

Claiming the Grounds for Reform: Agrarian and Environmental Movements in Indonesia

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This essay examines the convergences, tensions and mutual influences of agrarian and environmental movements in Indonesia and their connections to transnational movements under state-led development and neoliberal governance regimes. The authors argue that environmental movements of the last quarter of the twentieth century affected the strategies, struggles, mutual relations with, and public discourses of resurgent agrarian movements in diverse ways. Environmental movements had significant influences on national policy, law and practice within a decade of their emergence under the state-led development regime of President Suharto. Environmental activists used the appearance of technical 'apolitical' concerns to their advantage. They mobilized at multiple scales, targeting laws and other institutions of state power at the same time as organizing the grassroots. The repression of the Suharto regime forced agrarian reform activists underground, while environmental issues were mainstreamed. Agrarian movements in Indonesia today, under a decentralized regime dominated by neoliberal policies, have faced new opportunities and constraints due to national and transnational influences of environmental and agrarian reform discourses and networks. We show how these influences have changed the political fields within which Indonesian agrarian movement groups operate: forming, shifting and struggling over critical alliances.

Keywords: agrarian movements, environmental movements, agrarian politics, environmental politics, Indonesian movements

INTRODUCTION

This essay argues that the trajectories and strategies of 'new' agrarian movements need to be understood in relation to those of environmental movements and the positioning and power relations of both sets of movements within shifting political economic conjunctures. We focus on the alliances and divergences between movements in Indonesia and how these have changed under transformed and

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transformative political economic circumstances since the 1970s when the modern 'environmental movement' began. Indonesia is an interesting case to reflect on broader trends, as it helps demonstrate that these shifting alliances and conflicts do not derive from transnational forces alone. Rather, we suggest that they depend as well on the temporal and political economic origins and histories of the respective movements, on the types of land contested, on the politics of access to those lands and on the emergence of what Hajer (1993, 1995) has called 'discourse coalitions', that dominate discursive spaces. Going beyond this view of discourse as discursive space and into the realm of practice and institutions, we also examine the articulations of discursive and institutional practices of government and non-government, transnational, national and grassroots organizations involved in Indonesian agrarian and environmental struggles and movements.

These shifting coalitions across environmental and agrarian movements, and indigenous peoples' organizations with interests that might articulate with either or both, help us further understand Christodolou's (1990, 112) thesis that 'agrarian reform is the offspring of agrarian conflict'. Specifically, we argue that the forms coalitions take in the contexts of particular agrarian conflicts have lingering effects, even when movement groups move on and follow new, more separate trajectories. The diverse effects of different conflicts are particularly evident in Indonesia, where a number of key agrarian conflicts generated very different kinds of coalitions and helped produce new political opportunities in subsequent periods. Agrarian conflict in the 1960s, for example, did not lead directly to agrarian reform (Husken and White 1989; Farid 2005).

An important issue here is how the realm of the agrarian is defined. This is particularly important in understanding resurgent agrarian movements in Indonesia today, as the primary landlord targeted is a state 'environmental management' institution – the Ministry of Forestry. The state's expropriation of millions of hectares of land with the creation of a national forest puts forestry right at the heart of most agrarian struggles in Indonesia, though these have taken different forms in different parts of the country (see e.g. Bachriadi and Lucas 2001; Li 2007). In this essay, we include apparently environmental conflicts over access to and control over forests and certain anti-dam campaigns in our use of the term agrarian conflicts, because these have engaged issues of rights to and use of agrarian land. Contestations take place within more broadly defined 'agrarian environments' (Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal 2003), a term which recognizes that such sites were not always separated into discrete discourses and domains of 'forestry' and 'agriculture'.

Indonesian agrarian movements and their transnational connections are of significance because of the particular historical and political moments from which they have emerged and the forms they have taken. The massive drive to repeasantization¹ through land occupations and the formation of new rural

¹ 'Peasant' here refers to small farmers and land occupiers who have no land outside occupied areas. The word, '*petani*' in Indonesian translates into either 'peasant' or 'farmer'. Agrarian activists in the 1990s explicitly chose to translate it into 'peasant' in English for its more radical connotation.

organizations have taken place after over 30 years of depoliticization and structural violence since the largely rural massacres of 1965–66 (Cribb 1990) and subsequent, systematic land expropriation by Indonesian state agencies and their cronies in the private sector (Fauzi 1999; Farid 2005). The new agrarian movements have been concurrent with the efforts to make decentralization work and the ‘thickening’ of civil society (Robison and Hadiz 2004; Hadiz 2004a, 2004b). Those particularities make Indonesian agrarian movements unique and yet important to understand as they were constrained in their ability to connect with transnational networks until the late 1990s. Under the repressive ‘New Order’ regime, the name by which the Suharto regime was known for 32 years (1966–98), Indonesian environmental and agrarian movement actors often expressed a compulsion to retain a face of solidarity, despite some critical ideological differences.

The Indonesian case also demonstrates that state power has remained important, though in new institutional forms and ways, in the transition from state-led (including but not only authoritarian) development to a political economy dominated by neoliberal policy (see also, Borras 2004). Indeed, it is the involvement of state actors and institutions within the various coalitions formed across and within environmental and agrarian movements that often has determined their relative ability to literally gain ground – spatial zones of influence recognized by local, national and international actors and institutions.

That state power has remained important under changing global regimes was most evident in the gains of the environmental movement, occurring slowly but surely under Suharto. The intersections of state power and the history of discourse coalitions are also reflected in many environmental justice groups’ willingness to work within the confines of forest law in CBNRM (Community-Based Natural Resource Management) and social forestry projects. Here, ‘access to’ forest land rather than ‘private or communal rights’ to forests are seen as justice accomplishments, even though these were not enough for more radical agrarian reformers who have demanded full land rights, including excision of lands currently under the formal jurisdiction of state forestry institutions.² In ways reminiscent of earlier environmentalist strategies, since *Reformasi* some agrarian movement groups have started working with government, trying to form coalitions with sympathetic district and national parliament members and government land managers. This had been impossible earlier, as farmer/peasant organizations were criminalized and repressed in the wake of the anti-left campaign and the agrarian violence that brought Suharto to power in 1966.

Also affecting the histories of Indonesian agrarian and environmental movements and their mutual constitution were the ways each formed relations with a nascent Indigenous Peoples’ movement. Like the environmental movement, a major motivating factor for this movement came from international activity and grabbed Indonesian activists’ imaginations in the mid-1990s after the UN declared 1993 ‘The Year of the World’s Indigenous People’.³ However, this

² Mia Siscawati, personal communication, 2006.

³ It was extended for a decade.

movement has to be understood as not only an artefact of transnational movement politics but as a historically grounded set of institutions whose participants, practices and policies found ways of expressing their political positions through articulations with transnational and national discourses (Li 2000, 2001; Moniaga 2007). It has been alternately claimed by and allied with environmental and agrarian justice advocates.

Resurgent agrarian movements today show the effects of these historical tensions and the emergence of new ones. As centralized state power declines, and with it some of the gains of conservation, decentralization, democratization and the increasing hegemony of neoliberal policy and practice have generated new splits in the environmental movement. This is reflected in new alliances between Big Conservation and capital and changes in the alliances between environmental justice organizations and agrarian reformers. While these are changing the coalitions on the ground, a new state-led agrarian reform initiative launched by the National Land Agency (NLA), the Ministry of Forestry (MoF) and Indonesia's president has once again made the state a critical site of contestation over agrarian reform.

Contemporary agrarian movements aim to change state policies and their implementation (Webster 2004, 2; Moyo and Yeros 2005). Peasant associations and movements are shaped by state policy and practice and various forms of class formation and accumulation, as well as by other movements and the political fields they help to create (Buechler 2000, 78; McKeon et al. 2004; McMichael 2005). The transnational dimensions of campaigns and advocacy, of knowledge exchange and communication, and new types and goals of collective action have produced new political and cultural spaces nationally and transnationally (Routledge 2004; Edelman 2005; see also Keck and Sikkink 1998). Environmental movements, because many of them operate in the realm once thought of as 'agrarian', are particularly important to understand. While some work has begun on these relations, a great deal remains to be unpacked (Edelman 1999; Franco and Borras 2005, 2006; Kowalchuk 2005).

THE FORMATION AND TRAJECTORIES OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND AGRARIAN MOVEMENTS WITHIN INDONESIAN POLITICS

In Indonesia, many of the first environmental activists advocated environmental justice and worked at the grassroots (Tsing 1999; Lowe 2006), creating a situation where alliances could be made with groups fighting for other forms of agrarian justice. In this section, we discuss the political economic contexts within which early agrarian, environmental justice/indigenous peoples, strict conservation and resurgent agrarian movements emerged and changed in Indonesia, from 1945 when Indonesia declared its independence from the colonial Netherlands East Indies, through the New Order (1966–98). The practices and strategies of both state-led development and authoritarianism affected the emergence, room to manoeuvre and strategic approaches of both environmental and agrarian organizations and activists. The growing importance of forestry nationally, and

of conservation internationally, radically transformed agrarian politics during this period. Changing political fields also affected movement relations to one another.

Agrarian organizations are not new to Indonesian history. The Indonesian Peasants' Front, BTI (*Barisan Tani Indonesia* or the Indonesian Peasants Front) was formed in 1945. It was the first of several peasant/farmer organizations operating across the archipelago, and had its strongest bases in Java, Sumatra and Bali. In the 1950s and 1960s, peasant organizations were closely allied with political parties.⁴ Indonesia's Communist Party and the BTI, legal organizations at the time, became the most active proponents of the state's land reform programme, set in motion by the passing of the Basic Agrarian Law in 1960. They mobilized rural people to take 'unilateral action' by occupying the lands of large private owners and demanding redistribution (McVey 1965; Lyon 1970; Mortimer 1972). In 1965, when the military, led by then-General Suharto, violently seized power, all left and left-leaning parties, associations and organizations were criminalized and banned. Hundreds of thousands of peasants and farmers alleged to be supporters of PKI and their affiliates, including BTI, were killed (Mortimer 1972; Cribb 1990).

The violence constituted a critical moment of primitive accumulation that has underpinned all further phases of capitalist development and forms of state, corporate and private accumulation in Indonesia (Farid 2005). In addition, the massacres turned rural social movements and land reform agendas into history; they were absolutely stopped from operating in their previous forms. Agrarian transformations during the New Order generally meant large-scale land dispossession by central state institutions and their corporate or other capitalist cronies (Aditjondro 1993; Fauzi 1999).

Passed under Indonesia's first president, Sukarno, The Basic Agrarian Law of 1960 had both eliminated legal pluralism based on racial or indigenous categories of rightful access to land, and established a single, unitary land law that represented a 'classic' form of agrarian reform legislation for the times. It promoted land to the tillers and ceilings on private landholdings based on quality and location of land (with different ceilings for irrigated land and dry fields or uplands). After the mass agrarian violence and Suharto's rise to power, the law's land reform tenets were largely ignored, though not struck from the books.

A variety of pro-capitalist agrarian programmes were implemented, including 'green revolution' rice and maize production programmes, mining and forest exploitation, and large state and corporate plantations (Fauzi 1999; Husken and White 1989). All of these programmes were tied in with sources of global capital and backed by the Suharto regime's military-bureaucratic-authoritarian state. In some cases, such as the forestry and mining sectors, Indonesian versions of state

⁴ BTI (*Barisan Tani Indonesia* or The Indonesian Peasants Front) was affiliated with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), PERTANI (*Persatuan Tani Nasional Indonesia* or The Indonesian Peasants Union) with the Nationalist Party (PNI), and PERTANU (*Persatuan Tani Nadhatul Ulama* or the NU Peasants' Union) with one of the Islamic parties (*Nadhatul Ulama*) (Pelzer 1982).

capitalism were developed (Mortimer 1973; Robison 1986; Barr 1997). The strong state aimed to guarantee political stability and maintain control.

In upland areas of Java and in the larger, more forested 'Outer Islands' of Sumatra, Sulawesi and Kalimantan, state and corporate agro-industry and forestry institutions concentrated landed power (Barr 1997). The 'sectoral' or natural resource management laws on forestry, mining and land acquisition for development projects legislated under the New Order in 1967 radically centralized resource management and enclosed significant tracts of land for forest reserves and industrial agriculture, to be managed by government agencies under a variety of financial arrangements. Moreover, these natural resource laws did not recognize the Basic Agrarian Law as one of the legal tenets that preceded it, harking back instead to a clause in the national constitution on state sovereignty over 'the national territory and all the land and resources within' (Moniaga 1997; Zerner 1992). This legislation constituted some 70 per cent of the nation's land as a national 'political forest' (permanent forest zoned and maintained by professional state foresters) and strengthened forest law for Java and Madura, dating from the late colonial period. Forest Law 5/1967 in particular was a critical move that constructed agrarian and forest environments as legally, institutionally and conceptually separate spaces (Peluso and Vandergeest 2001). On and off Java, these state-based resource management institutions had their own territorial hierarchies and jurisdictions that were inconsistent with the territories and authority of civil administration and separate from the urban and agricultural areas under the National Land Board (NLB) (Peluso 1992; Afiff et al. 2005). This legislation accompanied and facilitated critical changes that were transforming the political economy of Indonesia, the structure and perception of the countryside, and the political ecological contexts within which subsequent agrarian movements would take place (Robison 1986; Barber et al. 1995; Dauvergne 1994).

Under the New Order, institutional and legal controls were accompanied by 'de-politicization', particularly of the rural population (Mortimer 1972; Mas'oed 1983; Robison 1986). Independent peasant organizations were replaced by HKTI (*Himpunan Kerukunan Tani Indonesia*, Indonesian Peasant's Harmony Association), an organization managed by military or other government officials and formally affiliated with GOLKAR, the state's ruling party (Hikam 1995). Violent punishments and incarceration were inflicted on anyone who resisted.

Until the 1980s, the New Order state successfully maintained such overwhelming power and control that rural protest was almost unknown. Coalitions of rural and urban activists – NGOs, students and local leaders – began to break the state stranglehold in the early 1990s (Lucas and Warren 2000, 2003; Aspinall 2004). Much of their initial work had to be done underground and involved various configurations of students and other activists (Ganie-Rochman 2002). The students discussed the potential and strategy for agrarian movements and worked with upland villagers in Java and Sumatra who, like many indigenous people outside Java, had been forced to give up their lands to military, other state agencies or corporate enterprises.

The Light in the New Order's Dark Ages: Environmental Justice

The grassroots character of the early environmental movement in 1980s Indonesia would today be described as an environmental justice movement (Lowe 2003; Tsing 2005). During the New Order, where any political opposition to the state was intolerable, environmental law and advocacy seemed – and proved – to be a safe arena for concerned activists working both to help local people and to advance environmental agendas.

Perhaps because state capitalism under Suharto had reordered development priorities, focusing on large-scale extractive projects and transforming the distribution of agrarian resources, it is not surprising that grassroots environmentalists engaged in agrarian struggles. The environmental concerns of these grassroots activists were advocated simultaneously by transnational environmental institutions and environmental lawyers and policy advisors working with and through state institutions to make state policy and development practice more environmentally sustainable. This multi-scaled approach turned out to be critically important to both the resounding successes of environmental discourses in Indonesia and the constraints environmentalists later faced.

Within transnational environmental protection discourses, a great deal of variation lay beneath the surface. For example, professional foresters had claimed experience in the conservation realm since the colonial era's establishment of protection forests, while ecologists and other environmental activists critiqued foresters for being overly production-oriented. By the late 1980s, environmentalist critiques of traditional forestry had gained significant international and national purchase. International conservation NGOs with strong preservationist agendas began to set up offices in Indonesia. Other advocates of justice were interested in addressing the exclusions of people from their lands that had occurred when the political forests were reserved and reinforced with the establishment of internationally supported nature reserves (Djuweng 1997).⁵

Environmental and conservation power in legal and policy domains in Indonesia grew in part as a reaction to the rapid growth and destruction wrought by natural resource industries in the wake of modernization policies, and the massive amounts of state, corporate and individual profits being generated at the expense of the environment. Yet conservation advocates often joined government foresters in blaming deforestation on shifting cultivators and forest-dependent peoples, working against the agendas of environmental justice groups. At the same time, though many of these big conservation interests may not have agreed with the justice advocates on the appropriate solutions to environmental problems, they helped make the government aware of environmental problems; they also helped establish institutions and provided funding to deal with these problems in formal-legal ways at the same time that environmental

⁵ At the time, dominant paradigms in ecological sciences tended not to include humans in their analyses of forest succession except as 'disturbances' – responsible for destroying the forest rather than creating it – a view that has continued among ecologists until the present. For a recent iteration of this argument in English, see Terborgh (1999).

justice advocates were working on the ground. For example, as we see below, the Suharto regime established a Ministry of Environment in addition to the Ministry of Forestry, and thereby contributed to the creation of a multiplicity of contexts for environmentalist agendas. But the former institution's budgetary and ideological power within the state was hardly a match for what foresters called their 'Golden Ministry' (Peluso 1992). Thus, a variety of alliances and divergences characterized this environmental 'movement' from early on, even when a veneer of common ground was deemed politically expedient.

The commonality of origin stories for grassroots-oriented and national or international environmental institutions is illustrated by the story of WALHI (*Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia*/The Indonesian Forum for the Environment). This umbrella institution was formed in 1980 and explicitly traces its origins and inspirations to the Stockholm meeting on Sustainable Development in 1972, a meeting which inspired many mainstream environmental and conservation organizations as well.

WALHI's establishment was during the peak of forestry power in Indonesia, when forest (timber) and oil extraction and trade accounted for most of Indonesia's GDP (Robison 1986). Forestry had been elevated to Ministry status in 1983, with jurisdiction over hundreds of millions of hectares of the national land base. Hundreds of timber concessions had been allocated all over the country – over 500 in Kalimantan alone (Barr 1997). With technical assistance and loans from the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) and the World Bank, the foresters had declared, allocated and mapped (in that order) national forests, dividing them into production and protection forests, as well as nature reserves and conversion forests (for conversion to industrial agriculture or development projects).

Given the institutional power and wealth of the Ministry of Forestry and the strength of the authoritarian government, WALHI could not have survived without some kind of support from within the government. In response to international pressures, but in ways meant not to interfere with the tremendous accumulation from the forestry sector, Suharto created the Ministry of Environment (MoE), headed by Dr Emil Salim. The MoE had a meagre budget and little actual power inside the state. However, Salim's MoE provided a safe haven for environmental justice activists – its own marginal position in government creating a basis for alliance with these justice advocates. At the same time, the MoE was developing relations with international environmental lawyers and legal advisors – who were also marginalized by the dominant global interests in state-led, large-scale, development. In some ways, then, the MoE served as a unifying institution for the justice and darker green components of the environmental movement. At a time when the New Order government interpreted any criticism of its development policy and practice as subversive, environmental debates were the only public media through which farmers' rights or access to land lost to extractive enterprises could be discussed. Further, political context made it crucial for them to have connections with a government body.

Thus both the strategies of transnational actors and the practical constraints of NGOs working within Suharto's authoritarian government helped forge

connections among international, government and non-government environmental advocates – both those who would continue along an environmental justice path and those who would pursue more coercive conservation policies later. Close connections between environmental movement activists working at national legal and local levels were further strengthened through justice advocates' connections with YLBHI (the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation), which also worked at multiple scales, collaborating with NGOs and student activists and transnational legal aid groups. Representative of this on the ground was the appointment in 1989, a member of YLBHI as the head of WALHI's presidium. At various points, YLBHI was supported by NOVIB (a Dutch donor NGO) and CIDA (Canadian Aid).

A defining moment occurred fairly early in this collaboration, one that in part explains later divergences within the environmental movement and the opportunities for alliances between environmental justice and still-underground agrarian activists. This now iconic 'moment' was constituted by activist mobilization against the Kedung Ombo project, a World Bank-assisted dam project in Central Java. Lasting more than five years, and ultimately failing, like the Narmada campaign in India (Baviskar 1995), to prevent the submergence of a huge swath of rural Central Java, the movement was significant for how it brought together different activists, simultaneously demonstrating commonalities and potentials for future alliances. For environmental groups inside and outside Indonesia, Kedung Ombo was part of a global 'Anti-Big-Dam' campaign. For agrarian activists, the campaign was an opportunity to help farmers in Java forced off their land without fair compensation (Rumansara 1998). And as development refugees forced into transmigration projects off Java, these farmers provided an unintended connection to indigenous people there, near or onto whose land they were forced to move.

This campaign gained greater national attention when YLBHI and other NGO members of INGI⁶ sent an *aide memoire*, a letter to the head of the World Bank, to protest the project's violations of villagers' human rights. This internationalization of the case, what Keck and Sikkink (1998) call a 'boomerang strategy', backfired in some ways. It reduced Suharto's tolerance of NGO activism; he spoke of the campaign as insulting and anti-national. This forced Minister of Environment Salim, the environmental NGOs ally and safe haven, to state publicly that the Indonesian NGO representatives in INGI had gone too far, mixing 'political' and environmental objectives. Salim toed the government line, stating that the political aspects of environmental cases were government concerns, not within the purview of environmental NGOs.

⁶ INGI (Inter-NGO Conference on Inter-Governmental Group of Indonesia (IGGI) Matters) was formed in 1985 by YLBHI and NOVIB (de Nederlands Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand), both transnational and local actors providing input to the inter-governmental conference of donors providing aid to Indonesia. WALHI is a member of INGI. Later, IGGI changed to CGI (Consultative Group on Indonesia) and INGI became INFID (International NGOs Forum on Indonesian Development).

This rather dangerous encounter with ‘politics’ was critical, as it brought into the open the fact that ‘environmental problems’ were not as benignly apolitical as environmental justice organizations had represented. Indeed, Kedung Ombo is an example of articulated environmental and agrarian discourses in Java (Aditjondro 2003), a conjunctural moment. Nevertheless, the campaign to stop the dam failed in part because Java’s violent agrarian history remained an obstacle to rights-based agrarian movement activities through the 1980s and early 1990s. Further, this history tempered the extent and manner in which some environmental justice activists were willing to proceed.

Off Java, particularly in Sumatra, Sulawesi and Kalimantan, there was more room for manoeuvre, literally and figuratively, where, in provinces with forest, an average of two-thirds to three-quarters of the land base came under the jurisdiction of the Forestry Department. In these regions, environmental justice advocates tended to ally with local groups who eventually called themselves Indigenous Peoples or *Masyarakat Adat* (Li 2000). The origins and identities of these groups, and the national organization formed in the late 1990s, saw itself as both an agrarian movement organizations and environmental justice organizations.

In Indonesia, the Indigenous Peoples’ organisation was first comprised of people who had been pushed off their land by large-scale development projects related to forestry, plantations, transmigration, dams or large-scale tourism. The expropriations they experienced put them up against the development and environmental discourses of the state and the expanding dark green conservation world. They differed from agrarian activists and farmers in Java and Bali and parts of Sumatra who were eager to reclaim land lost to government and corporate expropriations, but who rarely talked the environmental talk.⁷ *Masyarakat Adat* were critical participants in early environmental justice struggles, in part because they were usually represented as having environmentally friendly ‘customary’ practices. This was beneficial in some senses, but raised flags in others: the definition their national organization, AMAN (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara* or the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples in the Archipelago) decided on for *Masyarakat Adat* was clearly based on an (anthropological) definition of ‘tribe’, with all the positive and negative baggage that went with that label (Tsing 1999; Li 2001). They were, however, a harbinger of the future: NGOs working with them sought to legitimize their territorial claims by tying their agrarian practices to environmental goals of sustainability.

Moreover, their histories were quite different from those of peasants involved in agrarian struggles during the 1950s and 1960s on Java, Bali and the parts of Sumatra mentioned above. At the time, groups identifying as *Masyarakat Adat*

⁷ See, e.g. Fidro and Fauzi (1998) who analyze 29 land dispute cases under the New Order and make practical and strategic suggestions to advance the nascent (still underground) agrarian movement. Nothing in any of these writings suggested a sensitivity to the strategic potential in environmentalist discourse, except a paper by Aditjondro, which argues that people’s economies were ‘poli-cultures’ and better environmentally than the monocultures of the imposed plantations. This was not yet a rallying idea for the agrarian advocacy groups.

lived mostly outside Java, in areas that until the 1940s had been largely under indirect colonial rule. Javanese, Sundanese and Balinese ethnicities were not really considered 'tribal' in the ways many *Masyarakat Adat* had been characterized by colonial officials and observers, social scientists and Indonesian NGOs.⁸ Indeed the terms of colonial legal pluralism had recognized the 'customary territories' of these groups as spaces where they exerted authority over land disposition, among other governance functions. For indigenous people in the forested regions of Indonesia, the most immediately threatening laws were the Forestry Laws (Ruwiastuti 2000). These defined many of their agroforestry holdings or reserved areas as 'empty' and 'abandoned' land, and criminalized their agricultural systems of swidden cultivation.

Back to Underground Agrarian Activism . . .

After the Kedung Ombo campaign, agrarian and environmental justice activists worked more closely with YLBHI to assist villagers in land rights disputes in Java and parts of Sumatra (Aspinal 2004). Despite the still very tangible risks of being accused as 'communist' supporters and arrested or worse, activists organized protests to draw attention to farmers' land struggles. Unlike WALHI activists who, by the early 1990s, were framing their advocacy in terms of indigenous people's rights (environmental justice) and the criticism of forestry and mining laws, YLBHI and student agrarian activists focused their critiques on the implementation (or failure thereof) of The Basic Agrarian Law no. 5 1960 (BAL). Some environmental activists were invited to Bandung to take part in the discussions that were later the foundation of the KPA, the Consortium for Agrarian Reform (author interviews 2007).

The BAL was a national icon, as it formalized nationalist intentions to throw off the yoke of colonial differentiation based on race and ethnicity – realized in colonial legal pluralism – by establishing a unified national land law. A key component of the law was to be national land reform. The Suharto government, however, had implemented the law selectively, favouring the articles supporting the state's rights to acquire land for development projects 'in the national interest'. The parts that discussed the social functions of land for livelihoods and land reform were ignored. YLBHI and their student allies framed their movement and mobilization activities around land reform, advocating that the government implement the BAL more comprehensively. Although they worked with YLBHI on an embryonic multi-scaled approach as the environmental activists had, the land reform activists on Java and Sumatra lacked national cohesion and the extensive international funding available to environmental movement groups. They were also still politically sensitive and had to tread softly.

Several key historical and geographic differences affected the types of reform sought by these two types of agrarian movements – indigenous peoples' and

⁸ This changed later, as Balinese, Baduy and other groups joined AMAN and broadened its national base and the working definition of indigenous people in Indonesia.

peasant-based land reform – and the ways they engaged with or embraced environmentalist discourses and movements, national or international. The student activists who worked in Java, Bali and some parts of Sumatra, where rural class tensions had long been an issue, tended to separate agrarian reform agendas from environmental agendas, even though at times (such as in Kedung Ombo) they had seen fit to ally with environmental activists. They had to operate largely off the public radar screen, underground, until the very end of the Suharto regime – when he was forced to step down in 1998 during the economic crisis. By the early to mid-1990s, '*Masyarakat Adat*' types of organizations characterized a closely knit set of agrarian movements outside Java and Bali, most of which had connection to environmental justice concerns and were active more publicly.

Some activists and leaders moved easily among groups working on environmental, indigenous peoples and agrarian reform issues. In essence, this was facilitated by the groups' common dissatisfaction with the Suharto regime's policies of expropriating huge tracts of land and extracting resources for state or private accumulation. They found common ground in mobilizing against tenets of two laws: the Forestry Laws and the parts of the Basic Agrarian Law that enabled state land acquisition. Both of these laws were products of the 1960s, but came out of the different ideological frames that had animated the first two national regimes. Over time, their cumulative effect had been to eliminate or ignore communal and other customary rights in favour of Western private and state property rights (Djuweng and Moniaga 1994; Heruputri 1997).

REFORMASI AND NEOLIBERALISM: THE EXPLOSION, RADICALIZATION, ROUTINIZATION AND FRAGMENTATION OF MOVEMENTS

The lid of repression literally burst off with the fall of Suharto in 1998; major changes came with Reformasi. Immediately after Suharto's demise, tens of thousands of peasants and farmers, landless people and smallholders occupied state forest and plantation lands. They chopped down rubber, cocoa, teak, pine and many dipterocarp species in the rainforests. On plantation and state forest lands, they planted their own cassava, rice, banana, durian and oil palm. As early as September 2000, the Director General of the Department of Forestry and Plantations estimated that some 118,830 hectares of national estate land had been seized, along with 48,051 hectares of private estate lands (Kuswahyono 2003; in Fauzi 2003). For the first time in 35 years, peasant organizations formed, debated land politics, found allies in and outside government, and laid the basis for a new trajectory of mobilizing for agrarian reform (Lucas and Warren 2003).

Agrarian reform groups no longer had to work underground, but the long period of violent repression had affected the forms of oppositionist expression. Not until several years into 'reformed' Indonesia, after neoliberal policies had made tremendous headway and decentralized state power had become the norm, were large numbers of peasants and small farmers willing to openly join agrarian organizations. Even though the academic and activist mobilizers framed these

movements differently, farmers must have initially seen the demonstrations, protests and demands as quite similar to those that had been violently repressed in 1965. Moreover, this time, the biggest landlord they had to oppose was the state itself: the powerful Ministry of Forestry that now controlled some two-thirds of the nation's land base. At the same time, under the rubric of decentralization, district level government – parliament members, regents (*Bupati*) and district sectoral agency bureaucrats – had gained more authority and administrative power. Some of them were willing to support the new agrarian organizations and their calls for land reform.

Critically, however, these resurgent agrarian movements came into a national political context that had been reshaped by the environmental movements and agendas that began to influence Indonesian land management and allocation in the 1980s. Massive investment in Indonesian forest extraction after 1970 was paralleled a few years later by the meteoric rise of the international environmental movement. While this movement did not really take organizational form in Indonesia until the early 1980s, its effects were already being felt when FAO held its annual Forestry Congress in Indonesia in 1978 with the theme, 'Forests for People'. This meeting also foreshadowed future struggles, as new forms of territorialized environmental power were being envisioned and realized through the work of professional foresters and other ecological scientists, as well as by budding environmental justice NGOs. By the time pro-poor agrarian movements re-emerged publicly in Indonesia in the late 1990s, environmental discourses had transformed national and local political fields, as well as international arenas of law and policy, activism and moral authority. These changes were critical to shaping the strategies, positioning and rhetorics of both agrarian and environmental movements after the turn of the twenty-first century. At the same time, some of their common ground began to erode.

In 2004, *Vía Campesina*, arguably the most influential transnational peasant organization in the world, set up global shop in Indonesia, moving its International Operative Secretariat from Honduras. Over the past decade, *Vía Campesina*, an active and vocal critic of neoliberal agricultural and land policies, had consolidated a transnational network of peasant organizations from Asia, America and Europe, coordinated global protests and campaigned for a specific vision of 'agrarian reform and food sovereignty' (Desmarais 2002; Edelman 2003; Rosset 2006). When they moved to Indonesia, they announced that Henry Saragih, Director of the Federation of Indonesian Peasant Unions (*Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia* or FSPI), one of several peasant unions in Indonesia that had a national constituency, would serve as the new International Coordinator.

The largest single peasant organization in Java, *Serikat Petani Pasundan* (the Sundanese (West Java) Peasant Union or SPP), was a member of FSPI at that time and had some 30,000 members, most of whom were landless or extremely poor⁹ (Wargadipura 2005, 19). Formally established in 2000 (but organized

⁹ Although a systematic class analysis of SPP's membership has not been done, the organization's leaders and affiliated NGO contacts make this assertion.

underground in the mid-1990s), SPP's 52 local chapters in 2005 were located at sites of agrarian conflict in three districts of West Java and occupied more than 15,000 hectares of state plantation and forest lands in West Java's uplands. They are among the peasant unions that have moved against state landlords controlling land in West Java, that is, the State Forestry Corporation (SFC) and State Plantation Corporations (SPC). SPP's operations illustrate the new form of agrarian movement organization, as it works not only through direct land occupations and other forms of collective action, but also by its leaders negotiating with politicians, officials in government land management agencies, and members of district and national parliaments. SPP leaders and associated NGOs (primarily the Consortium for Agrarian Reform, KPA and, more recently, *KARSA-Lingkar Pembaruan Pedesaan dan Agraria*/Circle for Village and Agrarian Reform), have also collaborated with NGOs working for human rights (YLBHI) and conservation (WALHI, *LATIN-Lembaga Alam Tropika Indonesia*/The Indonesian Tropical Institute). KPA also was formed in 1995 during the underground period of agrarian activism. Although technically an NGO, some members of KPA are leaders of peasant organizations.

SPP and its membership put into practice an idea brought to them by a pro-reform academic, Gunawan Wiradi (1997), the notion of 'land reform by leverage' (Powelson and Stock 1990). Their ability to occupy, hold and transform the use and vegetative cover of these occupied lands was significant, even though the areas seem small relative to the million hectares of forest lands and plantations in West Java. The occupations are most meaningful for their *duration* of over three-quarters of a decade. Under Suharto, such land occupiers would have been forced off or worse. Indeed, the SFC and SPCs have hired hundreds of thugs to evict peasants from these occupied lands, but have ultimately failed to remove them.

More recently, agrarian reform groups have campaigned for and achieved participation in government decision-making. In their West Java working area, the SPP lobbied local governments and district parliaments to set up committees to resolve agrarian conflicts, primarily those in the significant areas of land currently allocated to the SFC and SPCs, which cover some 44 per cent of all Garut District (Fauzi 2003).¹⁰ SPP has also organized an association of village heads and parliaments in those districts and won some 10 per cent of village head elections in their working areas in 2006.

We should step back a bit and examine the major political economic transformations that have made these new institutional activities possible: land occupations, the revival of criminalized organizational forms and movement groups 'negotiating' with government officials. In a word, *Reformasi*, the Indonesian version of Philippines' style 'people power', represents the changed and changing political context. *Reformasi* is the Indonesian term for the transformations of the political economy of Indonesia, causing radical changes in the contexts,

¹⁰ Cf. Wargadiputra (2005, 2), who states that 50 per cent of the district is state forest or plantation land.

programmes, strategies, positioning and alliances among agrarian and environmental organizations. Suharto's successor in 1998 almost immediately passed a Presidential Decree to decentralize many functions of government to districts, particularly budgetary functions and the management of resources (Resosudarmo 2005). An important anomaly affected the expected re-distributions of state lands and the ways that grassroots groups and NGOs had to manoeuvre subsequently. Sectoral central state institutions, most importantly the Ministry of Forestry,¹¹ retained jurisdiction over those lands, although they are required by the terms of decentralization to negotiate with regional governments over management of the above-ground resources (McCarthy 2000, 2006).

It was into this political space of opportunity and constraint that the peasant organizations and supporting NGOs and NGO consortiums emerged and began their activities. After the collapse of the New Order, with the decentralization law to take effect within two years, agrarian activists, NGOs and student groups helped organize dispossessed peasants outside the major cities of Java (Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Yogyakarta and Surabaya) and parts of Sumatra (Medan). They set up 'action committees' and engineered public protests and dialogues with government officials and members of parliament. AMAN – the National Indigenous Peoples' Association – was formally established in 1999 at a national meeting in Jakarta. Before Reformasi, most delegates had been from outside Java, but at this meeting Java and Bali were represented.

The new opportunities offered by decentralization and the establishment of more civil liberties exacerbated an underlying source of difference amongst rural reformers in civil society and in government. This had to do with whether – and in what forms – land or broader agrarian reforms were appropriate for state forest lands. Such a split could be viewed as between environmental and agrarian reform interests, but, as we show below, the alliances and conflict did not line up precisely in that manner.

Transnational Agrarian and Environmental Movement Effects

FSPI and KPA are technically categorized as different types of agrarian movement organizations, though in practice they have some similarities, as both are led by activists, not peasants. When it was first formed in the mid-late 1990s until late 2007, FSPI was a federation of peasant organizations led by Sumatra-based activists associated with the Synthesis Foundation (*Yayasan Sintesa*, YS), an NGO. KPA is a West Java-based consortium of Indonesian grassroots NGOs, peasant organizations and activists, and registered in Indonesia as an NGO. The founding leaders of both began activist work during the Suharto-era struggles, working underground in their native North Sumatra and West Java, respectively. Differences emerged early on over the best base-site for a national level organization, funding and other sources of competition (Lucas and Warren 2003; Afiff 2004).

¹¹ And its regional institutions, including the State Forestry Corporation (SFC) in Java.

While supportive of many of Vía Campesina's policies and actions, and a member of Vía Campesina's main Indonesian affiliate, FSPI, until the national meeting in 2007, SPP has always been more closely allied with KPA (the Consortium for Agrarian Reform). KPA, as an NGO, could not be a member of either FSPI or Vía Campesina. Perhaps for that reason, it established connections with the International Land Coalition (ILC), which is also a kind of consortium of diverse types of organizations and representing more diverse ideologies among its members than Vía Campesina. For example, ILC has a less confrontational approach to the World Bank and its market-oriented land policies – indeed the World Bank is a member organization.

However, as Borras (2004) points out, the political positions of and actual relations between organizations and individuals in ILC and VC are confusing and variable, as some groups are members of both. SPP, for example, is a member of ILC and was a member of VC through its membership in FSPI until late 2007 when SPP resigned (see below). NGOs such as KPA are much more sympathetic to VC concerns and ideologies than to those of ILC and many of its member groups, but are barred from formal membership in VC by their NGO status. This all gets even more complex as the critical tensions between Vía Campesina (VC) and ILC in the global arena (Edelman 2003; Borras 2004) have been reflected in and created new tensions – real or represented as such – between some of their Indonesian allies and various sub-national member groups.

Learning of the ban on NGO membership during Vía Campesina's international meeting in Mexico in the late 1990s, the Indonesian activists were surprised. The leaders of KPA (NGO), SPP (peasant organization) and YS (NGO) all saw themselves as equally committed to radical land reform and these Indonesian activists had been deeply involved with peasant organizations. Subsequently, they agreed in 1999 to form FSPI exclusively as a peasant organization, but with a non-peasant activist – Henry Saragih of *Yayasan Sintesa* – as its first secretary general. Some activists recall an understanding that, as the organization and its membership matured, an actual peasant/small farmer would take on the leadership. When FSPI became the site of VC's international secretariat, it also became the major international portal into Indonesian agrarian movement activities. At the same time, the organization's national agenda was now being more determined by international campaign priorities than by those of to Indonesian member organizations. The leadership of KPA and SPP, in contrast, while aware of international developments and drawing on the experiences and ideas of MST and other international agrarian movements, tends to be more Indonesia-focused, explicitly looking inward to the demands and needs of their West Java membership, and in other Indonesian areas. Until late 2007, SPP remained an important member of FSPI as well, sending a full three-quarters of the 10,000 peasants who marched under FSPI's flag to a June 2007 agrarian reform demonstration in Bandung (<http://fspi.or.id/en/content/view/120/1>).

In their late 2007 meeting, FSPI's leadership changed the terms of membership in FSPI, making individuals rather than peasant organizations the membership units. This discouraged some member organizations, as it changed

significantly the organization's federated character. SPP and several other peasant organizations refused to dissolve their own organizations to become chapters or individual members of FSPI, and resigned from FSPI. Activist Saragih was re-elected director again, causing further dissatisfaction in some quarters that he had not yet stepped aside to let an actual peasant lead the organization.¹²

Tensions between groups or their leaders have also been exacerbated by campaigns and connections with environmental groups and issues. In particular, differences intensified over various moves to integrate discussions of agrarian reform as discussed in the Basic Agrarian Law and the reclaiming of forest lands and mines under the purview of the Ministries of Forestry and Mining. How these tensions have played out on the ground can be seen through two key legislative and policy initiatives that animated these fora early in the reform period and recently (2005–07). The initiatives are Parliamentary Decree no. IX/2001 (hereafter called TAP MPR IX/2001) and the agrarian reform initiative announced jointly by the President, the Ministry of Forestry and the National Land Board (NLB) in September 2006. In addition, different notions of the ultimate goals for reform have split groups and individuals, demonstrated by the debates over community forestry or CBNRM. These debates demonstrate the changing (once again) agrarian and political contexts within which reform organizations have been operating.

TAP MPR IX/2001 Debates

By late 2000 and 2001, it was becoming clear not only that Reformasi would change the Indonesian state, but that environmental initiatives had already, throughout the Suharto period, reconfigured state institutions, including law, and normalized new regimes of territorial control. The environmental movement – and here again, we mean land and forest conservation movements, as these affected patterns of land control and access most – had constituted different state and civil society arenas within which its separate but entwined components ('big' conservation and environmental justice) operated. This was a context – the context – within which agrarian movements would have to negotiate and struggle.

KPA had long been one of the agrarian groups willing to work with national and sub-national environmental justice NGOs, in part because some environmental justice groups (e.g. LATIN and WALHI) had occasionally provided funds to KPA and SPP to finance occupations and protests (author interviews 2007). In 2001 they set up a Working Group on Agrarian Reform and Natural Resource Management. To agrarian reformers and environmental justice groups, this represented the first time the two issue groups openly shared a public forum to jointly strategize and influence national policy and legislation, although in ways still limited by the nature of state and corporate power and their own differences (Rosser et al. 2005, 67).

¹² Despite the assertions of a reporter in a recent article on FSPI in *The Guardian*, Henry Saragih did not start out as 'a small farmer'.

This environmental–agrarian activist collaboration on TAP MPR IX/2001, and the participation of AMAN, the indigenous people’s national organization, which, remember, claimed and was claimed to be both an agrarian and environmental justice organization, was enabled by the focus on tenurial issues in environmental conflicts, even though the word ‘tenure’ was not used consistently. Rather, it referred both to ‘land tenure’ or ‘resource tenure’, the latter not necessarily meaning formal land rights. At the same time, sympathetic academics and policy makers attempted to integrate the agro-ecological and social structural dimensions of the two approaches to reform. Among those who started out first as agrarian reformers, one strategy was to link agrarian structural inequities with ecological crises, and show how solving the first might help ameliorate the second (e.g. Sangkoyo 2000; Kartodihardjo 2002). It was argued that the new agrarian reform agenda should not only restructure land access and control or alter land use, production and consumption systems to guarantee the basic rights and welfare of poor people, but also to ensure ecosystem integrity and improve productivity (Fauzi and Zakaria 2001, 2002).

Many of these ideas had been integral to both global and local (Indonesian) social and community forestry discourses, and part of strategies for community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) (ARuPA et al. 2003). Here, they were repackaged by agrarian activists as part of their own and common environmental–agrarian agendas. Interestingly, what started out as a community-based ideology intended to wrest control of tightly controlled forest resources from the central government was soon being represented at an international level as both a neoliberal strategy for reducing big government (McCarthy 2005; cf. Belsky 2008) and a mobilizing/organizing strategy for agrarian reform.

Another contradictory representation of ‘reform’ issues characterized the debates over TAP MPR IX/2001. The alliance between some agrarian reform groups (notably KPA) and environmental justice groups in the interest of passing the TAP MPR IX/2001 was repackaged by other agrarian reform groups as a capitulation to neoliberalism. FSPI’s leadership, for example, argued that the parliamentary resolution could be used by pro-market forces to change – or invalidate – the reform tenets of the 1960 BAL.¹³ On FSPI’s website, for example, it is stated that the TAP MPR IX/2001 has been ‘used as a basis of various law drafts (RUU) that clearly opposed and depleted the spirit of UUPA No. 5/1960 and UUD 1945 chapter 33. This legislation also reveals flaws in agricultural laws in Indonesia that have resulted in an unjust agrarian structure and enhanced the process of liberalization of natural resources’. The website also states that former state-owned companies (parastatals called BUMN in Indonesia) have been taken over or strengthened by transnational companies (http://viacampesina.org/main_en/images/stories/lvcbooksonwto.pdf).

This view however, distorted the intentions of allied agrarian and environmental justice advocates. To them, the issuance of TAP MPR No. IX/2001 had

¹³ See Lucas and Warren (2003) for a more extensive elaboration of these debates.

great symbolic and strategic meaning. Local SPP leaders used the decree as a means of justifying land occupations and as a bargaining chip with central and regional government land management agencies (Afiff et al. 2005). Well aware of, and not in agreement with, the problems around Suharto-era natural resources legislation, reinforced in the reform period by the revised Forestry Law (41/1999) and a subsequent presidential decree (KepPres 34/2003), KPA and SPP and other proponents of the resolution have used the TAP MPR IX/2001 to bring issues of agrarian reform back to the negotiating table with government. The decree clearly states its support for the BAL. Even member organizations of FSPI had differing views on these new pieces of legislation, such as KepPres 34/2003. SPP saw this presidential decree as legitimating district parliaments and administrations' engagement in agrarian reform, putting 'resolution of conflicts closer to the source' (Lucas and Warren 2003, 35–6; Afiff et al. 2005, 5). While FSPI, SPP and KPA supported the BAL and agrarian reform, the former saw the TAP MPR IX/2001 as more beneficial to big conservation (dark greens) and corporate environmentalism than to environmental justice issues. For KPA and SPP, environmental justice often sought the same solutions as agrarian reform initiatives.

The darker green environmental groups were also not enthralled with TAP MPR IX/2001, because of the agrarian alliance and what they saw as a threat to their recently gained territory. The prospect of redistributing whole tracts of forest land to impoverished or indigenous peasants and farmers on Java, or elsewhere, was a line that some environmental groups, moderate or conservative, were unable to cross. At the time of these debates, the large land management institutions within the Indonesian state were being framed by agrarian activists as landlords. This move changed the terms of the conflict over agrarian reform and in some ways differentiated Indonesia's struggle from those of other countries.¹⁴ It also pitted the most radical agrarian activists against more moderate agrarianists and the darkest green environmental NGOs. Some of the latter were not willing to consider the implications of the very recent history of state forestry expropriations (1967) in forming the 'national forest', a process which also involved taking over customarily managed or owned lands (Peluso and Vandergeest 2001). TAP MPR IX/2001 thus drove stakes through some collaborations, just as it had engendered new ones.

The TAP MPR IX/2001 debates also illuminated the fact that the big national-level challenge had switched from the criminalization of civil society movements to whether and how activists would work with or within the state. The Indonesian state was making its own radical changes in its structures, practices and policies. For both radical and moderate agrarian activists, working within government was an entirely new concept, minimally thought about and hardly – if at all – planned for.

Yet government had to be dealt with, as decentralization had created a major contradiction: many district level officials who were now in charge of making

¹⁴ But see Borras (2006), for example, who addressed agrarian reform on forest lands in the Philippines.

their own decisions on matters they had been ordered to take care of during the Suharto regime did not always know how to make such decisions. Thus some activist groups, including KPA, developed training programmes for district parliament members in the early years of Reformasi. Through workshops and training sessions, they could discuss the implications of the new laws, and the possibilities for different scenarios of agrarian reform. In many of these discussions, district level foresters were involved, requiring an almost constant awareness that ecological integrity and environmental sustainability would be invoked. Even the most radical rights-oriented agrarianists had to learn to talk this talk if their strategy included changing laws and policies of government land management institutions.

The Effects of Environmental Discourses

Environmental activists had always seen a major part of their movement as operating on the legal front – seeking territories over which they could exert control or influence state control – in addition to grassroots work. As shown above, over time, they succeeded: even under authoritarian rule in Indonesia, environmental discourses had gained legal ground and territory. Conservation benefited from state forestry and natural resource-based accumulation strategies (corporate and state) in part by contesting the capacities of natural resource agencies such as the Ministry of Forestry to sustainably manage land.¹⁵ Newly gazetted national parks, conservation areas and nature reserves were physical proof of environmentalists' power: they had even modified the terms of forestry, extending the amount of forests reserved for protection or conservation rather than large-scale production or development.

Increased conservation power changed and was changed by the political economic context. On the dark green conservationist side, the territorial bases of conservation were perceived as threatened by both decentralization and agrarian reform – whether through direct land occupations or through government policy (McCarthy 2006; Resosudarmo 2005). If management of forest and conservation areas was decentralized, who would take responsibility to fund and enforce the nature reserves and other protected areas that represented conservation's successful years of mobilizing on transnational, national and local fronts (Jepson and Whittaker 2002)? And, if the MoF and the SFC were being framed as illegitimate 'landlords' on political forestlands, conservation areas established under the New Order could be, and were, similarly challenged, as happened in the case of Dongi-dongi in Sulawesi (Adiwibowo 2005; Li 2007). These new developments pushed moderate or flexible agrarian movements and environmental justice groups to mobilize against exclusive areas of 'nature protection' (Lowe 2003; Afiff and Lowe 2008; Stedile 2002). Perhaps for this reason, some environmental groups made some previously unheard of deals with big capital, reflecting a neoliberal-era follow-up to the coercive conservation alliances made

¹⁵ On the 'natural' alliances between capitalism and conservation, see Smith (1984).

by international conservation groups with military and authoritarian states of the developmentalist era (Peluso 1993; Chapin 2004).

Environmental justice groups also had won some battles under the New Order, including under the rubric of community or social forestry. Community forestry proponents in environmental justice groups had long pursued their objectives of increasing farmer access to government forest lands as part of broader struggles for tenure reform. In the early years of the new millennium, they had some small but highly symbolic achievements. For example, the Ministry of Forestry formally recognized a few autonomous community forests in Sumatra and Sulawesi (D'Andrea 2003; Li 2007). In Java, the SFC expanded villagers' access to forest land through forms of joint forest management in the 'social forestry' areas of Java, in part responding to the threats posed by forest occupations and the mob logging that took place in the early years of Reformasi.

The Indonesian state's consolidated control over so much of the national territory as state forest made it necessary for the agrarian movement groups to deal explicitly with community/social forestry programmes and concerns. As agrarian reform activists in the late 1990s focused their attention on upland areas, their work unavoidably overlapped and sometimes conflicted with that of community-based forest management (CBFM) activists.

On Java, where land was tight and political forests had played a much longer role in the island's land use history, and particularly during the New Order, CBFM activists could not always insist on excising land from the island's forests.¹⁶ The first step was seen as increasing farmers' access to land and forest resources.

However, the problem with community and social forestry, in the views of some agrarian activists, was that resource tenure rights and access constituted neither absolute control nor community autonomy, rather, they were held jointly with the SFC or the MoF. Further complicating the rights picture, many agrarian activists had been hoping for more communal property alternatives to emerge organically or be attempted. Private property ran the risk of being sold, a bitter lesson for many after the success and perceived failure of the Sagara campaign (Fauzi 2003; Lukmanudin 2001).¹⁷ In these ways and others, both working with government in community/social forestry programmes and 'winning' private property became major bones of contention.

Some community forestry and agrarian reform activists made efforts to connect and collaborate, enabling both to see their work from new perspectives. For

¹⁶ On Java, the form implemented within the SFC was called Social Forestry. Activists posited community forestry as an alternative framing, one that would not involve intervention or decision-making power by the state, once the state had recognized the community's forest as outside the *kawasan hutan* or state forest territory.

¹⁷ Sagara villagers had been mobilized by SPP and KPA to occupy land also claimed by SFC. The case ended with the SFC losing, when the National Agrarian Ministry and the Head of the National Land Bureau determined that the state land in question could be subjected to land reform (Decree No. 35-VI/1997). Yet, three years after the settlement, most of the redistributed 580 hectares of the land had been sold, disillusioning agrarian activists.

KPA, for example, community forestry connections represented access to new resources, support and networks. The connections also provided opportunities for agrarian reform activists to radicalize community forestry and other forms of environmental justice. To this end, the environmental NGOs WALHI and ARuPA (*Aliansi Relawan untuk Penyelamatan Alam*/Volunteer Alliance to Save the Environment) led a campaign on Java to dissolve the SFC – which actually seemed possible in the wake of the government enterprise’s announcement of its bankruptcy in 2002. Although in the end the SFC was sustained by support from the MoF, the pressures imposed by activists, academics and some foundations/funders led the SFC to dramatically increase community access rights to state forest land and to increase the amount of territory and trees under social forestry programmes – but not to redistribute or reclassify state forest land (Simon 1993, 1994; Awang 2004). While this was criticized by agrarian reformers, EJ activists defended this ‘access’ approach, seeing it as a potential wedge in a very tightly closed door to forest lands. The incremental gains for farmer access would be difficult to refute once the SFC or the MoF had conceded them (author interviews 2007). In fact, this latter scenario is what transpired.

It is not so surprising, then, that after Reformasi some agrarian movements have found it expedient to embrace environmentally friendly stances as explicit components of their political strategies. Some agrarian movement leaders have taken a page from the environmentalists’ book, deploying multi-scaled approaches to gaining legitimacy, territory and moral authority in various arenas of contestation, including state law and policy (Afiff et al. 2005). The fact is that failure to commit to ensuring environmental sustainability could be a basis for denial of access to land – especially in areas that are classified as forest or conservation areas.

Indeed, a great deal of the environmental justice movement and their international academic allies had already focused on demonstrating the misunderstandings and misrepresentations of indigenous people’s sustainable agroforestry practices and claims by foresters and others.¹⁸ Just as environmental justice advocates had recognized the need to translate the traditional practices of *Masyarakat Adat* into notions of sustainable resource management, KPA advocates soon moved in that direction. The potential for land occupiers to be seen as sustainable managers of fragile upland environments made its way into SPP and KPA leaders’ speeches, and was also used to transform some land occupiers’ land use practices in favour of agro-forestry. SPP leaders have decried the lack of ‘traditional agroforestry’ on SFC-controlled uplands and associated that forestry department’s upland monocultures with recent natural disasters such as erosion and landslides on Java’s forest lands (author interview 2007).

Off Java, through AMAN and on their own, indigenous peoples’ groups continued to work with the environmental justice movement. They wanted legal recognition of ‘ancestral territories’, meaning formal state acknowledgement.

¹⁸ This also constitutes a huge literature, including in English, on Indonesia, most of the lifetime work of Michael Dove (see e.g. Dove 1983, 1985, 1996, and many others).

One possibility for this was a reintroduction of legal pluralism into the Indonesian legal system, a move supported in part by some national, local and international activists and even funders. But such a broad move could alienate many agrarian reformers because some of the 'customary rights' systems included as members of AMAN are dominated by the 'feudal elites' that agrarian reform and nationalist activists had resisted in the anti-colonial, anti-feudal movements of the 1940s and 1950s. Most contemporary activists were not willing to facilitate these elites now claiming 'customary rights' through inclusion in agrarian reform initiatives or strategic alliances. They have, however, maintained ties to AMAN member-groups with more democratic, communal or egalitarian connections.

Debates on Recent Government Land Reform Initiatives

The differences between the fundamental principles underlying agrarian organizations and how they would work (or not) with government were highlighted further in September 2006, when the President formally announced that land reform would be implemented in Indonesia after a hiatus of more than 40 years, with 8.15 million hectares of state land under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Forestry and the National Land Board slated for redistribution (*Republika Online* 28 September 2006). Almost immediately, FSPI leaders campaigned about the danger of 'pseudo-agrarian reform' because the scheme could be implemented without substantial political-economic transformation (FSPI 2006). KPA, on the other hand, and some of the other peasant organizations, argued that although the political-economic structure would not radically change, the plan could be used to facilitate the legalization of hundreds of thousands of claims on occupied lands by dispossessed peasants and indigenous groups (KPA 2006). The confusion wrought by these two positions amongst supporters of agrarian reforms on state lands is exemplified further by the fact that leadership at SPP, then a member of both FSPI and KPA, engaged in formal and informal discussions with government actors about the implementation of the new initiative.

The agrarian reform initiative may be an indicator that it is now the turn of agrarian movements and their leaders to change the political-economic context. Moreover, this context in 2007, well into the neoliberal and decentralized post-Suharto period, is considerably different than when nascent underground movements first began in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the place of the centralized New Order state is a mish-mash of diverse, decentralized districts, each dealing with shifting and uncertain politics in differently endowed agrarian environments with different institutional and social histories of land management. The MoF is still clinging to its claims to forest land. Parks as well as production forests look good to aspiring agrarian reform claimants, but they are off limits in the eyes of conservative conservationists and some environmental justice advocates. Despite these powerful forms of opposition, reform is in the air.

How all this will resolve is not entirely clear, as pilot project areas for the national agrarian reform initiative were being selected as of late 2007. Public

positioning and private agitation and action by reform promoters and detractors will continue. As with other agrarian collaborations and reforms, the real stories are not yet public.

What is clear is that there will be some alliances between national and sub-national environmental justice and agrarian reformers, just as these have been increasing in transnational campaigns. The common fight against GMO technology and the support of international organic farming are the most obvious examples of alliances (Stedile 2002, 103; Borras 2004; Biekart and Wood 2001). At the 2007 Climate Change conference in Bali and on their website, FSPI has come out in support of sustainable agriculture, organic farming efforts, anti-GMO campaigns and other 'initiatives' supported globally by *Vía Campesina*. In Bali, FSPI/*Vía Campesina* argued to the international community that 'small family farms make the earth cooler'. Again, it is interesting that FSPI leadership tends to use internationally oriented fora to make such claims, seeking legitimacy outward, while other national agrarian movement organizations such as KPA address the majority of their strategic initiatives to national and sub-national debates, institutions and actors.

CONCLUSION

Reformasi, decentralization and the resurgence of agrarian reform movements in Indonesia began at about the same time as the infamous global protests against WTO took place in Seattle, suggesting that they were part of a common transnational movement. However, as Biekert and Wood have pointed out, 'Global protest existed long before the "battle of Seattle"'. What is new are the growing linkages between highly diverse campaigns' (2002, 1).

This essay has shown that campaigns are constituted under different regimes and articulate within different conjunctures, with effects on each other arising from transnational, national and subnational sources. In a variety of ways that still need deeper exploration, the lines between environmental and agrarian justice movements are often blurred by their specific and common histories in opposing state expropriations. These have in part been hidden from view by the rhetorics and strategic moves of environmental and agrarian movements that suggest divergence rather than articulation and convergence. Using Indonesia as an example, we showed how agrarian and environmental movement rhetorics, strategies, alliances and other practices varied under neoliberalism and Reformasi, as well as under the previous authoritarian, state-led development regime. The outcomes and configurations of power have changed over time and have changed their times.

For observers of Indonesia's often violent agrarian and environmental politics, the extent of mass agrarian organizing, land occupations, public opposition to government policy and other critical actions since 1998 have been no less than revolutionary. Nevertheless, today's agrarian movements were forced to come to terms with the territorial and governance gains of yesterday's environmental movements. Similarly, and somewhat unexpectedly, as agrarian reform agendas have gained ground, at least in a symbolic or moral sense, environmental activists

are being forced now to take account of their own campaigns, demands and claims. Early alliances with agrarian justice groups split Indonesia's environmental movement, between relatively coercive and justice-oriented environmental groups. Many agrarian movement groups, however, have found common grounds with environmental justice advocates.

Despite their common euphoria when Reformasi replaced authoritarian rule, the organizations that make up Indonesia's resurgent agrarian movements are not united in their struggles today. Among other reasons for the splits are the particularities and politics of movement groups' different associations with transnational agrarian and environmental organizations and the changes these and national or sub-national groups have generated both under state-led development and Reformasi.

As political fields have changed and alliances with government and transnational institutions formed and dissolved, formerly marginalized activist concerns have become normalized within state and development practices and ideologies – first those concerns of the environmental movement then of agrarian movement activists. Environmental activism and action have engendered legal, institutional and territorial changes in national land management and control. Under different political economic regimes, in different historical moments, the political opportunities open to environmental or agrarian movement groups have been shaped not only by international and national agendas but by strong grassroots organizing, and movement groups' perceived needs and capacities to ally with each other, with state and transnational actors, and with capital. Further complicating matters, the logic of what might be called a national grassroots – including migrants travelling around the nation seeking work in resource-based industries, or land they deem to be 'empty' – does not always work well with the logics of the local grassroots (Li 2007). Thus, partnerships across and within movements and transnationally have not been consistent.

What is interesting is that all of them have learned to talk the talk of environmental sustainability, which has become increasingly important to operationalize. The landscapes of occupation must appear sustainably managed in order to claim a piece of the moral high ground and create grounds for agrarian reform. Yet in the present conjuncture, environmentally sensitive agrarian reform has to be seen as having been pre-configured by environmental movements, conservative and radical.

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