (*Perlindungan Hutan dan Pelastrian Alam*/PHPA) to manage the Komodo National Park for 25 years. This was the first of the national parks in Indonesia that TNC has become associated with (Halim et al 2007). Since then they have become involved in quite a number of other parks in Indonesia such as: Lore Lindu and Wakatobi in Sulawesi, and Raja Ampat in Irian Jaya. Their track record in terms of working together well with local people is, however, not very good; there have even been moves to chase them out of one of the parks by local inhabitants who felt they had no right to restrict their traditional livelihood practices (Kompas 30/3/03). As far as I can find out about this original partnership, TNC was invited into the Komodo National Park to work together initially with a national NGO. This was at a time when the Indonesian government was beginning to come under increasing international pressure about biodiversity loss; the park officials at the local level were feeling increasingly unable to deal with the management of the park and the protection of species within it. Biodiversity loss and diminishing fish stocks are increasingly conceptualized as global responsibilities that require supra/ transnational intervention. In 1986, Komodo National Park had been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) for the unique terrestrial fauna, the *Varanus komodensis* (Komodo Dragon) found on Pulau Komodo, Rinca and Padar. KNP's designation as a WHS was the first step towards involving the global community in environmental politics in Flores, as it signified global recognition of the 'value' of the Komodo Dragon. This international seal of approval was a key factor in getting TNC

involved in the management of KNP. Similarly, TNC benefits from the WHS status that KNP brings with it in the raising of funds and publicity for its organization.

TNC's publicity materials often make the case for the protection of the Komodo dragon by constructing its habitat as a "last preserve" or "last hope" for the dragons, underscoring the urgency in which the donor has to act. The culprit for the decreasing numbers of dragons is blamed on human encroachment on its habitat in reducing the number of prey species, in particular, deer (*Cervus timorensis)*. The TNC emphasis on 'preservation' and their focusing on local communities as the source of the deterioration of the natural environment, has led to their increasingly being unpopular with many members of the local communities, as will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. However many other of their management strategies have alienated them in the local context.

Firstly almost all of the TNC staff have been non-locals. The first programme coordinator of the TNC office in Labuan Bajo in the mid-1990's was a Manggaraian man, but he was replaced subsequently with a Javanese. Rumour in Labuan Bajo has it that the Manggaraian was too sympathetic to the local fishermen, and for this reason he was replaced. Many of the staff originate from Bali and Java. The question of 'local' is important here, since from an international perspective any Indonesian is a 'local'. The present coordinator of TNC in Labuan Bajo is very proud of the employment of 'locals' in some of their projects, but these 'locals' are from other parts of Flores. Even though there are one or two 'local' Manggaraians (people who come from the district of which Komodo National Park is a part) who work for TNC, the people in the fishing communities do not recognize them as 'locals', since no one from the fishing communities themselves has been hired to work in TNC. When TNC stepped up its efforts to patrol the park in the late 1990s and early 2000s, they paid a number of Labuan Bajo youth an 'honorarium' to be involved in guarding the park. These were mostly young men who sought work as 'guides' in the tourism sector in Labuan Bajo. However one resident of Labuan Bajo has complained that no one from the real indigenous residents of Labuan Bajo or the neighbouring islands had been chosen by the TNC, but instead young men from highland Manggarai or other parts of Flores. Other rumours in Labuan Bajo stated that several prominent people who became subsequently the most vocal opponents of the TNC had been rejected for jobs with them when they first arrived in Labuan Bajo (see Chapter 5).

Another matter that has alienated a lot of local residents is the perception of the TNC staff as being very highly paid. At times the foreign staff have been resident for periods in TNC, and one of them, a Dutch man, had a reputation for flaunting his high pay. He would have barbecues party every weekend, where his guests would sit around drinking expensive drinks, and eating expensive food that locals could barely afford to have even on rare

occasions. These types of lifestyles did not endear the TNC staff to local community members.

The collaborative management of the Komodo National Park that TNC began to promote in 2000, became a further sore point in the eyes of many local people in the vicinity of the park. This will be discussed more in chapter 5, however the fact that the "collaborative" effort was not one with the local community businesses, but instead with a Malaysian-born businessman, made many people from the district of Manggarai, both in Labuan Bajo and the islands of the park, as well as ex-patriot Manggaraians living elsewhere, considerably agitated. This collaboration was subject to great local scrutiny, as TNC's larger objectives seemed to be commercial, and the lack of transparency in the partnership and subsequent programmes and projects suggested that this collaboration was far from altruistic. TNC's large budgets and ambitious projects, also suggested that the local park authority was being manipulated to ratify laws and accomplish the goals pre-determined by TNC, rather than the other way around. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Local NGOs

Apart from international and national level involvement in conservation efforts in Indonesia, there has also been a swelling of local civil society concern with this outside attention. There is growing attention on how local communities manage the production of meanings and their own understandings of the environment. Local NGO groups have started to defend local communities, and contest the labels that are often imposed on them as being un-cooperative and 'uneducated' about the concepts of 'conservation'. Because of the involvement of TNC in the management of KNP, many local NGOs have emerged to support the goals/rights/ needs of the communities in the park. The frequent use of conservation discourse or 'conservation's new vocabulary'-- international, standardized discourse about eco systems and nature protection (see Mc Afee 1999) by TNC has also meant that local NGOs and communities have begun to appropriate, reject and transform these discourses to further their own objectives and interests. Juanita Sundberg's research in the Maya Biosphere Reserve in Guatemala examined the processes by which the relationship between International NGOs and local people can transform landscapes and identities (Sundberg 2003: 51). Sundberg examined the role environmental INGOs play in the construction of discourse of environmental degradation in the Maya Biosphere Reserve. Through the generation of powerful discourses, INGOs had managed to privilege certain ways of thinking, primarily the narratives that draw from the sciences as being 'neutral, unbiased, objective and value free' to marginalize and silence those who did not have access to or familiarity with such discourses.

She found that some of the reserve's inhabitants were able to co-opt such discourses by learning to articulate multiple cultural values and practices through their relationships with individuals working for such INGOs, as well as other outsiders working in the Reserve who were fluent in the discourse. This ability to act as cultural intermediaries was greatly dependent on the socio-economic position of the individuals who could engage in these discourses to varying degrees of success (ibid: 53). Similarly to what has happened in the Komodo National Park, "the INGOs had no legal authority to enforce laws; rather, their authority derives from increasing power of scientific and technological discourse to circumscribe how social groups *should* interact with nature. A host of experts has conducted studies of the Peten's [Maya] biophysical environment, while the most rudimentary socioeconomic data are regarded as a sufficient source of knowledge about people's practices" (ibid: 56).

In the vicinity of the Komodo National park, there have been several local NGOs who became involved with the various communities in the park to oppose TNC and help local communities fight for their rights. My first experience of this 'conservation encounter' or the point of interaction between NGOs and local people (Sundberg 2003: 53) began in Ruteng, the capital of the Manggarai Regency, with the NGO, ASPRIDA. ASPRIDA[13] was affiliated to the Bogor based national environmental NGO TELAPAK (http://www.telapak.org). Founded in 1996, ASPRIDA received small grants from other TELAPAK for their work on environmental education in Nusa Tenggara Timur. The organization was also concerned with the protection and recognition of rights of local communities, as well as providing some technical assistance to local communities hoping to manage their own projects. It was after I made contact with ASPRIDA, that I met community leaders living in Komodo National Park who would openly discuss the conflict. Speaking to Pak HH, village head on Pulau Kukusan, it was clear that TNC management plan was not well received, or even well understood by the people living in the park. With the increase in environmental legislation that favoured protection of the flora and fauna of the park, villagers were often left feeling vulnerable as many of their livelihood practices infringed on these news rules and left them open to prosecution. This feeling of vulnerability also left many villagers feeling indignant, as these rules had been imposed unilaterally and in many ways, impractically. The suggestion that non sea-dwelling -"city people"-outsiders should know better than villagers who had lived all their lives by the sea for many generations was also a sore point for villagers who felt TNC

[13] ASPRIDA's profile can be found on the "Peace Directory of Indonesia" website: http://www.direktori-perdamaian.org/ina/org_detail.php?id=312

had no empathy nor experience of their situation and no right to interfere in local livelihood practices.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to provide some background to the political situation in Indonesia and globally that has led to various contesting discourses about the use of the environment. Under the authoritarian Suharto regime, environmental NGOs were the only ones allowed any space for political dissent, albeit very limited, because of the rising international pressure on Third World countries about environmental exploitation. This space has opened further in the reform era, where local NGOs increasingly struggle in the name of local communities for various rights. There has also been increasing international attention on the environmental situation in Indonesia, resulting in greater donor reliance for conservation projects and the presence of International NGOs, which began under the Suharto regime, intensifying greatly in the reform era. This intensified interest has led to a situation of competition between NGOs, both between INGOs, with each other over areas that they 'control', as well as between international NGOs and local NGOs. This competition is expressed quite differently, since INGOs concerned with the environment are often 'preservationist' in nature, are more concerned with the natural environment than with the human inhabitants and are not accountable to local governments or national interests. On the other hand the local NGOs, speak up for the local inhabitants, both their rights to land and livelihood, as well as their indigenous understandings of 'conservation' and the environment. What has become problematic is a very different understanding of 'community', and what their needs are. As Sundberg argues for the conflicts in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, INGOs often have a superficial understanding of communities. It is to the question of communities that I now turn.

Chapter 4 Communities in the Park

Introduction

One of the recent emphases in the conservation discourse, as I have mentioned in chapter 2, is about 'community participation'. What a community is and who constitutes it, has not usually been clearly defined by conservationists, however, and there has been recent criticism of this in the social science literature. The issue of community in Komodo National Park is a complex and crucial one; not only because it determines the implementation and effectiveness of park policies, but it also determines the way in which park policies affect the dynamics/ identities within the local communities. In the next chapter I will explore how the use of labels by TNC homogenizes and discounts the diversity of the populations within the KNP.

One of the complexities of the question of communities in the vicinity of the Komodo National Park has to do with the diversity of ethnic groups that make up the populations of the town and different villages in the area. Ethnicity is only one aspect of understanding community dynamics within KNP, only partially salient in determining the parameters that communities are perceived and created. The complexity also has to do with the spreading out of the population over a number of different islands in and near the park, that are made up of villages of mixed ancestry and ethnicity.

The islands that I visited that are located in the park are Komodo, Rinca and Papagarang. The islands just outside the boundaries of the park that I visited are Mesa, Seraya Kecil, Seraya Besar, and Kukusan. These island communities are involved in a complex network of relations that are based on economic, ethnic and settlement ties. A history of foreign involvement in Western Flores has also historically privileged certain ethnic groups over others, depending on culturally specific notions of dominance and power that still prevail today.

Instead of recognizing the overlapping and cross-cutting ties within and between diverse communities in and around the park, the KNP's management plans for the park, have largely ignored this. Instead, communities are understood simply as one thing or another, a residential location, by ethnicity or in terms of economic position. Such an assessment of community typifies the pitfalls that face conservation literature on community-based resource management; broadly, the understanding of community as a spatial unit, a social

structure and as a set of shared norms. These ideas do little to shed light on the causes of these features nor the way these features affect resource utilization (Agrawal and Gibson 1999: 630). In short, Agrawal and Gibson argue for a more political approach that focuses on decision-making processes, in particular, the role of institutions and the multiplicity of interests that actors seek to protect or advance. In short, "…community based conservation initiatives must be founded on images of community that recognize their internal differences, processes, their relations with external actors, and the institutions that affect both" (ibid).

Labuan Bajo is the only town in western Flores. It is where the National Park headquarters is located, where TNC is based, and is the capital of the newly formed regency of Western Manggarai (Manggarai Barat). Labuan Bajo is a small sea side town of approximately 6000 inhabitants. Despite being outside the perimeter of Komodo National Park, it is economically most significant, as goods and services consumed within the park originate from Labuan Bajo. Like most of the communities in the park, it is ethnically diverse; and migration over the centuries has brought various groups to its shores, such as the Bajo (also spelled Bajau), a nomadic seafaring people located throughout eastern Indonesia, the Bugis, a seafaring people from South Sulawesi who have also travelled across the archipelago, the Bimanese, from the nearby island of Sumbawa, Chinese from other parts of Indonesia as well as from China, and more recently people from all over Indonesia, such as Balinese and Javanese. Additionally of course in more recent time, the population of Labuan Bajo has been dominated by the presence of Manggaraian people of the interior of West Flores, and peoples from other parts of Flores Island. There has also been in very recent years a small group of foreigners, some of them European, Australian and American, who have sought to settle in Labuan Bajo because of the developing opportunities in tourism. Hence as time goes on, Labuan Bajo has become more and more diverse, what one might even call even 'cosmopolitan'.

Labuan Bajo (*Pelabuan Bajo* literally translated as the harbour of the Bajo people) was not always such a bustling centre of economic activity, though, it has been a place of exchange for at least the past 200 years. According to an informant from Pulau[14] Mesa, a small densely populated island

[14] Pulau means 'island'.

located just outside the park boundaries, Labuan Bajo has always been a meeting place between the "sea people" (the Bajo) and the "mountain people" (Manggarai people); this was based on an informal agreement between the "heads of the market" (*kepala pasar*), the Bajo representative staying in Pulau Bajo, a small island off Labuan Bajo. Many of the Bajo were known to have moored their boats in the protected lagoon off Labuan Bajo, and many established villages in the islands that are now in the KNP. Though it is not clear how long this arrangement persisted, settlement of non-coastal areas of Labuan Bajo town was believed to have begun sometime in the late 1800s by arrivals from Bima.

Over the centuries the western part of Flores had been variously controlled by different overlords: the Sultanate of Goa on the island of Sulawesi up to the 17th century, the Sultanate of Bima on the island of Sumbawa up to the 20th century, and finally the Dutch, until the end of World War II (Erb 1999). In perhaps as early as the 15th and 16th centuries the kingdoms of Bima on the island of Sumbawa and Goa (Makassar) on the island of Sulawesi started to take an interest in western Flores, perhaps due to cinnamon and sandlewood that could be found there, and developed a rivalry over the territory of "Manggarai" that lasted for centuries (Erb 1997, Verheijen 1991). In the beginning of the 17th century the King of Goa converted to Islam, and subsequently the Sultanate of Goa became a powerful force throughout eastern Indonesia, gaining control over Bima, and forcing their king to convert as well (Noorduyn 1987, cited in Erb 1997). When the Dutch conquered Goa in 1667, Bima was freed from Goanese control and later Dutch East India Company contracts put Manggarai in Bimanese hands (Erb 1997). At that time many refugees swarmed to Flores from the island of Celebes (present day Sulawesi), among them quite possibly Buginese and Bajo. Bima and Goa kept up their rivalry over the western part of Flores for several centuries though, each supporting different local leaders at different times. The name 'Manggarai' to refer to the western part of the island of Flores dates from perhaps the 17th century. Stories tell that a Bimanese vessel tried to anchor in the harbour of Reo on the north coast of western Flores, and the anchor was taken away by a current; he called out in Bimanese, "mangga rai!", "the anchor has run off!", and after that the land was referred to by this name (Erb 1997, 1999).

Possibly during the time of Bimanese control, a system of governing and tax collecting was set up, where leaders, called *dalu*, of different territories,

would be directly responsible to the Sultan's representative for collecting taxes and governing a district[15]. Under the dalu were representatives of smaller territories, leaders called 'gelarang'[16]. In Manggarai, traditionally there were 38 dalu, a system that remained in effect even up to the post-colonial period (Erb 1999). In the most westerly part of what became known as "Manggarai", the amount of influence from Bima was greater than in other areas, because of its proximity to the island of Sumbawa. The dalu districts of westerly Manggarai, Nggorang and Mburak, were where many Bimanese from Sumbawa settled. In the village of Warloka, in Mburak, graves were found in the 1960's which indicated very ancient trading with Chinese traders to the islands of eastern Indonesia (ibid:66). Villagers in Warloka today tell tales that link them closely to the Sultanate of Bima (ibid). According to historical records, Bimanese took a lot of slaves from the interior of Manggarai, and viewed the mountain people as 'barely human' (Coolhaas 1942, quoted in Erb 1997). Hence there was an early distinction between the coastal settlers, who were Muslims who had migrated from Bima or Goa, versus the mountain folk, who later became the focus of missionary work after the Dutch took control of Flores in the early 20th century. Over the course of the 20th century the Florenese population of the interior were almost entirely converted to Catholicism, while the coastal fishing peoples remain Muslim.

This general religious division remains true until today in Labuan Bajo and the environs of the Komodo National Park. The fishing populations resident on the islands in and near the park are all Muslim, while the town of Labuan Bajo has seen a large influx of Catholic migrants from the interior of Flores, mostly Manggaraian, who have dominant political and economic positions in the town. The fishing communities are thus in several ways slightly marginal to wider Florenese political, economic and social life. However there are cross-cutting connections with members of different classes, ethnicities and religions into the communities that are located in the park; these are based on business ties, as well as interest in more recent years from mainland Florenese NGOs to offer aid to fishing communities, as well as attempts on the part of some

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[15] According to Verheijen 'dalu' is a Bimanese word so this system possibly began during the time of Bimanese rule, J.A.J. Verheijen, *Manggarai dan Wujud Tertinggi*, p. 31, see Erb 1997.

[16] Gelarang or gallarang, is a Goanese word, see Cummings 2002, referred to below

individuals to make political alliances with these communities. Hence relationships between people cannot be simply discussed in terms of their membership in distinct neatly defined 'communities'.

"Communities" of the Park: History and traditional social organisations

I will explore in this section the stories that I have received from people of different ethnic groups about the history of their settlement in the area. I will then go on to analyze some of the dynamics involved in the structure of these communities as they exist today in the vicinity of the park.

The Bajo are said to be the earliest to have settled in the region. Indeed, many of the islands in KNP have names of Bajo origin. Other islands such as Pulau Seraya Kecil and Pulau Seraya Besar were settled in the 1940s. The Bajo are a group that is highly nomadic, and are found from the Sulu Sea in southern Philippines, into Sabah, from southern Sulawesi, across to Papua (Warren 1983, Nimmo 1972). The Bajo have been active in and around Makassar, the important port on the island of Sulawesi where the Sultanate of Goa was located, since before the 16th century. Skilled boat builders, strand-gatherers, seamen and pirates, they also traded items such as sea cucumber, tortoise-shell, pearls, mother of pearl and other marine products all over the Indonesian archipelago (Villiers 1990: 145). In the sixteenth century, some of these Bajo were established in the Sangkarang Islands, a group of small islands off the west coast of Sulawesi opposite Makassar. The commander of the Portuguese forces that overthrew Makassar in 1666, described them as a 'very useful people', "… who collect tortoise shell and are obliged to deliver to the king of Makassar. Furthermore they must always be ready to go with their boats in any direction they may be sent, wherever the king from time to time sees more advantage to be gained, since they are the type of men who are known as slaves of the king…" (in Villiers 1990: 146)

According to Verheijen (1986), a Dutch missionary who did linguistic and ethnological studies of people living on Flores and Komodo islands, the Bajo functioned as carriers for the feudal lords and it was the task of the Bajos to bring tribute regularly from the seven western Manggarai dalus (feudal chiefs) and from the community on Komodo, to the Sultan in Bima, on the neighbouring island of Sumbawa to the west (Verheijen 1986: 29). Komodo Island has historically been regarded as ethnically distinct from the other islands

in the vicinity. The ata Komodo or Komodo people had their own language as well as a separate cultural identity (Verheijen 1987). According to a long term resident in Kampung Komodo, the last descendant of the ata Komodo died in 1984. Komodo remains ethnically distinct from the other villages in the vicinity of the park today, because of the higher numbers of migrants from Sape, on the island of Sumbawa. The people of Komodo are regarded with some derision by the Bugis and the Manggaraian respondents, as well as by the park rangers I spoke to. One ranger from Kalimantan, referred to them as "the laziest people" and the commandant at Loh Liang, the harbour where tourists boats anchor on Komodo Island, warns people to stay away from the people of Komodo and look after their belongings because these villagers are known to steal. To illustrate the stupidity of the Komodo people, two informants told me the following story about when Komodo decided to wage war on Sumba.

> The people on Komodo had a wooden anchor and decided to set sail for Sumba. However, they forgot to untie the anchor from the Assam (tamarind) tree. As it was dark, they assumed that they'd already set sail. When they heard the chickens crowing later on, they assumed they'd arrived on Sumba and killed the villagers and looted the village, unaware they were in their own village. It is said that in Gillimotang, there are still "rope marks" on newly growing tamarind trees as a memorial to this event. Chickens can also be heard crowing in the morning but they are never seen.

It is not clear how Komodo was settled but respondents mentioned that it was one of the first places settled in the Komodo National Park, along with Mesa, Rinca and later Pappagarang. There is only one village on Komodo Island.

Stories were also told to me about the Bajo. It is not known when they arrived in the waters of Eastern Indonesia, but respondents tell stories that explain how they came to these isles. The present day representation of Bajos as being simple, peace loving, tolerant and generous people--though not wholly untrue--belies their role in the history of the lesser Sunda Islands. According to a Bajo respondent in Labuan Bajo, the Bajo in Eastern Indonesia originated from Riau.

> The Sultan of Goa kidnapped a princess from Riau as she was very beautiful. The furious Sultan of Riau sent the Bajo after the Sultan of Goa and warned them if that they do not succeed in bringing her back, they should not return as he would kill them and their descendants. For that reason, many Bajo did not dare to return and sought refuge with the Sultan of Bima. In return for his protection, the Bajo acted as look outs for the Sultan to keep watch for Portuguese invaders and settled in the islands between Bima and Flores.[17]

However, this story was denounced as 'nonsense' by other Bajo informants. Another Bajo informant told of how the Bajo originated from China; four brothers decided to sail away together. When their boat broke down and sunk, they drifted to different places, one of those places was Flores. Where ever people say the Bajo first came from, they claim the Bajo did not initially settle on the mainland of Flores, but resided on the island facing the present day town of Labuan Bajo, aptly named Pulau Bajo.

Many informants, though not able to describe the exact origins of the Bajo in the area, were able to trace back family history to the time of the Sultan of Goa and the Sultan of Bima, and told how the Bajo at that time were instrumental to their overlords for maritime transport, security and warfare. However, not much is written about the social organization of the Bajos outside their relationship with their terrestrial overlords. Verheijen, who writes extensively about the Sama Bajau language, also touches on migration and kinship in his book on the Sama-Bajau of the Lesser Sunda Islands (Verheijen 1986). However, he does not elaborate on the issue of class amongst the Bajo. During interviews with fishermen living in the KNP, the reign of several Bajo

[17] Warren (1983) reports a slightly different version of what she calls the "Johor princess myth" where the Bajau, charged with the safe conduct of the princess of Johor to her betrothed, are banished from their homeland for failing to protect the princess when she is captured en route by the envious Sultan of Brunei. For this reason, the Bajau are forced to remain at sea to begin their wanderings, never to return to their homeland in the Malay Peninsula (Warren 1983: 5).

punggawas[18] who ruled over the Bajo in the islands is often mentioned. According to them, the presence of Bajo punggawas dates back to the kingdom of Goa (Cummings 2002), and continued throughout Bimanese and Dutch rule and later Japanese occupation.

The punggawa, a position of political power, traditionally of Bajo descent, was the spiritual and moral authority of the Bajo who lived in the islands. Punggawas were said to descend from the lolo Bajo[19] or Bajo aristocracy. The lolo Bajo legitimized the rule of the Raja of Goa over the Bajo, and according to one informant, was equivalent to the position of karaeng or lord. According to Cummings, during the sixteenth century:

> Gowa's rulers began to create a hierarchy of positions and titles that would endure beyond the lifespan of personal kinship links between individuals…Some communities were transformed into [tributaries] for the noble who held the title—the kareang-ship—of the area. The most powerful rulers of important communities were titled kareang;…other local lords were called gallarrang…More important than these individual designations was the recognition that they represented particular ranks or positions within a Makassarese society whose pinnacle was in Gowa. Not rigid or unchanging, this evolving hierarchy of positions and titles nevertheless marked out a comparatively coherent

[18] *Punggawa*, a Javanese term for officials that fulfilled the positions and functions in the King's administration, were also known by the more general term *abdidalem* (king's servants) (Moertono 1968: 93). Although Javanese society had an open elite, the King's officials traditionally were recruited mainly from *prijaji* class, the social group that essentially consisted of the King's *punggawa* but gradually came to include their families and descendants (Moertono 1968: 95).

[19] Verheijen notes that, "*Lolo*- "father" is Macassarese. In Longos it is used with regard to respected people. Mk *Lolo* was a title for a chief of the Bajos." (See Verheijen 1986: 206, no.88) In his Bajo word list, *Lolo* is listed as a word that refers to father; nobleman (*aha lolo*) or nobility (*bansa lolo)*. (Ibid: 92.)

> system of relative statuses and clear political and social relationships within an integrated whole (Cummings 2002: 29).

Informants in Labuan Bajo concur that in the 19th century there was much pirate activity and instability in this region. On certain islands, the presence of lolo Bajo helped keep pirates away because the Bajo were also armed with weapons, as naval warriors for the Sultan of Bima. According to an informant on Pulau Mesa, the Bajo had their own weapons to keep pirates away (including a canon). Under the rule of the punggawa, the punggawa was responsible for ensuring that justice was served by meting out punishments to wrong doers. Punishment was severe, for example, a thief would have his hands cut off if he was caught stealing. For this reason, the Bajo were very afraid of committing crimes in the territory of the punggawa.

Verheijen also notes that though the Bajo carried out some services for the Sultan of Bima, they were not regarded as ordinary subjects. From his review of archival lawsuits, he found that the Bajo were referred to together with princes and high officials, as well as '…and Bajos or important or well to do people' (See Verheijen 1986: 203, n. 63). This is not surprising as Bajos played a vital role in the burgeoning slave trade between Manggarai and Bima, contributing substantially to the Bimanese economy. As carriers of tribute for the Sultan of Bima, the Bajo were also slave runners, transporting slaves from inland Manggarai to Bima for trade in Batavia. This demand began in the 17th century when the Dutch opened pepper and sugar plantations in Western Indonesia that required cheap labour in large numbers (Erb 1999: 88) . In the 18th century, slaves were the most important good traded from Manggarai, with demand outstripping supply. Villages were raided increasingly frequently for slaves to be sold not just in Bima but also in Makassar, by pirates and Bimanese administrators alike. (Ibid)

The Bajo were active in the slave trade, hunting, transporting, selling and owning slaves. Verheijen also suggests that Bajos did not only transport slaves from subordinate dalus to the Bimanese government but sold and owned slaves for their own profit, as told to him by the mother and sister of his informant, Sahamma (Verheijen 1986: 29). An informant in Labuan Bajo also tells of how his mother, Lolo Intang, came to Labuan Bajo from Southern Sulawesi with forty slaves she had bought. These slaves were then put to work

clearing Pulau Kukusan Kecil and Pulau Kukusan Besar to clear land for agriculture there. His mother also had a silver belt and bracelet that was bestowed to her ancestors by the Raja of Goa, further strengthening his claim to Bajo aristocracy.

Wiltshire documents in her case study of Wakatobi National Park (Wiltshire 1998), how the position of punggawa continues to hold a special cultural significance in South Sulawesi, where there are still many Bajo residents. According to her respondents, since the time of the Bone kingdom, a Sama-Bajo had customarily been inaugurated as punggawa and presented with a flag called ula-ula as a mark of the king's protection. This flag was used as a signal of the king's permission for fishing activities, as well as during times of war, where the flag would be planted in the coast to announce to the Bajo that war had officially begun. The flag was also surrounded by great superstition and is not opened other than for traditional events for fear of supernatural reprisal. According to Wiltshire's informant, the flag had last been flown during tribal wars sometime during 1900—1920s (Wiltshire 1998: 78).

Respondents in Labuan Bajo reported that they had also had an ula-ula which they had flown on Pulau Bajo during the Dutch colonial period. The punggawa at the time, Suedy[20], a Bajo originally from Selayar in Sulawesi, was chosen to be punggawa at aged 16. Though a lolo Bajo, he did not inherit this position as a direct descendant (usually from father to son) from the last punggawa[21], rather it is said he derived this position from his grandparents (nenek). Suedy was chosen as he was literate, having attended school, literacy being a quality valued by the Sultan of Bima. Suedy, was said to have been from Pulau Longos, the island farthest north off of Flores. An emissary of the Sultan of Bima, his rule stretched over the islands Longos, Boleng, Medang, Mesa, Papagarang, Rinca, Komodo, Seraya Besar and Seraya Kecil, as well as Kukusan. An informant in Pulau Kukusan, himself a descendant of the lolo

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[20] Verheijen actually interviewed Suedy (Sawedi) regarding the numbers of Bajo in Western Flores. "According to the former Penggawa of the Bajos in western Flores, Mr Sawedi, their number in 1941 was approximately 1,000 people. The now living Bajos in the same area number some 6,500 at least." (See Verheijen 1986: 200, n.54) However, Verheijen does not elaborate about the position of the penggawa/ punggawa in Bajo life. There is also no reference to the word in his glossary of Bajo words.

[21] It was said that Suedy was related to the preceding *punggawa* by marriage (*ipar punggawa*)

Bajo, said that the centre of power was determined by where the *punggawa* chose to move. Each village on each island in the *punggawa*'s territory was said to have a leader, who represented the *punggawa* in his absence. Each of these islands was also said to have its own boundaries, marked by *taka*, maritime markers in the form of sand spits, coral reefs, and small islands, that defined the span of rule of each emissary of the *punggawa*. These boundaries were not exclusive; fishermen from other islands were welcome to fish in the area but the villagers of the island had the right to exclude them, for example if they disapproved of their fishing methods.

Verheijen noted that the Bajo dialect in Longos island is strikingly different from that spoken by other Bajo communities. He writes:

> ….the forefathers came from Celebes (Sulawesi), allegedly, and declared their submission to the then mighty ruler of Gunong Talo who allotted them a place which was called Labuanbajo afterwards. After the inhabitants increased considerably, a good number of them moved to Papagarang. From there some of them went to Rinca, some to Mesa and others to the isle of Boleng. From Boleng some settled on the isle of Medang from where they visited the island Longos, which is called Sapoh by the Bajos… The tribute of Bajos in Longos consisted of kima (clam) shells. Yearly this tribute was shipped to the sultan of Bima together with the tribute beeswax from the dalu of Pacar." (Verheijen 1986: 25, n.58a).

However, many of the lolo Bajo on Pulau Longos had been refugees from the separatist movement in Sulawesi in the 1950s, shortly after independence of Indonesia from the Dutch[22]. Many Bajo came to Labuan Bajo and the surrounding islands to seek shelter from the violence, as well as from pirates. According to respondents in Labuan Bajo and Pulau Seraya Kecil, Suedy was

[22] Rivalries between North and South Sulawesi, resulted in a rebellion in the South of Sulawesi, led by Qahhar Mudzakkar against the proposal that Sulawesi to join Sukarno's new republic. (See Harvey 1977)

also said to have lived on Pulau Bajo and later in Labuan Bajo, along with other lolo Bajo.

Given the information from Verheijen, and what I gathered from informants as well, the Bajo appear quite opposite to the reputation they often tend to have as maritime drifters with unstable alliances. The Bajo were not merely sea nomads, but occupied entrenched positions within both monarchies of Bima and Goa historically. The existence of aristocratic families within the Bajo also has implications for present day Bajo identity, social organization and claims within KNP, as will be shown below.

During the colonial period, Manggarai was freed from the overlordship of the Sultan of Bima. When the Dutch took over direct control, they initially left Manggarai in the hands of the Sultan of Bima, but when missionaries became more numerous in Western Flores, they lobbied for a king to come from Manggarai itself, so that Manggarai would be free from a Muslim overlord. In 1930, a Manggaraian man became king, and later at the end of the colonial era, his brother became the first district head in Manggarai (Erb 1999). With the end of the control of the sultanate of Bima, and the demise of positions of aristocracy and royalty as positions of power in the modern Indonesia state, the punggawa position also lost its political legitimacy. In its attempt to institute a new system of national law, the New Order government implemented the "village law" in 1979, which implemented a new administrative system called "Desa Gaya Baru". By differentiating adat or 'traditional law and custom', often linked with religion, from secular, and thus national, administration, the state was able to penetrate into local affairs by controlling secular matters, like positions such as the village leader, and strategies, such as village development plans (Hill 1992: 273). The transformation of the village government through this law began in the 1980s by the uniform formation of villages, either called *desa* or *kelurahan*, led by either *kepala desa* or *lurah*. Village hamlets below that level were known as *dusun*. In this way the divisions of *dalu* territories, and all the various functionaries under the *dalu*, disappeared. The new positions of power, regent or district head (*bupati*), sub-district head (*camat*), and village head (*kepala desa*), were appointed by the central government, or, as in the case of the village head, chosen by the villagers, but ratified by the central authorities. In this way, throughout Indonesia, traditional systems of political power at the local level were gradually eroded away.

However, descendants of the punggawa and lolo Bajo up to the present day, continue to play important roles in the community. The transition from a court system to an administrative system has also meant that the lolo Bajo of each island likewise became administrators of the New Order. The introduction of central authority was most striking in the appointment of leaders to the *desa* and *lurah*. Though village and hamlet communities are able to nominate individuals to fill these positions, the local subdistrict head was able to veto certain candidates deemed to be unsuitable, appointing the leader from two nominations finally submitted to him. When the desa is 'upgraded' to *kelurahan* status, all salaried officials at both hamlet (now called lingkungan) and village level become civil servants whose obligations are entirely to the administrative hierarchy. By definition, kelurahan, unlike desa, no longer have the right to manage their own affairs. These leaders become salaried civil servants, thus ensuring their primary loyalties are to the central and regional government rather than to their own 'electorate'. Their position is no longer vulnerable to local censure but is rather ratified and enforced by the authority of the state. The position of these appointed leaders is further reinforced by their control, in consultation with an advisory council of village elite (LKMD-Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa), of all development funds channelled to the village. Not only does this consolidate the authority of the village head and elite, it also gives them access to 'commissions' of various kinds in administering such funds (Hill 1992: 273-274).

As a result, in at least one desa in KNP, *kepala desas* and key members in each village are descendants of the lolo Bajo, and retain key decision making powers over these communities. The traditional position as a spiritual and moral leader has been translated into a political and administrative one, that is located within the government bureaucratic structure. In the past, a punggawa's power was his material wealth, spiritual power and his link to the lolo Bajo. Today, descendants of the lolo Bajo have been quick to make use of their extended networks to their economic advantage. What is important to recognize is that some of the present day Hajis, that is those influential men who have power and wealth who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca, are second generation Bajo whose parents arrived from Sulawesi, rather than from the islands within the park. However, it is often mentioned that they derive from royalty (either directly from Bajo nobility -lolo Bajo- or kinship with the punggawa, or

sometimes through marriage eg. through their wives), which in turn legitimates their position as village heads (*kepala desa)*.

What I want to discuss in the next section is how these prominent Bajo people have capitalized on their aristocratic descent, and present political positions to become middle men in the commercial fishing industry that has expanded into the communities of the park over the past several decades. Without their positions as middle men, the fishing industry would take on a very different shape in the park. As far as the conservation organizations are concerned these men are the major culprits in the destructive fishing methods that had been proliferating in the park before the presence of the TNC beginning in 1995. In the present day, though destructive activities have abated considerably, covert activities continue, though it is not always clear who are the culprits. There exists a patron-client relationship between many of the descendants of the punggawa, based principally on their material wealth and strengthened by their religious attainment of being a 'haji'. These are important links that sustain part of the economic networks in the communities across the park.

Fishing in the park

A TNC report in 1996, gave a good overview of the different livelihood strategies pursued by different communities located in the park. An estimated 97% of the park population are engaged in fishing activities (Bakar 1996: 7), economic position often determines access to resources such as gear and fishing type. Different fishing techniques also reflect the differing social ties between different strata within communities. Often, capital intensive fishing techniques require the support of patron-client relationships as financial institutions are not available to the less well off (ibid: 24).

Fishing techniques can be broadly divided into two categories- commercial and subsistence fishing. Most fishing techniques in the park are subsistent, largely for local consumption. Commercial fishing is usually capital intensive and requires the use of networks and middlemen as the fish are usually sent to faraway markets.

The variety of fishing methods used in KNP is summarised below (from Bakar 1996: 7-13):

> "Bagan"- local name for specially designed motorboats equipped with lift nets and kerosene lanterns…used at night to catch squid, anchovies and sardines…the catch is shipped to either Bali or Surabaya.
>
> "Meting" or Gleaning of the reefs- Marine biota collected are sea cucumber, abalone and a variety of molluscs… takes place during low tide and is done on foot by men, women and children. This is regarded as destructive due to the trampling of corals and the use of iron bars to retrieve abalone from crevices.
>
> "Pukat" or Drag nets- This is used especially to collect reef fish, as well as small pelagic fish, anchovies and shrimp.
>
> Hook and line- Not a popular method, limited to Kampung Rinca and Kerora, occurring between periods of main fishing activities. Reef fish caught are processed and salted.
>
> "Nener" or harvesting of milkfish larvae- carried out by mostly women and children. The catch is either sold to purchasing agents or directly to Labuan Bajo. This generates significant additional income as milkfish larvae are priced between Rp20 and 25 per fish. One person can collect up to 2000 larvae a day (9)
>
> "Bubu" or fishtraps- Fish traps made of bamboo and set in the reefs to catch reef fish for salting and local consumption. (11)
>
> "Tuba" (Derris elliptica)- A poison derived from the root of the local tuba tree which is used to drug reef fish such as rabbitfish. The use of tuba may yield many fish as drugged fish can be taken with nets. (11)

> Diving- Using compressors (hoka), local fishermen can gather species such as sea cucumbers, young pearl oysters and abalone. High start-up costs limit this technique to the wealthier members of the community. This is regarded as a destructive process as divers often dislodge and damage corals when using iron bars to pry off abalone. (13)

In a list compiled by TNC, destructive fishing methods (such as blast fishing, fishing with poison, the use of gillnets and long lines), overharvesting and poaching were considered the biggest threats to the resources in KNP (PKA and TNC 2000a: 18). Of particular concern was the use of cyanide to catch fish for the live fish trade. The use of cyanide on coral often spells death for the reefs, the home and spawning sites of many fish and invertebrate populations. Such reefs are thought to take decades to regenerate to their original states (Johanes and Riepen 1995: 27).

According to a report prepared for The Nature Conservancy by its consultants Robert Johannes and Michael Riepen, the live fish trade has devastated most viable reefs in the Philippines and hence the trade has been forced further east into Indonesia, Papau New Guinea as well as the Pacific Islands to exploit the tropical reefs there (Johannes and Riepen 1995: 5). Economic prosperity in affluent Asian (Chinese) centres such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan has increased demand for live fish, where eating highly priced live fish during social events is a sign of status. The eating of fish in Chinese culture is a symbolically and socially entrenched practice, though the eating of live reef fish in Hong Kong has only become popular since the 1960s when live fish from nearby reefs became available in large quantities (ibid: 11). This demand is expected to increase with China's continued economic expansion (ibid: 12).

In 1995, Indonesia accounted for 50% of the 20 to 25000 tonnes of live fish exported to Asian markets (ibid: 17, 12). Johannes and Riepen state that "there is nothing inherently wrong, environmentally or socially, with supplying the demand for live reef fish… practical, non-destructive ways of supplying the demand are available" (ibid: 10). However, the destruction of fish habitats through the rampant use of cyanide for short term gain greatly accelerates the

demise of the reefs and its stock, and concentrates the profits from the fish trade in the hands of relatively few parties- namely the companies and the bureaucracy. Their report also documents the difficulties that local communities that work for these companies often face. Johannes and Riepen report that some companies are oppressive in their dealings with villagers, providing inadequate training or none at all in the use of faulty diving equipment, resulting in mortalities and injuries (ibid: 20). Compensation is often meagre in comparison to the value of the fish caught, fishers in Papua New Guinea received US$1.08/ kg (ibid: 22), a mere fraction of the value of a humphead wrasse US$50/kg (ibid: 38).

However, it is clear from the Management Plan that the incidence of destructive fishing is believed to be a result of the ignorance and lack of conservation awareness of residents in the park. This completely ignores the extensive social, economic and jural networks that are needed to participate in the trade, especially the sources of capital for infrastructure and the complicity of local bureaucrats and officials who facilitate its existence.

Celia Lowe's study (Lowe 2003) on the Sama Bajo in Togean Islands focuses on how they are trapped by market forces, bureaucracy and representations of ethnicity as their marine environment is being rapidly degraded by the live fish trade's use of cyanide. Furthermore, representations of Sama ethnicity and identity set the Sama up as scapegoats for the decline of their marine environment.

Their marginal bargaining position, as subjects of government poverty alleviation projects to help them 'progress', promoted the notion that the Sama are primitive and backward. While those who manage to fulfil material wants and 'develop' through the use of cyanide in the live fish trade, are penalised for destroying the environment (Lowe 2003: 243). The setting up of fish camps[23] close to Sama villages also perpetuates the illusion that all Sama people use cyanide. The Sama are also caught up in a relationship of debt with the fish camps since the camps provide outboard motors as well as other material goods. The function of this relationship is more than monetary, the threat of revocation of outboard motors in particular, ensures that a steady supply of fish will be provided to the camp (249).

[23] Fish camps are capital intensive buildings with holding pens to accumlate fish for later transportation by Live Fish Transfer Vessels (LFTV) and staffed by non- Tongean camp bosses (Lowe 2003: 243).

Lowe also cites the "entrepreneurial culture" that extends from the top of the Indonesian hierarchy, trickling down to local leaders and bureaucrats who are bound to reproduce a culture where economic benefit is capitalized upon and spread out, or else risk losing their positions (247). The complicity of bureaucrats and officials play a pivotal role in facilitating the trade in the procurement of permits for fish camps and custom forms, as these are major sources of revenue for poorly funded government agencies (251). The legalese that governs fish export also means that collaboration with multiple government agencies is required, thus it is in the bureaucracy's interest to further the process.

Environmental legislation places the responsibility of environmental protection on the citizens and the state, where development and conservation are inseparable. The drive towards 'development' and progress however, creates a protected business environment, where the consequences of enforcement and environmental decline are borne by local communities (250). Furthermore, legal structures benefit fish camps, exporters and government officials who exploit the numerous tiny exceptions facilitating the capture rather than conservation of endangered fish (ibid).

From Lowe's accounts, the Sama are far from ignorant about the consequences rampant cyanide use will bring, however, economic exigencies and bullying from complicit officials and bureaucrats in the name of neo-liberal trade ideology have given them little option but to either participate or simply stay out of the operation's way. Fishers in Komodo National Park are caught in a similar bind; patron-client relationships between middlemen and poor fishers mean that fishers have little or no bargaining power. During my fieldwork, respondents would not openly discuss the live fish trade in Labuan Bajo as it would mean implicating powerful individuals. A respondent did admit that Live Fish Transport Vessels (LFTV) from Taiwan or Hong Kong do enter park waters, but are reluctant to venture too far into park boundaries, due to the presence of patrols. "They are very scared; we had to signal them with lights for a long time before they would come nearer… In the end, we had to go to them. They are very scared because now there are patrols and they (TNC) have very fast boats. But we made sure that nobody saw us and there was no moon that night." He also claimed that Napoleon Wrasse were still being shipped out but were very rare and usually much smaller than before. During my fieldwork in 2003, floating fish cages (*keramba*) were evident just outside of the harbour,

though it is unclear to whom they belonged to. One respondent claimed it belonged to a Haji in town, another claimed that it was part of a fisheries project run by the government.[24]

Other possible evidence of the LFT was encountered during an interview with a local businessman who apologized because he had to leave abruptly to oversee his shipment of fish. A minibus (*bemo*) filled with styrofoam boxes labeled 'Live animals' pulled up shortly in front of the house which he boarded and directed to the airport. Other residents in Labuan Bajo recount stories of friends/ relatives/ tourists being 'bumped off' flights to make way for live fish cargoes to Bali. A guide in Labuan Bajo recounted the story when the fish cargo exceeded the weight allowed, the airline officials tried to get rid of two European tourists who had bought tickets just before the flight, but they made so much noise that in the end, a Manggaraian man was forced to 'postpone' his trip to Bali. By turning down tourists, he said that it was obvious the business from the live fish trade was more important than tourism and that "…the locals always come last".

The secrecy that surrounds the live fish trade made obtaining data almost impossible for a relative newcomer such as myself. However, people were much more forthcoming about bagan fishing, an approved form of fishing within KNP. Throughout the islands, this is the dominant commercial fishing method. Bagans are motorized lift-net boats that catch squid, anchovies and sardines. Bagan fishing takes place at dusk when fishermen go off to look for suitable fishing grounds. Large nets are then released into the depths of the sea and kerosene lamps are set up above the nets to lure the target species. Once enough animals aggregate in the net, the net is hauled up by the crew using a system of turnstiles. In one night, the nets can be dropped multiple times until the captain is satisfied with the catch. Boats return to the villages before dawn and the catch is usually sorted and set out to dry by the women before noon.

Bagan fishing is similar to the live fish trade as it requires substantial capital to start up. Almost all captains have had to borrow money from middlemen or traders to finance their bagans. Some are also bound to middlemen for other necessities such as electricity, fuel, water and even rice. In

[24] As yet, aside from TNC's short lived mariculture project (2003-2006), much of the fish for the Live Fish Trade (LFT) is assumed to be by destructive methods so as to make it lucrative enough for LFTVs to enter the area.

this way, the relationship between middlemen and fishers in KNP is very similar to the situation of the Sama Bajo in the Tongean Islands.

To finance the boat engines as well as the construction, boat captains enter into a financial agreement with one of the middlemen. These middlemen often finance new fishing boats in exchange for the exclusive rights to the catch of new boats. The fish are bought at market price from the fishermen and a percentage of the money is returned to the middlemen until the debt is paid off. Bagans cost between Rp 30 million to Rp 80 million to make[25]. Fishermen rarely have that amount of capital and will approach a 'sponsor' to help finance the construction.

Pak Haji H has helped commission fifteen bagans (*atas nama*- they are 'in his name'). The borrower is bound to sell all his catch to Pak Haji H, who claims to buy it at market prices. Each bagan brings in between 700kg to 1 tonne of fish every evening. One kilogram of fish is about Rp 6000 (a bit more than one Singapore dollar). In the case of Pak H, anybody can approach him for 'help' in commissioning a boat. He has various 'debtors' on several islands. Surprisingly, the key criteria is simply that the borrower is 'reliable'. Pak Haji H claims to want to help increase the standard of living of the fishermen. After an initial meeting with the borrower, Pak Haji H takes about a week to do a character check before giving an answer. As the people living on the islands are often related by either blood or marriage, it is supposedly not difficult to find out if the person in question can be trusted. Aside from trust, creativity, determination and a capacity for hard work are the qualities he looks for in a prospective client. The boats are usually built in Pulau Kukusan by two resident professional boat builders.

According to Haji Idris, the *kepala desa* of Pulau Mesa, a bagan can cost as little as Rp 10 million (hence about $2000 Singapore dollars) to construct. Captains of the bagan are then obligated to sell their catch to their lender at market price. In 2003, the price on Pulau Mesa for a kilogram of fresh squid was Rp 5000/ kg, whilst a kilogram of dried squid fetched Rp 8000/kg. Captains must sell their catch back to their lender until they have repaid the amount borrowed. In the event the captain chooses to sell his catch to someone else before the loan is repaid, the lender has the right to seize ownership of the

[25] The exchange rate has been holding fairly steady for the opening years of the 21st century at around 5000-5800 rupiahs to one Singapore dollar. So the cost is between 6000 and 16000 Singapore dollars.

bagan. Lenders are eager to finance boats as it guarantees them a minimum catch that they can in turn sell elsewhere in Indonesia. They are thus eager to accumulate as large amounts of fish or squid as possible in the shortest possible time. As there are many lenders eager to finance bagans, market prices have remained relatively competitive.

According to Haji Idris, borrowers are often related. However, H has begun to lend to whoever he feels is "capable, hardworking and diligent", extending his network of supply beyond his relatives and his immediate villagers. Potential borrowers approach H with a proposal to finance a bagan. Haji H will then do his research on these potential borrowers— who have they worked for, are they hardworking and creative? Haji H holds creativity in high esteem as creative individuals have the ability to find the best fishing grounds. He has to rely on his network of friends and relatives for testimonials. In this way, the borrower is also held accountable for his loan as he has to have a good reputation and any attempt to dishonour the contract will be public knowledge. As the people living on the islands are often related by either blood or marriage, it is supposedly not difficult to find out if the person in question can be trusted. Social pressure is a strong incentive to repay loans. By lending to a group, the risk of an individual defaulting on the loan is reduced. By 2003, Haji H had financed 8 bagans. The boats are usually built on Pulau Kukusan by two resident professional boat builders, enabling Haji H to personally supervise the construction. Already, the entire village is tied to Pak Haji H as he supplies them with electricity from his generator. He claims that he makes a loss as some of the fishermen are unable to pay him for electricity, often delaying payment or making payment in kind with rice or fish.

The absence of financial institutions that will give loans to the average fisherman has thus allowed the development of such a system. As there is no system for registering bagans in Labuan Bajo, banks are not willing to lend the money to individuals. Banks are more willing to give loans to groups, usually up to a sum of Rp100 million. However, a lack of collateral and strict banking regulations have meant that fishermen are unable to borrow large amounts of money to finance their operations.

The resulting patron-client system has posed problems in the enforcement of illegal fishing methods. An interview with a member of the local NGO ASPRIDA reveals that it is often the richer fishermen in the community who use such illegal fishing methods. It did not make sense that people who had

spent generations living by the sea would be unaware of the detrimental consequences that reef bombing and cyanide fishing would bring. Apparently, only the richer and more influential members of a community had the money and the network to be involved in the live fish trade. Due to kinship and economic ties, it would be unlikely that they would be reported. ASPRIDA had hoped to help Pak Haji H and his village start up a co-operative so that the villagers can make use of the funds to get their catch to further markets and fund their own boats. However, such a scheme may also end up only benefiting the richer members of the community as negotiations have to proceed directly through the village head.

It is necessary to understand that increasingly fishing in the park area is done not for subsistence, but feeds into a commercial system, which results in more intensified fishing activities. These intensified activities, such as the use of bagan, and destructive fishing methods, are capital intensive, and result in a patron-client dependency. This intensification has been the result of a shifting of commercial fishing interests into this area over the past decades. As with the live fish trade, fishers I spoke to have reported an influx of buyers of fish and squid from other parts of Indonesia, including nearby Sape. One respondent explained that the Straits of Sape had been fished out, driving many Sape bagans and middlemen into the waters and shores of KNP[26]. The fish trade is thus also being driven further east. Buyers from Java, Ujung Pandang, Bali, Sape and even as far as Taiwan rely on the catches from KNP. A large cold storage facility exists on Binongko beach and every 2 weeks, the fish collected from local fishermen are sent to Surabaya. Another cold storage facility is owned by a Taiwanese businessman who sells fish collected in Labuan Bajo back to Taiwan. Local businessmen have also started selling fish in Ruteng, a four hour bus ride away from Labuan Bajo, since fish is a cheaper source of protein than meat. Often, they get teenagers to ride their motorbikes at high speed to Ruteng to arrive in time for the morning markets. As a respondent commented, “The best fish are gone by 9am. What is left is the fish brought in by fishermen who arrive late or the fish that nobody wants to buy.”

[26] Bakar’s report already indicated that the Sape fishermen were the most intensive, with the largest numbers of bagan, and the most intensive use of destructive fishing methods 10 years ago (Bakar 1996)

Buyers and middlemen are thus finding that the situation is increasingly competitive. Local businessmen have an edge because their kinship ties and proximity enable them to expand their network of fishers, the only limit being the amount of capital they can lend. Relationships with buyers in the past were stable and long standing due to the remoteness of the area; fishers thus did not have much choice. However, in the face of such recent competition, once the loan is paid, fishers are not obligated to remain with their former debtor and may sell elsewhere. It is this competition that has kept market prices relatively competitive between buyers. Long standing loans are favourable for both middlemen and traders; there is no 'minimum' amount that has to be repaid every month other than the selling of their daily catch to their debtors. Again, the primary goal of the middleman is to ensure a constant supply of fish.

But the rapid increase in the number of bagan, as well as the influx of bagan from other parts of eastern Indonesia has resulted in stiff competition for squid and fish stocks. When I joined P for a night of fishing on his bagan, whilst looking for a place to drop anchor at night, other bagans had already dropped anchor nearby. Though P estimated that there were some 800 bagan in the park, the bulk of them were from Sape, where fish stocks have depleted rapidly in recent years. These boats are distinctive from boats from villages in and around the park, principally because they are larger and thus carry deeper and bigger nets.

This example of bagan fishing shows that fishers once again fall to the bottom of the "food chain" as the pressure from the market forces of the food fish industry, declining fish stocks and middlemen challenge their ability to sustain their livelihoods.

Conclusion

In 1996, TNC, together with Yayasan Pusaka Alam Nusantara, published a report, "Resource Utilization In and Around Komodo National Park", that attempted to "gain an understanding of local customs and socio-cultural, socioeconomic and environmental conditions" as a reference to developing a management programme for the park (Bakar 1996: 4). Subsequently, an updated version of those findings were presented in the 25 Year Management Plan for Komodo National Park when it was formally released in 2000.

The Management Plan examines the demographics of the villages in and around the park, local economic activity (in particular fishing methods and income from fishing), institutions ("largely ineffective"), as well as the amenities such as health care and education that are available to park residents. (PKA and TNC 2000b: 55-59) Community relations were said to be harmonious and community structure relatively flat, though village institutions, such as the village administration (*Lembaga Pemerintahan Desa*) and village council (*Lembaga Musyawarah Desa*) are noted as "not functioning as intended, in particular on remote islands" (Bakar 1996: 23) .

Both reports note the powerful role of traders who control the local economy as the sole access point to markets. Due to the perishability of marine products, traders are able to control the prices of marine products in the local market. The lack of alternative lending institutions also means that fishermen often turn to such traders for loans, thus becoming locked into a cycle of debt. The Management Plan proposes the formation of fishing co-operatives, credit unions and direct market access to increase revenue for fishermen that will enable them avoid such relationships of patronage. (PKA and TNC 2000a: 17)

Of primary concern was the sharp increase in the park's population of "1000% since 1930" due to high birth rates and in-migration (PKA and TNC 2000a: 67). The projected exponential growth of the human population would in turn increase terrestrial resource use (e.g. access to fresh water, cutting of fire wood and access to building materials) compromising the eco-systems within the park (ibid). Resettlement to larger islands such as Sumbawa and Flores was suggested as one way to reduce human populations in KNP with the lure of social and economic incentives.

Thus, despite extensive knowledge of the live fish trade, the poverty of fishers and the power of middlemen over residents in KNP, the Management Plan still chose to concentrate its efforts on reducing human impact on the national park, despite the fact that the islands have been populated for many centuries. In the next chapter, I attempt to examine the implications of the Management Plan and the reasons for the outrage it provoked in Labuan Bajo. I also look at how the issue has been positioned in the form of multiple storylines as mentioned by Haajer (1995) by multiple groups in order to further their own political, social and economic agendas.

Chapter 5 TNC and communities

TNC and Komodo National Park: Developing a Management Plan

The Komodo National Park is now The Conservancy's longest running marine project in Indonesia (Halim et al, 2007: 147). As mentioned in Chapter 3, The Nature Conservancy was invited by the Indonesian government to collaborate on the formulation of a management plan for Komodo National Park in 1995.

Komodo National Park is home to rich marine and terrestrial ecosystems. According to the Management Plan, in addition to terrestrial species such as the Komodo dragon and the Timor deer, the marine environment is home to more than 1000 species of fish, 260 species of reef-building coral, 70 species of sponges, 10 species of dolphin, 6 species of whales and 2 species of sea turtle (PKA and TNC 2000a: 5). The plan proposed the creation of a marine and terrestrial reserve to protect these eco systems, in particular, to maintain the quality of the habitat of the Komodo Dragon, ensure sustainable use of park resources for tourism, education and research, as well as the protection and replenishment of exploited reef fish stocks and inveterbrates (ibid: 11). This plan then was the key factor in extending the boundaries of the park to include not just the terrestrial areas of Komodo and Rinca, but also the marine environment.

Little is said in the plan about the manner in which local stakeholders and community members would be part of the implementation, since most recommendations take the form of stricter enforcement of existing regulations, new regulations on fishing methods and living patterns. From TNC's summary of stakeholder meetings from 1996 to 2003[27], the role of local stakeholders has been largely to support the management plan, as well as to convince fellow community members of its validity. Though it is not stated who exactly these 'stakeholders' are, the bulk of meetings has been more concerned with clarification with regards to the joint venture with Putri Naga Komodo, as well as calls for greater transparency in the management of the park.

In his thesis Henning Borchers makes a strong case that the Management Plan fails to not just meet, but to even recognise the livelihood realities of communities in the park (Borchers 2002). The lack of collaboration and non-participatory nature of the relationship with local communities resulted in increasingly negative interaction with the communities

[27]PKA & TNC 2003. Overview of Komodo Stakeholder Consultations, 1996 - 2003. 33 pp. <www.komodonationalpark.org>

residing in and around the park. His research on Komodo Island uncovered a considerable amount of resentment of the TNC in the Komodo National Park.

In practice, TNC has fallen for what Lowe calls the "official red herring" of the state's progressivist ideology (Lowe 2003: 255), choosing to discipline and order park residents through its coastal zonation plan, rather than address the social inequities and bureaucratic inadequacies/ loopholes that enable the trade in live fish, food fish and deer meat to occur. The heavy-handed patrolling and surveillance which TNC instigated in the park from the beginning, was directed as much towards local communities as it was towards outsiders, despite the fact that their Report and Management Plan recognised that external market forces had resulted in destructive fishing practices that were compromising park biodiversity. Furthermore, it states that:

> "Preliminary data clearly show that it is communities from outside the park that are having the most damaging impact (Management Plan Book 1 2000: 22)."

> "Primary threat comes from outside communities in Sape, South Flores and Sulawesi. Local communities pose less of a threat, since they generally use 'bagan' lift-nets that are not destructive to the coral reef ecosystem (ibid: 33)."

In a detailed report by TNC's own consultants, they suggest that recommendations at the governmental, regulatory and commercial level to regulate and enforce the trade, and also to develop mariculture industries to breed, harvest and transfer live fish in a less destructive and wasteful manner (Johannes and Riepen 1995: 76-77). However, the focus of enforcement activities have largely been on park residents through the increased regulation, restriction and prohibition of resource access and types of use. With the proposal of a coastal zonation policy, the activities of park residents were considerably curtailed. To curtail the impact of human settlement further, the proposed zonation policy (Book 1: 44) demarcated KNP into multiple zones where only certain activities would be permitted.

The coastal zonation plan for KNP divides the park into seven discrete zones, with restrictions on economic and livelihood activities in all but two zones. The park was carved up into the following zones, using GPS co-ordinates:

1. Core zone
2. Wilderness zone
3. Tourism use zone
4. Traditional use zone

5. Pelagic use zone
6. Special research and training zone
7. Traditional settlement zone

Each zone has its own set of strictly worded restrictions, where human activity if not outright banned, is strictly curtailed (KNP Coastal Zonation Information Sheet 2000:1). According to the sheet, 'zoning within the park is based on available ecological data, current understanding of conservation and ecological principles, the socio-economic and cultural needs of local communities, and feasibility" (ibid). The primary objective being to protect the marine biodiversity and prevent outside communities such as those from Sape from using destructive fishing practices. By dividing the park into a series of concentric zones, park managers were theoretically able to control the type of activity that would occur in each zone. A series of licenses would allow residents in the settlements around the park to fish unfettered, provided they do not use prohibited fishing equipment and fish only in approved zones (ibid: 45). The number and type of licenses to be issued will be decided by a marine survey of fish stocks, fishing fleets, with the consultation of village leaders (ibid).

For example, present settlements within the park are located in "traditional settlement zones", governed by a list of regulations and prohibitions pertaining to trash disposal (must be sorted into hazardous and non-hazardous waste), accommodation (no tourist accommodation allowed), water use (strictly limited), immigration (prohibited), pets (prohibited) and so on. (PKA and TNC 2000a: 50) The creation of zones around the park has also meant that fishing activity has become highly regulated for park residents, limiting their fishing grounds to "Traditional Use Zones" and "Pelagic Use Zones" (ibid: 46-49). The introduction of licences and "exclusive rights" based on quota allocations per village and negotiation between village heads, "closed seasons" and other bureaucratic regulations have now territorialized the fishing grounds within the park, complicating and politicizing the situation further.

The regulations governing each zone are wordy and unrealistic, in particular those that govern traditional settlement zones (ibid: 50). The growing human population in the park has caused concern as there is worry that it will outstrip the amount of resources within the park. Thus, there are regulations to limit the amount of in-migration as well as access to essentials such as fresh water. These regulations are piece meal directives that aim to limit human impact on the environment, rather than an organized attempt to improve the standard of living of residents so that they may participate in value added activities (such as tourism or marine product processing) and depend less directly on resource exploitation. Implicit in these directives is the idea that a rise in the standard of living and free access to resources will encourage an influx of new migrants that will further tax the national park's resources, hence

the need for control and restraint. Rather than increasing the level of education and number of opportunities for park inhabitants in the long run, TNC has focused on short run issues of in-migration and resource control.

Two of the biggest problems that face villagers is the lack of fresh water and health services. Life on these islands is difficult as fresh water and fresh food has to be purchased from nearby Labuan Bajo. Though land is suitable for agriculture, water remains a challenge. In any case, agriculture is not allowed within the park. Health services can only be found on Kampung Komodo, and even then this has been reported to be unreliable. Malaria is a perennial problem and according to the women, infant mortality is high. Almost all the women I had spoken to had lost at least one child under 2 years of age to sickness, during childbirth or through a miscarriage. Schools are poorly stocked and have few resources at their disposal. (In one school, it was hinted that the principal pocketed a large percentage of the already very small government budget allocated to the school.) The zonation plan does not provide alternatives (except for leaving the park) nor does it provide the organizational systems necessary to implement any of its regulations. The human-nature dichotomy is thus played out, pitting the welfare of humans against biodiversity through the regulation of everyday practice in space.

According to the TNC's report on socio-economic conditions of park inhabitants, 80% of the population earn a living from *bagan* fishing or lift net fishing. Statistics from the same report estimate that there are 800 bagans operating in the waters of KNP. A large majority of these *bagans* do not originate from communities living within the park. Most of them originate from Sape, Bima, as well as Labuan Bajo. There have been attempts to regulate the number of *bagans* operating in these waters. Posts have been set up in various sites on Pulau Komodo, Rinca and Padar. Captains have to report to the rangers at these posts before obtaining a pass that will allow them to fish in the park. These passes are to be presented when the boat is stopped by a patrol. Captains without passes supposedly can be arrested. Captains are obliged to provide information such as the names of their crew, place of origin, colour (for identity purposes) and make of their boats and proposed fishing ground for the night. Such information will supposedly help the KNP gather more comprehensive information about the actual numbers of fishing boats operating within the park, origin of these boats and their crew as well fishing methods used and preferred fishing areas, as well as for enforcement purposes.

Implementation

Unsurprisingly, the plan has not been easy to implement. For one, the overwhelming emphasis on enforcement has alienated local communities that have been utilising the marine resources unfettered for the past 200 years. Hostility towards these regulations seem to be on two levels. On one hand, there is resentment that marine resources that were traditionally 'theirs' have now been appropriated by the state. On the other hand, the TNC is seen as the main perpetrator in this 'theft', the PHPA, though an agent of the state, was merely a puppet of the TNC. The TNC, it seemed, had even less of a 'right' to impose these sanctions. Some respondents saw themselves as being another project to attract donors by the TNC to enrich itself. As one respondent on Kukusan put it, "THEY need US to survive. Who will give them money if they don't have this project? WE don't need them."

As noted by one villager from Kampung Komodo, "They are trying to kill us, not help us. They are just waiting for us to die… Animals are more important than people." In effect, the zonation plan penalizes existing communities in the park. This view was strengthened when in 2002, it was reported that unarmed fishermen had been shot and killed by these patrol boats. The local communities were outraged by this excessive use of force and this became the symbol of TNC's uncompassionate 'nature before people' approach to managing KNP.

On a day to day basis, the larger issue that concern park residents is the regulation of fishing practice within the park. Despite the intricate wording and obvious pains to clearly define permissible activity in each zone, feasibility really means convenience in mapping the precise boundaries on paper. In reality, these boundaries were not at all feasible in terms of enforcement or implementation due to lack of capacity by the TNK coupled by the sheer size of the park. More disturbingly, members of the local fishing community remained in the dark about the precise nature of these restrictions. During my visit to Pulau Seraya Kecil in 2003, P, a bagan fisherman, asked E, an employee of TNC, about these new rules as he was worried that he might unintentionally fish in the 'wrong' zone. He had heard about these new rules but had not been given any details about the rules and how these rules were to be enforced in reality. He had heard that fishermen were now required to present themselves at the ranger posts located on various islands in the park to get permits to fish in the designated areas. P might also have been concerned by the possible consequences of encountering a patrol if caught fishing in prohibited waters.

When I spoke with P later in the year, he mentioned that a patrol of rangers had assaulted a relative when his bagan was stopped for inspection[28]. I had heard that the ranger in

[28] One such instance of police brutality was reported in local newspapers when a captain and crew of a dive boat from Bali were beaten up by BRIMOB officers (Brigade Mobil, a paramilitary arm of the

question had been subject to disciplinary action from his commanding officer and was assured by an informant in TNC that such assaults were not routine. However, such reports of heavy handedness by enforcement personnel had already done its damage and further confirmed P's skepticism about the true motives of TNC and its conservation measures.

That aside, P pointed out, enforcement of this policy was unfeasible from his point of view as a fisherman, on several accounts. Firstly, the zones were not physically marked in the sea, thus nobody really knew if they had strayed into a 'forbidden' zone, or indeed what 'zone' they were in. These fishermen did not possess or use GPS or even maps to navigate within the KNP. Secondly, the logistics of getting a boat to land to report to the ranger post is complicated as it would depend on navigating against tides and currents. Valuable time would be lost. Furthermore, as ranger posts were located few and far between, the distance fishermen had to travel from the fishing grounds to these ranger posts would entail additional fuel costs, which would have to be borne by the fishermen alone. Given that there are only 2 patrol boats out at any time, most fishermen chose not to report to these ranger posts. In fact, many may have been simply unaware that these regulations existed.

P suggested that it would instead be easier if patrol boats approached fishing boats to check for permits as their boats were smaller and faster. Patrols could then radio back to ranger posts to see if these boats were indeed registered to fish in KNP waters. P was also frustrated by the lack of transparency and at the slow speed at which such information was being disseminated. E, an employee of TNC, assured that he would get members of the community outreach team to elaborate on the details.

A week later, two members of the community outreach team did indeed pay a visit to P. The meeting was held at P's house and lasted about 30 minutes, consisting mostly of pleasantries. When P finally asked about the implementation of the zonation policy, H and W produced English pamphlets of the Zonation Information Sheet, illustrating the various zones. Eventually, what transpired was that the 'rule of thumb' for fishermen using traditional methods such as the bagan were allowed to fish anywhere within the park as long as it was 'deep enough'. H and W promised to ask another colleague of theirs from PHPA to speak to P because they felt that he would be more 'knowledgeable' and 'helpful'. They left shortly after. P was clearly frustrated as he commented later that "if it takes 2 weeks to tell me how this zonation policy works, how long is it going to take to tell the other 800 fishermen that fish in KNP?"

Indonesian police force) from a KNP patrol boat when they brought tourists into the park waters to dive (Fajar Bali 26//11/02).

The lack of communication about this newest policy also seems to have to do with jurisdiction issues between TNC and PHPA. After adverse publicity from shooting incidents involving TNC commissioned patrol boats and fishermen from Sape, TNC has maintained consistently that it has no jurisdiction to make or enforce laws within the park, thus in this instance, preferring to defer to PHPA staff (how never came in the end) to provide information about these law under their jurisdiction.

The feasibility of the coastal zonation policy was again called into question by fishermen from Pulau Kukusan. According to Z, this policy was not feasible as fish are a mobile and seasonal resource. "Even if we are allowed to fish in a specific zone, what is the point when there are no fish for 6 months of the year in that zone? How are we to survive the rest of the year if we are only allowed to fish in one area?" Thus, there is little incentive (or sense) in forcing fishermen to keeping to these zones, since they restrict their catch and income. As shown earlier, KNP has also done little to facilitate the process.

Interestingly, fishermen could not agree on the level of fish stocks in KNP. P confided that it was getting increasingly difficult to fish as not only had fish stocks diminished but an increasing number of bagans from nearby Sape were coming into KNP to fish. Fish stocks in the Straits of Sape had been depleted severely in the last 10 years. The number of bagans being commissioned in KNP villages had also increased as the buyers were now coming to Labuan Bajo to buy fish. Depleting fish stocks were being depleted further by an increasing number of users.

Z and P, however, denied that there was a problem[29]. To them, the problem was the control over access to resources. They claimed that fish stocks were the same as 10 years ago and it was actually the recent imposition of controls that meant harvests had to be curtailed. Unsurprisingly, they were outspoken in their displeasure about TNC patrols. Another fisher, L suggested that fishermen would gladly take up the duty of patrolling surrounding waters if their fuel costs were covered. To Z, the ownership and management of resources should be the responsibility of the communities in KNP, not of "city people who know nothing about fishing [and] who have never lived their lives by the sea".

Expansion of the Park and the Problem of Compensation

[29] Majors (in press) discusses a very similar type of disagreement about whether or not fish stocks were diminishing or not in Wakatobi Park in southern Sulawesi. He attributes this to indigenous belief systems about good and bad luck, as well as different techniques of fishing.

According to the Management Plan (PKA and TNC 2000a,b), prior to 1998, Komodo National Park occupied a total 1817 square kilometres with a population of 3267 people, with another 16 816 people living in fishing villages surrounding the park (PKA and TNC 2000b: 7). Within the park, Kampung Komodo on Pulau Komodo, Kampung Rinca and Kampung Kerora on Pulau Rinca, had a total population of 2310 individuals in 1996 (Bakar 1996:23). In 1998, a proposal to extend park boundaries increased the terrestrial area of KNP by 25 square kilometres and its marine area by 1479 square kilometres to a total of 2321 square kilometres, increasing the number of settlements within KNP and its buffer zone to include the populations on Pulau Mesa and Pulau Papagaran. (PKA and TNC 2000a: 40)

By extending park boundaries to include marine areas, local marine communities who were formerly unaffected by national park regulations are now increasingly subject to state mechanisms of control and surveillance. Though it is questionable whether the state is physically able to enforce these boundaries in reality, territorial domination by the state means marine resources are now property of the state, indigenous concepts of property and access are now subsumed under these territorial controls.

Conversely, since boundaries by definition identify limits, rather than individual elements, communities will have a difficult time claiming compensation on the various items and property lost through the boundary setting exercise. In the case of Pulau Rinca the problem of compensation arises when remuneration is demanded from the national park in terms of property lost, rather than of space lost. Space itself was not considered a commodity, rather, the items that occupied the space— fruit trees, buffalo, horses, vegetable gardens etc. were considered of value. Thus, though the space might be small, the value of the elements within it could be considerable. The problem thus is putting a value on items that were never previously commoditized.

The case of Bapak Steph and his horses present an interesting example of how national park creation as well as subsequent park policies have affected land ownership and the way of life on Rinca. He has been seeking compensation for the loss of his horses since Rinca was declared a national park, a matter his father had pursued continuously till his death in 1984. Bapak Steph's father was posted to Rinca by the central government in 1949 to open a primary school in Kampong Kerora. According to Bapak Steph's father, there had been people living on Rinca since the 1920s. The horses had been brought to Rinca from Warloka as dowry by one of the villages for his prospective wife's family. However, the family declined the gifts. Being fisherfolk, they could see no use for the horses. The six horses had been purchased at great expense and could not be returned. The desperate man appealed to Bapak Steph's father to buy these horses from him so he could recoup his losses. The village headman also offered him land to keep and water these horses. Bapak Steph's accepted the

village headman's offer and took the horses. Bapak Steph also hired several villagers to look after his horses. The land he was given had a well (or spring) where the horses could drink and a total area of 25 000 hectares. The horses thrived and by 1965, the population of horses had swelled to about 60. With Indonesian independence, Rinca was declared part of the state and shortly after, part of the komodo national park.

With the declaration of Rinca as a national park, the park authorities claimed that all the land, with the exception of the land the village was standing on, now belonged to the state. Villagers lost all the land they had previously cultivated with coconut, jackfruit, citrus fruit (*jeruk*) and teak. They could not even harvest the wood from the mature teak trees that they had been growing for 40 years. The water source on Bapak Steph's land was sealed, the park authorities claiming that they wanted to build pipes so the whole village could benefit from it. (However, so far, only Loh Liang benefits from water on Rinca.) This made it impossible for the horses to be confined and they were released to forage on their own. Many buffalo were also left to roam free as they were no longer needed to plough the fields. Some villagers wanted to slaughter the animals for meat later on but were told that these animals were now part of the national park and according to national park regulations, no 'wildlife' could be harmed.

According to Indonesian law, people living within the park have the right to use the natural resources. Park authorities were obliged to share information and co-operate with the local people. Local people were also entitled to compensation for all property lost to the national park. According to Bapak Steph, should any of these conditions fail to be met, the establishment of the park fails to be legal. Bapak Steph's father has sought compensation for lost land and horses for more than two decades. Other villagers are also seeking compensation for lost land and for the feral buffalo. They are apparently awaiting the capture of all the heads of buffalo so that a final account can be made. There are also 31 people who own land on Rinca who have gone uncompensated.

Before his father passed away, he had actually written to various levels of government stating his claim for compensation. His extensive research revealed that in the legislation for the Komodo National Park, only Pulau Komodo had been designated for conservation efforts. Indeed Pulau Rinca and Padar were not included in the proposed area at all. Bapak Steph's father kept extensive notes on his research and each meeting with local officials were minuted carefully. Inaction at a local government level left him feeling extremely frustrated. This culminated in three trips to Jakarta to meet the director general of the Department of Forestry (PHPA) himself, Widodo. His father's claims were finally acknowledged to be legitimate and negotiations on the precise amount for compensation were to proceed. Widodo requested that the issue not be exposed to the mass media, presumably so

that the issue could be settled quietly. Bapak Steph pointed out that if the issue was revealed, it would mean that PHPA had actually broken the law to acquire the land and would have to be punished in court. Meanwhile, back in Labuan Bajo, the local PHPA authorities sought to settle the issue, hoping that a symbolic Rp 5 million would be sufficient. Bapak Steph was offended because the negotiations promised did not take place. The approach the PHKA had taken also offended him—it was as if he was being offered bride price (*mas kawin*), with the presentation of wine (*arak*), a gold ring, amongst other traditional Javanese wedding gifts. Bapak Steph was upset because he felt he was not being taken seriously. Furthermore, these offerings were part of Javanese culture, not even Manggarai culture. The last straw was that it was not even the PHPA who had made the offering but the district office (*camat).* It seemed that the local politician was hoping to get electorate support for being the person who 'settled' the issue.

The longer such outstanding issues remain unsettled increases the probablility that claimants such as Bapak Steph will lose out in in the long run. However, growing awareness about the profitability of tourism, in particular a drive towards resort tourism means that the looming threat of further economic marginalization might be imminent when even significant claims such as Bapak Steph's remain unresolved. This territorialization of the park might have deeper implications for local communities in the long run, especially for issues like land tenure and property rights.

Conflict, Violence and the Dragon Princess of Komodo

Substantial debate surrounded the implementation of the plan that was designed by TNC to 'collaborate' in the management of the park. Much discussion was generated due to the lack of transparency of the planning process. Local groups were most concerned about the partnership that TNC proposed in the management of the park with a Malaysian businessman; the plan was to create a 'joint venture', and this joint venture was to form a private limited company by the name of PT Putri Naga Komodo- The Dragon Princess of Komodo Pte. Ltd. The circumstances of this partnership was shrouded in secrecy and though ostensibly the company was repeatedly declared as non-profit, many suspected that this partnership was a vehicle for the businessman to gain a foothold in the tourism industry in Labuan Bajo. As mentioned earlier, stakeholder consultations held by TNC during the period of 1996 and 2003 show that concern for the lack of transparency about this collaboration was raised frequently (PKA & TNC 2003) .

However, the shooting of two unarmed fishermen from Sape on the 11th of November 2002 by a TNC sponsored patrol team (Gaung NTB 12/11/02) provoked strong reactions

from communities in Sape and Labuan Bajo and catapulted the issues of TNC's capability to manage KNP into local, regional and international press. TNC's office in Sape was destroyed by almost a hundred angry villagers from Desa Bajo Pulo, Labuan and Soro. The Sape harbour was also blocked by angry villagers demanding that action be taken against the shooters (Gaung NTB 21/11/02). One respondent noted that the consequences of this blockage were felt in Labuan Bajo when salt from Bima could not leave and many households in Labuan Bajo could not salt their catch for the next few days.

The public outrage generated by these demonstrations prompted TNC to send a delegation of "community representatives" to Jakarta to show that TNC's presence in KNP was still supported by local communities. The leaders of the Association of Tour Guides in Manggarai (*Himpunan Pariwisata Indonesia, Kabupaten Manggarai/* HPI),Self-Help Group of Labuan Bajo (*Kelompok Swadaya Masyarakat Labuan Bajo/* KSM) and the Tourism Interest Group (*Kelompok Peduli Pariwisata/* KPP) were sent to Jakarta by TNC to meet with the Minister of Forestry. These groups later denounced the actions of their leaders, leading newspapers to conclude that this trip was another manipulation tactic by TNC to engineer the perception of support for the collaboration between TNC and KNP (Fajar Bali 2/12/02, Flores Pos 3/12/02).

On 12 December 2002, the Director General of the Department of Forestry and Nature Conservation (PHKA) arrived in Labuan Bajo for an open dialogue session pertaining to the issue of the TNC-KNP collaboration. He was met in Labuan Bajo with demonstrations by groups against TNC's presence in the park, numerous posters and banners proclaiming "Reject TNC's version of collaboration" and demonstrators chanting " Don't sell Komodo National Park, we reject the collaboration" (Flores Pos 13/12/02). The newspaper report notes that there were no similar demonstrations of *support* for the collaboration. Opposers of the collaboration had six points of protest, namely that

1. the collaboration with the private company Putri Naga Komodo be removed from the management plan;
2. the rights to and authority of the management of KNP be retained by the park authority, Balai Taman Nasional Komodo, and that the skill and technical level of TNK be improved;
3. TNC is questioned about the progress of its programme for the past 7 years in KNP, in particular investigated for the many cases of the shooting of fishermen in the park;
4. TNC stops the practice of manipulation, lies, fragmentation and harassment of the local communities;
5. alternative methods of management such as the one in Bunakken National Park be used in KNP;

6. the Ministry of Forestry really take note of the aspirations and concerns of the people when making decisions (ibid).

However, this "open" dialogue session was heavily guarded, with a restricted "guest list". Many community members who had wanted to voice their concerns and grievances such as Pak Steph Syukur and his claims on Rinca, were turned away by security forces. Apparently the park authority did not allow the public to attend this dialogue session unless they had been issued invitations (Flores Pos 16/12/02). This was yet another sore point with many local people and in their eyes, further evidence that TNC was clearly trying to misrepresent public opinion of the collaboration.

Support for TNC's management plan was particularly crucial at this point because according to its director of the Asia Pacific Coastal and Marine Programme, Dr Rili Djohani, the management collaboration between KNP and TNC was till December 2002. When interviewed by local newspaper, Flores Post, she said that the Management Plan had not been approved by the central government at that point, despite approval from the Bupati, head of the local parliament in Manggarai and community groups. She cited support from from approximately 25 other groups from the islands and Labuan Bajo, HPI, KSM, youth groups and kader konservasi? amongst them (Flores Pos 17/12/02). However, despite the demonstrations in Labuan Bajo, the director general publicly declared his support for the collaboration and believed that this would be a good model for the rest of Indonesia to follow (ibid).

The show of official support for TNC-KNP collaboration galvanised much public sentiment that the central government had little interest in community aspirations, and that TNC's promise of funding was more important to the regional and local government than its plan's impact on local livelihoods. Local NGOs who had been active in opposing the collaboration prior to the shootings, now laden with new ammunition, continued to campaign against the collaboration in various forms, forming alliances with national NGOs.

The death of the fishermen in the course of enforcement of park regulations caused much concern. The tactics were decried as being typical of those used during the New Order (Fajar Bali 16/11/02). As these patrols were used to protect the flora and fauna of the park in the name of conservation, the report felt that TNC should take *moral* responsibility as the shootings were in the name of conservation. The article concluded if TNC continued to be implicated in such encounters, that they should be chased out of the park (ibid). In February 2003, another two fishermen were shot at by patrols for illegally taking corals and fish from the park. Since 1982, twenty-six fishermen have died in the park- twelve were shot by security forces, including the two fishermen from Sape in November 2002. TNC was criticized for supporting enforcement patrols with a known history of brutality. TNC was also

criticised for not allowing room for dialogue and bribing selected villagers with economic incentives for their support where they wanted to carry out conservation programmes. Traditional fishers were being penalised by park regulations and to compete for livelihoods with other fishers from outside the park, were being forced to use destructive methods of fishing. (Kompas, 7/4/03)

The debate quickly evolved into a question of morality about the human cost of conservation. In a commentary piece, journalist Agust G Thuru questioned if the price of human life should be more important than the lobster trade in Manggarai, arguing that human life cannot be commoditised unlike the rights to the islands, Komodo dragons that have been valued for trillions of rupiah. He argues that if trafficking in human life carries a heavy sentence in human rights courts, thus murder, for whatever reason must also be heavily punished. However, in KNP this is not the case as it seems to be "a state within a state" with its own laws, where the body count has sharply increased since TNC arrived in the park and such offences go unpunished. He concludes life in Komodo is cheap, to be precise- as he titles his article- "91 lobsters for the price of the lives of 2 Sape fishermen". (Fajar Bali, date unknown).

His article sums up the views of many respondents I spoke to in the course of my fieldwork. Many people mentioned that human rights should not be compromised in the name of conservation and this case was a clear infringement of Human Rights[30]. The contemporary human rights perspective states that all people are entitled to equal rights in their communities, in particular, people should have agency in the face of power. Briefly, the Western[31] concept of Human Rights is built upon the notion of human dignity where a utilitarian value cannot be put on human life. These rights are inalienable and thus must take priority over all other moral, political and economic goals (ibid: 26).

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[30] Human Rights discourse is a powerful ideology in Indonesia, the use and abuse of power being closely linked to New Order government of Suharto (see Vatikiotis 1993, Anwar 2005). The emergence of popular movements demanding decentralization and democratization in 1997-1999 resulted in the central government granting regions local autonomy under law no. 22/1999. Decentralization was synonymous with the expectation of better government, better public services, greater prosperity, more justice and equality, all of which were lacking during the Suharto regime (Pratikno 2005: 21).

[31] Sachs examines the genealogy of human rights rhetoric in the West and its evolution into international politics, with the development of laws and courts to address the atrocities during the Second World War and subsequent acts of war, especially the Cold War (Sachs 2003:26-29).

Sachs observes that increasingly development practices are being replaced by a rights- centred approach that addresses the root of poverty as a lack of power, rather than a failure to fulfil basic needs (ibid: 31). This is especially crucial for ecological subsistence, where Sach notes

> "The reference to rights- even human rights- strengthens the position of the poor, since rights can be claimed before courts and are not chargeable. Rights generate duties, needs and… active solidarity. Anyone who speaks of rights asserts that certain institutions and authorities have an obligation to give an account of themselves; the language of rights strengthens the power of the marginalized (ibid)."

More importantly, a human rights approach to the issues facing KNP empowers local communities with the legitimacy to act against powerful institutions, namely TNC, the Ministry of Forestry and PHKA. It also provides them with a common platform to access resources that were previously unavailable. Rosse and Sikkin discuss this "boomerang" pattern of influence when local group bypass the repressive state in search of partnerships with international allies to apply external pressure on the state through partnerships with national opposition groups, NGOs and social movements with access to transnational networks and INGOs. Such allies bring access to networks that provide resources such as money and political leverage, more importantly, amplifying the demands of domestic groups, enlarging space for negotiation before echoing these demands back to the local arena (Rosse and Sikkink 1999: 18).

The human rights story-line has been well used in the debate against TNC presence in the park. The use of this common platform enables local NGOs to form partnerships with national NGOs to access the legal, technical and political capabilities these NGOs possess. National NGOs also tap local expertise and contacts to lend support to larger causes and campaigns; the case of KNP has been used in several of WALHI's ongoing campaigns. Local NGOs in Labuan Bajo are loosely aligned, often forming coalitions to protest against common interests (such as to demonstrate at the Director General's visit to Labuan Bajo in December 2002). One such NGO, the Komodo Watch was part of an advocacy team sent to Jakarta to query KNP management tactics and the shootings by WALHI, Indonesia's largest conglomerate of environmental NGOs in March 2003. This team comprised of other local and national environmental NGOs, as well as human rights NGOs. The team was concerned with bringing the parties responsible for the shootings to justice, eliminating the proposed expansion of the KNP, as well as urging the government to reject TNC's presence in the park

due to its heavy handed and opaque management style[32]. WALHI also has ties with the Fisherman's Solidarity Group (NUANSA- *Himpunan Nelayan Bersatu*), whose head, Florianus Adu is currently part of WALHI's Working Group Conservancy for People[33].

However, the use of the human rights story-line also was used to further political agendas of various leaders, who believed that a large number of sympathisers would also mean a good pool of voters in local political elections. As one of the most vocal opponents to the collaboration, Florianus Adu, is also the head of the organization for community advocacy (*Lembaga Pemberdayaan Advokasi Masyarakat Labuan Bajo/* LPAM) and leader of the anti-TNC demonstrations during the director-general's visit. He was also campaigning actively for the rights of fishermen in the park, forming NUANSA. However, respondents I spoke to viewed his goals as not quite altruistic. Adu had managed to gain the support of several powerful businessmen in the islands and was being funded by them to campaign for the rights of fishermen in KNP. One respondent believed that he was actually using the support to gain a foothold into politics, his real agenda being securing a position in the district parliament (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*). Adu was not a fisherman or a resident in KNP. He was a Manggaraian from Labuan Bajo and the son of a prominent local. Ironically, Adu had sought employment with TNC but he did not have the relevant qualifications and was not hired, becoming eventually, one of TNC's most vocal attackers.

During my fieldwork in 2003, many respondents I spoke to felt indifferent towards the renewed interest in the 'plight' of KNP. Many of them distrusted all these "LSM-LSM" (*Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat* or Self help Groups/ NGOs). Several respondents mentioned they felt that these organizations caused trouble, as they would often start demonstrations over various issues pertaining to TNC and its presence in the park. What respondents found especially discouraging was that many of the 'protesters' were paid by LSMs to demonstrate. During my fieldwork in October 2003, villagers from Pulau Batu, a small island off Pulau Papagarang had been forced to leave the island[34] sparking several demonstrations in Labuan Bajo. According to eye witnesses, a demonstration outside TNC office was believed to have been instigated by an outsider (i.e. a non resident) working for a major NGO. This

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[32] For fuller details on WALHI's Conservation Areas and Conflict campaign, see http://www.walhi.or.id/kampanye/hutan/konservasi/reform_huk_advocasi_masy_kom_sp_120303, see also the write up on the website of Down to Earth, an international campaign for ecological justice project based in UK http://dte.gn.apc.org/57Kom.htm).

[33] See WALHI's homepage http://www.walhi.or.id/kampanye/hutan/konservasi/050714_wgcop_ps/

[34] This was initially assumed to be due to TNC but later believed to be by the district office (camat) acting independently.

'provocateur' was believed to have paid fishermen from nearby islands Rp 50 000 each to sign a petition to oust TNC from the park and protest outside its office. The demonstrators had also been promised lunch and that their fuel costs from their village in KNP would be covered. Other fishermen thought they were genuinely campaigning against what had happened on Pulau Batu, however, they left when they found out that the demonstration was not about Pulau Batu per se. Some were disgusted when they found out that others had been paid to demonstrate and left. Come lunch time, many left the demonstration site, as there was no sign of lunch and or payment.

In this way, the story-line has not really empowered local communities in terms of their rights to access resources, though it has brought much national and international attention to the park. Locals I spoke to in Laban Bajo felt that such activities bred hostility between residents as resentment would build against those who could be 'bought', be it by TNC or other organizations. It also fragmented the solidarity of the communities as members felt they would never really know the real agendas of campaigners or campaigning organisations.

The Human Rights story-line can also be alienating as it positions local communities as powerless and helpless, in need of external help to get their rights recognised. Where TNC portrays fishers as lowly educated and ignorant, the human rights story line casts them in the role of victims. Furthermore, with the focus on holding TNC accountable for the dismal state of affairs in KNP, the larger issue of intensifying competition for fish stocks and loss of property rights to park expansion (and land speculators in Labuan Bajo[35]) takes a back seat.

In an interview with a village head and his brother, they felt there was a need to reclaim their identity, by rejecting the story line of 'ignorance' by TNC. The storyline of their search (or re-affirmation) of identity was also important in the face of the creeping threat of materialism that was spreading in the park from tourism, or unscrupulous opponents of TNC or from TNC itself. Their village in particular has been particularly vocal about its opposition to TNC's presence in the park. J and H maintain that sea people are self-sufficient, hardworking people as sea people are proud to live by the sea, a lifestyle that requires much skill and intelligence to survive. The introduction of terms such as "lacking" (*kurang*) and "poor/ miserable" (*miskin*), they believe, erode the sense of pride and identity of sea people,

[35] In April 2006, Pulau Bidadari, an island off Labuan Bajo and a popular recreation spot for locals, was sold to an English couple for 495 million rupiah (Kompas 24/2/2006). This is an alarming development as many of the land claims within the park and Labuan Bajo are traditional ones, with little or no documentation. As many claimants cannot afford or do not know of the notarization process, land claims are becoming an increasingly contentious issue in Labuan Bajo.

as it focuses on their lack of material comforts. J, in particular is afraid that this will cause young people to focus only on money and neglect their obligations and customs to their families and to the village. Recently, a school was built on the island, however, J, finds secular education lacking, favouring a religious education which instils (Islamic) values in the students.

> " Government schools teach children about reward and punishment only. Many children do not like to go to school because they get punished, so they stay at home. What they study is also not relevant to them here, how many of them will go to high school even?... Some of them help their fathers fishing at night, so they skip school because they are tired… That's why some children don't like school and don't come… Their grandparents often are left to discipline them, but it's not effective. So their biggest influence is their friends… Even the women can't teach their children much as they don't have much guidance and are often helping their husbands. There is no women's group here to discuss such things…Parents here teach nothing to their children… Religion is not followed because of the work of the fishermen who fish at night and sleep in the day, therefore most of them do not pray in the day or have the time to teach their children.,, When there is a school, parents forget the need for strong family socialization… they forget the importance of *adat*… Money becomes the most important thing."

J was particularly concerned that there was growing materialism amongst the young in the village today, some of whom go into debt or become alcoholics. He believed the solution was an Islamic education and during my visit, was searching for a female religious teacher to come to the newly built school. (The previous male religious teacher had an affair with one of the village girls and was sacked.) The idea was that a female teacher would also be able to guide the women in the village, who in turn can be better role models for their children. He believed that students grounded in religious values will be better able to withstand the 'bad influences' that come with Labuan Bajo being a tourist town. I asked him why an Islamic identity, rather than a Bajo identity? He says that many of the old traditions have been lost and very few are practised any more. Furthermore, not all the villagers are Bajo and Islam was a better unifying factor as almost all of the villagers are Muslim. J believed that a strong identity was the key to empowering the village. (However, he also mentioned that nine families had left because of differences in opinion on this issue.) In co-operation with local NGO, ASPRIDA, there were aspirations that the village would be able to market their island as an eco-tourism and research destination for divers and scientists, improving the standard of living of the village, a plan very similar to TNC's aspirations for the park. However, if this

could be achieved independently, it would be a symbol of resistance to TNC's management in KNP. In 2003, this village was working with ASPRIDA, a local NGO to build capacity.

ASPRIDA, a Ruteng based organization, was run by a group of full time activists[36] who were also heavily involved in other activist and political associations. The organization was also concerned with the protection and recognition of rights of local communities, as well as providing some technical assistance to local communities hoping to manage their own projects. The primary goal of ASPRIDA was to empower local communities to conceptualize and manage their own projects based on the real needs of the community, rather than to be subject to the agendas and plans of 'outside' forces. It was in this capacity that they lent their assistance to the village head of Pulau Kukusan in KNP.

J mentioned that they had chosen to work with ASPRIDA as he did not believe in working with big NGOs. He believed that NGOs that had a lot of money must be taking money from the poor and thus, corrupt. J and H believed that villages had to stand up for themselves and source for their own sources of funding in order to show TNC that they were not needed in KNP. Speaking to a respondent from ASPRIDA, I discovered J was also running for a position in the district parliament in 2004. I am guessing that ASPRIDA, with its many connections to political parties in Ruteng, would have provided J a good means to network. In 2005, according to another informant, ASPRIDA was no longer working with this village as village leaders "had their own ideas of what they want". ASPRIDA itself was no longer active as many of its members were working for political parties in the lead up to the selection of candidates for the elections of regional heads in 2006.

Conclusion

Locals thus find themselves entangled in the storylines woven around their perceived position within the KNP debate which are then used to mobilize popular support for multiple agendas. Villager such as J and H have to come up with alternative storylines of identity that are familiar to their fellow villagers in their attempt to resist TNC's storyline of local's ignorance of conservation, whilst generating solidarity for their own political gains. The attraction of a strengthened Islamic identity is also powerful in the light of recent world events, in particular the unilateral decision by America to invade Iraq in March 2003, in some way mirroring the

[36] By 'full time' activists, I mean that activism took up the bulk of their time. Some were employed in a formal capacity by the (mostly political) organizations they were affiliated to but most considered activism their primary occupation, falling back on harvests from their share of agricultural land for subsistence.

American NGO's actions in the park. Issues of identity are thus relatively new to the struggle of storylines. Despite the diversity of park residents within KNP, the development of identities based on residence, ethnicity or religion was unnecessary in the absence of the storyline of an external threat, be it from TNC, NGOs or other more nebulous forces such as materialism. Thus the storyline of identity is a seen as a tacit form of resistance and rallying point for solidarity for many actors who use the park debate as a vehicle in achieving other goals.

In this chapter, I have examined the problems surrounding the conceptualization and subsequent implementation of the Management Plan in Komodo National Park. TNC's wilful ignorance and reluctance to fully engage communities has resulted in an ugly backlash of public sentiment when its patrol shot two fishermen in November 2002. However, I have attempted to show the ways that this shooting was crucial in drawing national and international attention to the situation in KNP, through the use of a human rights storyline. I also show that community interests can also be fragmented as storylines are also used by members of the community to mobilize support for their own political agendas. Community solidarity is thus fragmented, and in the end, the situation of communities in TNC does not improve as the actual issues of depleting fish stocks, outstanding claims and lack of financial institutions are not addressed, as most storylines are focussed in garnering support for the ousting of TNC from the park. So even with this heightened interest in the conflict that faces the communities KNP, it remains to be seen if there will be any concrete positive improvement for the bulk of the people eking out a living in the seas of KNP.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

In this thesis I have attempted to present a case of conservation management in a national park that has been very controversial in the late 20th and early 21st century. Over the past decade conservation is being discussed as a matter of increasing urgency.

I have attempted to provide a holistic account of the situation in Komodo National Park using a diversity of approaches under the broad umbrella of politic ecology (Bryant and Bailey 1997: 23-26)- looking at a specific environmental problem, its discourse development, the capitalist relations that frame the socio-economic characteristics of the communities, and the distinct aims and interests of actors involved. Drawing from political economy, I also attempt to show how the economic and political interests of developed countries continue to eclipse those of developing ones such as Indonesia through financial aid.

As a starting point, I deconstruct the specific environmental problem of biodiversity loss. In chapter two, I attempted to show that recent attempts at creating Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDP) have failed due to the basic assumption that biodiversity loss is a direct result of resource exploitation by local communities. The use of biodiversity discourse continues to prevail as its networks of international NGOs, scientists and consultants, continue to couch the issue of biodiversity as a matter of neutral scientific fact, requiring urgent action at any cost, simultaneously devolving management of biodiversity resources from the state. In chapter three, I show that environmental funds such as the Global Environment Facility undermined any real drive to create a more equitable conservation paradigm, as accountability is ultimately to treasuries in the World Bank and donor nations, who still continue to consume the bulk of natural resources in the world.

Despite being a conservation heavyweight, The Nature Conservancy seems to ignore this fundamental link between the inequitable consumption of natural resources in developed countries and the continued loss of biological diversity in developing countries, instead choosing to focus on expanding their ecological fiefdoms in developing countries, implying that it is local communities that biodiversity has to be saved from. In Komodo National Park, TNC has implemented their plans without proper collaboration with local communities, and in fact made members of the local communities appear to be the criminals in the destruction of the environment.

Though community complexities in biodiversity conservation projects have been discussed extensively, it is also important to note that resistance to conservation projects is equally fragmented. In chapter four, the power relations within the communities in KNP were the key to understanding resource allocation within the park and the more pressing underlying problem of commercial fishing. Chapter five illustrates how a vocal minority mobilised the

discourse of human rights violation to ostensibly denounce TNC management tactics, while advancing their political agendas and protecting their economic interests. The locals attempted to show that they have their own agenda for conservation, and this needs to be freed from the 'eco-imperial' control of international conservation organizations. Rallying around ideas of 'indigenous rights', and 'human rights violations', local communities attempt, in their use of various 'story lines', to turn the tables on hard line conservation organization tactics, implicating them, instead, as the 'criminals'. By utilizing the networks of both local and international NGOs to make their objections heard, they were able to garner sufficient resources to draw attention to the fracas in KNP. The voices of the majority of residents in the park, who suffer the brunt of conservation regulation, however, remain silent and unrepresented due to their marginal economic position[37].

Conservation programmes will continue to face similar problems as long as storylines about biodiversity conservation continue to place blame solely on the shoulders of developing countries and its peoples. Communities will continue to aspire to improving their standard of living and restricting their development is a myopic and spurious solution to larger environmental issues. In this light, there can be no real 'partnership' in conservation as long as biodiversity continues to be a storyline to further greater economic or political agendas, whilst ignoring larger economic pressures.

Biodiversity conservation measures should not be conceptualized as localized solutions such as protected areas, rather it is biodiversity *consumption* that should be fully traced and understood, showing the flow of resources between developed and developing world whilst taking into account the political economy of debt that has cornered developing countries into focusing on primary industries. Indonesia, one of the most debt stressed countries in the world, is most in need of hard currency export revenues, and until it can resolve its financial obligations to donor nations, it will continue exploiting its natural resources in its 'last great places' to service its debts and maintain its balance of payments.

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[37] However, that is not to say that there is no resistance by subordinate groups. Low profile forms of resistance such as rumour, gossip and euphemisms were rife. Such symbolic defiance is 'prudent by design, unobtrusive and veiled… any public defiance of the material of the symbolic order. When, however the pressure rises or when there are weaknesses to the 'retaining wall' holding it back, escalation results…' (Scott 1991: 18) In the case of KNP, this esclation has occurred in the form of demonstrations, public confrontations, destruction of public / private property and personal attacks.

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