Vernacular Models of Development: An Analysis of Indonesia Under the "New Order"

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Summary. — Official development discourses often differ from the everyday discussions and activities of development agents. If the former reflect an official model of development, then the latter could be said to reflect a "vernacular" model. The latter model is the focus of this analysis, taking as a case study development in Indonesia during the "New Order" regime (1966–98) of former President Suharto. Resource relations between the Indonesian state center and rural periphery are examined along with the norms that govern the flow of resources as well as information on resource-use. This vernacular model of resource and information flows helps to explain the economic, political, and environmental crisis that befell Indonesia in the late 1990s and is relevant to understanding the development dynamics of a number of other nations. © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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Wong cilik lungguh dinglik oglak aglik mangane gogik.
The little man sits on his rickety stool and eats cassava chips. (Javanese aphorism about the vulnerability of the poor.)

1. INTRODUCTION

The normative forces that tell us what is important to study and what is not are particularly strong in the field of rural development. It often seems, for example, as if what happens

in development receives less attention than what is supposed to happen. Particularly neglected are the myriad "quotidian practices" (Gupta, 1995, p. 376) that attend development activities but yet are thought to be extrinsic to them. These practices, and their significance for the theory of development, are the subject of this paper.

(a) *Vernacular models*

In Indonesia, government officials use the term *insentip* "incentive" to refer to payments made to community leaders to facilitate the appropriation of community resources (e.g., land) for government projects against community objections. For example, during a fight that a Dayak nongovernmental organization (NGO) in West Kalimantan waged in the early 1990s against the establishment of para-statal plantations on tribal land, they discovered and published a list entitled *Daftar Insentif Pejabat Daerah* "List of Incentives for Local Officials," which gave the names of 14 local village, police, and military officials who were each being paid between 75,000–100,000 rupiah [1] per month to help persuade the local community to acquiesce in the appropriation of their land (Dayakologi, n.d., pp. 8–9). On the other hand, "incentives" is also used in official parlance to refer to payments made to lower-level officials to facilitate the flow of central government funds to peoples and communities that are physically and/or socioeconomically distant. The premise behind these payments is that without them, the central government funds would be captured by the intervening levels of the bureaucracy and would never make it to their intended recipients.

The same term, thus, is used for payments made to heighten the flow of resources in *to* the state over community objections and to minimize the loss of resources flowing out *from* the state over bureaucratic objections. In a narrow sense, the two incentives have opposite intentions; but in fact they both address a shared, underlying reality. The implication is that "incentives" are needed to overcome resistance to resource-flows by the *people* on the way in to the state, and by the *state* itself on the way out to the people; the implication is that resource-flows are perceived to be fighting the people on their way in to the state, and fighting the state on their way out. The perception is that it is a flow out that the people want and a flow in that the state wants: the interests of the people and

state, in this system, are perceived to be diametrically opposed.

During much of former President Suharto's "New Order" regime in Indonesia (1966–98), the official development discourse presumed an idealized, "giving" state, meaning a state that stood in relationship to its citizens (particularly its poorer, rural citizens) in the unproblematic role of benign donor of resources. This vision of the state is clearly at odds with the pattern of "incentives" cited above. [2] The perceived need to pay "incentives," and the implications of these payments as to where resources should versus should not flow and who will or will not support those flows, reflect a very different model of development. The tribal activists who exposed the pay-offs to local leaders cited above derided the attendant collusion by community leaders as *Pagar makan tanaman* "The Fence eats the plants" (Dayakologi, n.d., p. 7). According to this folk metaphor, thus, people are like plants and their local leaders are (supposed to be) like a fence, and what the fence is supposed to keep out are the rapacious activities of the state. [3] The state obviously held a rather similar view of rural reality and this is why it was willing to devote resources to altering the orientation of the "fences."

We term this vision of relations between people and state a "vernacular" as opposed to official model of development. This usage is inspired, in part, by Jackson (1984) concept of "vernacular landscapes," which he defines as local, customary, fluid, and adaptive. He describes his dawning awareness of vernacular landscapes as follows: "But gradually, out of the corner of my eye, so to speak, I saw a disturbing mobility of people and spaces, a search for adjustment, for change; an incessant making of structures and spaces and communities, an incessant adaptation and remaking of the landscape, resisted by the political landscape when it could no longer be ignored" (Jackson, 1984, p. xii). What we see out of the corners of our eyes tend to be things that do not fit existing conceptual paradigms. Jackson's accomplishment in the field of landscape studies, thus, was to bring what he saw into full view, to re-conceive it as not a peripheral matter but a type of landscape—a vernacular landscape—in its own right. [4] There is an analogy in development studies. [4]

Many observers of course have noted the ubiquitous difference between the ideal and the real in development, but most of them relegate this difference—no matter how great—to the

conceptual periphery, where it does not trouble development planning or theory. This peripheralization is based on the perception of the differences as random, unsystematic epiphenomena. What we perceived "out of the corners of our eyes," in contrast, was not merely the difference between the ideal and the real or the official and the vernacular, but the cohesive, normative, and thus *meaningful* character of this difference. In recognition of the systematic construction of this difference, and in order to bring this phenomenon into the central gaze, we use the term "vernacular model."

The concept of a vernacular model of development provides a way to make sense of the informal, norm-driven, diverse, and even conflicting practices that dominate the real versus imagined landscape of development. The vernacular model is more than simply a description of what happens as opposed to what is supposed to happen, however. It encompasses a description of how official and vernacular realities articulate with one another, how the boundaries between the two are defined, maintained, and renegotiated. The modern development project cannot be understood, indeed, in terms of one or the other but only the relationship between them. In a series of papers we are examining the way that official and vernacular realities are distinguished, subjects of study are defined, and the boundaries of analysis are drawn in development studies (Dove & Kammen, 1997; Kammen & Dove, 1997). We believe, with others (see the following literature review), that a major object of the development project is this contestation, redefinition, and defense of critical conceptual boundaries, as we intend to show here in the case of Indonesia.

(b) *The literature*

Our distinction between official and vernacular models of development continues in a long tradition of scholarly analyses of the relationship between the professed values and direction of development on the one hand, and on the other its actual course and impacts. Early work on this subject by dependency theorists such as Frank (1967, 1989) and others (e.g., Amin, 1976) developed as a critique of the stage-based modernization theory of Rostow (1960). This work problematized facile distinctions between developed versus undeveloped parts of the world and suggested that the circumstances of Third World peripheries are best explained not by inherent development dynamics but by their disenfranchised political and economic position in wider, extractive relationships with centers of capitalism. Examples of subsequent work in this tradition include de Janvry (1981) and Bunker, 1985. Related and influential work was done by Wallerstein (1974, 1980), who argued that the world is divided between core areas of capital and technology on the one hand, and on the other hand peripheral areas of labor and natural resources—with the former dominating the latter. Wallerstein's work was utilized by a generation of Marxist and "world systems" theorists to examine the way that development projects implicate local communities in the wider capitalist system.

Recent analyses by scholars like Crush (1995), Hobart (1993), and especially Escobar (1995) have focused more on the idea of development itself, arguing that it has implicitly privileged those in the world who can apply it to others. A particularly noteworthy contribution to this debate was made by Ferguson (1990), who argues that one of the principal goals of development discourses is to remove the appearance of politics from what is inevitably a highly politicized process (hence he calls development the "anti-politics machine"). Of equal importance, Ferguson argues that the manifest goals of development are often irrelevant as well as being unattainable, and that it is implicit goals of extending the reach of state bureaucracies that truly drive development interventions (cf. Ascher, 1999; Blaikie, 1985).

This distinction between the real and professed goals of development inevitably leads (as in Ferguson's work) to some re-examination of what is meant by development "failure." Scholars of development are increasingly reluctant to treat failure as an epiphenomenon, as something whose occurrence can be decoupled from our understanding of what development is fundamentally all about. As Esteva (1987, p. 136) writes, "For years, the literature arrived at the analytical conclusion that a missing factor or tool, or the perverse, corrupt, or inefficient use of something, could explain the damage done by development to people and their environments. These analyses have come to a dead end. They move in a vicious circle, like a dog chasing its tail." One of the problems with these sorts of explanation is that they are artificially localizing. As Gupta (1995, p. 384) writes of perceptions of corrup-

tion in India (cf. Ascher, 1993, p. 11; Soyinka, 1996, p. 38):

> It is often claimed that even well-designed government programs fail in their implementation, and that the best of plans founder due to widespread corruption at the lower levels of the bureaucracy. If this is intended to explain why government programs fail, it is patently inaccurate (as well as being class-biased). For it is clear that lower-level officials are only one link in a chain of corrupt practices that extends to the apex of state organizations and reaches far beyond them to electoral politics.

Gupta, among others, is saying that orthodox concepts of corruption divert our attention from the overall political system by leading us to think that only particular parts of it are at fault.

Another concept that is now being critiqued for similar reasons is that of "bad policy." In their study of the Amazon, Hecht and Cockburn (1989, p. 99) write, "To take 'poor policy' as the precipitating factor in deforestation is to see 'policy' as something conceived and executed by technocrats secluded from a country's political economy, and is an extraordinarily naive assumption." That is, policy may indeed be "poor" from the perspective of an external observer, but it does not follow from this that it represents an unintended product of the social and political system. This same error is committed when external observers attribute development failures to "lack of political will." What is so termed is actually "will in the wrong direction, it is policy success for elites" (Broad, 1995, p. 331); it simply means that "the rich and powerful have failed to act against their [own] interests" (Chambers, 1983, p. 161, cited in Hecht & Cockburn, 1989, p. 200). Chambers (1983) goes on to say that "'Political will' is a way of averting eyes from the ugly facts." Similarly, we suggest the concept of development failure obfuscates the circumstances of this failure by narrowly focusing on the particular failing while ignoring the wider institutional milieu that is dedicated to achieving precisely that outcome. For this reason, Ferguson calls customary references to development failure a "privileged rhetoric." It is privileged because it inhibits us from linking the actual outcomes of development to purported development intentions and, thereby, it inhibits us from drawing on the former to interrogate the integrity of the latter.

The inadequate linkage of actual development outcomes and purported development intentions is made possible, in part, by the way that not just knowledge but also ignorance of development is constructed. We are used to thinking of knowledge but not ignorance as an active product of bureaucratic activity, but this is a modernist fiction that itself ignores the value of ignorance. As van Ufford (1993, p. 157) writes of Indonesia, "Ignorance therefore becomes an important asset for those who are engaged in policy processes. Lack of insight into what is actually going on in the 'implementation' process in fact becomes of paramount importance [to them]." As a valued asset, ignorance must be constructed and defended—it does not simply result from failure to construct knowledge. Thus, Ascher (1993, p. 18) explains the lack of information about timber harvesting and regeneration in Indonesia:

> The restriction on information goes further than the simple failure to gather or publicize data: it has posed a severe limitation on scientific research and economic assessment. There are strong disincentives for the [Indonesian] Forestry Ministry and other agencies that could fund research projects to do so, as long as the findings are likely to be embarrassing or to arouse conflict.

In place of an idealized image of knowledge-construction that illuminates but is separate from the development context, therefore, we must recognize that in such contexts ignorance as well as knowledge is being constructed and this process is itself part of the development dynamic.

(c) *This analysis*

This study draws on primary as well as secondary data sources on Indonesia. The focus on Indonesia is based on the enormous national and international investment in development in this country over the past three decades and on stark disagreement over what the returns to this investment have been. From some perspectives, Indonesia was—at least until recently—a model of development success. In 1994, just a few years before Indonesia commenced its public slide into economic, political, and ecological chaos (Booth, 1999b; Hill, 1999; Sadli, 1999; Sunderlin, 1999), [5] the World Bank characterized its process of economic development as "one of the best in the developing world" (cited in Barber, 1998, p. 7) – and the Bank was joined in this view by many of the same scholars now studying the chaos. Well before doubt was cast

on this sanguine view by Indonesia's slide into crisis, however, it was disputed by a wide variety of different actors, including environmental NGOs, international environmentalists and human rights advocates, ethnic minorities, local as well as international labor and civil rights activists, and separatist groups in Indonesia's outer islands, among others. This dichotomy in views itself suggests to us that the way that different parties in Indonesia have conceived of, articulated, and evaluated their models of development merits study. In addition, the fall of Suharto in May 1998, after 32 years in power, makes the timing appropriate for a reassessment of his "New Order's" development policies—the legacy of which will take Indonesia many years to come to terms with. [6]

Our focus will encompass not just the traditional community-level subjects of detailed ethnographic analysis but also the state, its institutions, and the development process. Structures of government customarily have been studied by social scientists working at macro-scale levels of analysis; they have less frequently been studied using the finer-grained techniques commonly applied to local-level communities. As Gupta (1995, p. 376) writes:

> Very little rich ethnographic evidence documents what lower-level officials actually do in the name of the state. Research on the state, with its focus on large-scale structures, epochal events, major policies, and "important" people... has failed to illuminate the quotidian practices... of bureaucrats that tell us about the effects of the state on the everyday lives of rural people.

The ethnographic tradition brings weaknesses as well as strengths to such studies. One weakness is the "centrifugal impulse" [7] that traditionally predisposed anthropologists and other ethnologists to study not government but the governed, not those who exercise political power but those upon whom it is exercised. The related and peculiarly ethnographic emphasis on intimate study of proximate subjects has also been inimical to the study of abstract and disembodied systems like the state (Gupta, 1995, p. 377). On the other hand, the ethnographic focus on peripheral places is also a strength. As Roseberry (1996, p. 14) writes, "Practically, anthropology's emphasis on fieldwork has taken its practitioners to the fringes of empire, placing them in a virtually unique position among social scientists to

report *substantively* on empire's effects and victims."

We will begin our analysis by presenting several case studies from Indonesia's recent history that illustrate the way that resources actually flow in development programs, as opposed to the way that they are supposed to flow according to the official models of development. These case studies will show how the vernacular model of development encouraged the flow of resources toward the rich and powerful as opposed to the purported targets of development, the poor and weak. We will next look at the institutions that support these resource flows, focusing on norms concerning how resources are supposed to flow in the Indonesian state and normative aversion to feedback on the consequences of this flow. We will conclude by suggesting that feedback effects ultimately undermined the sustainability of this vernacular model of development.

2. RESOURCE-FLOWS

Before turning to examples of resource-flows between center and periphery in Indonesia, we will first briefly discuss the nature of center and periphery in Indonesia, which is central to this discussion.

(a) Center and periphery in Indonesia

A conception of state center and periphery has long offered heuristic value in thinking about relations between rulers and ruled. As Hobsbawm (1994, pp. 352–353) writes,

> In most of the rural Third World the central distinction was between 'coast' and 'interior' or city and backwoods. The trouble was that, since modernity and government went together, 'the interior' was governed by 'the coast', the backwoods by the city, the illiterate by the educated.

The "center" is in fact an old concept and indeed value in Indonesia, dating from the centrally-organized kingdoms of ancient Java. [8] This concept has persisted in everyday discourse into recent times. Thus, when people (including government officials) in the provinces, especially those off Java, refer to the national government in Jakarta, the term *pusat* "center" is commonly employed. When people in the national government talk about visiting the provinces, they use expressions such as

turun "going down" or even *mengadakan safari* "going on safari." Considerable recent ethnographic work has shown that these sorts of dichotomies between governing and governed are often inadequate to the representation of on-ground social and political complexities. While making this point, however, Nugent (1994, p. 358) has also observed that "The line between state and society is most easily drawn when the mission of the state has failed, when its power has been *forced* into coercive form by those with whom its seeks interrelationship." Such coercion arguably came to characterize government in Indonesia during much of the three-decade reign of Suharto, a period that was characterized by central dominance. As Malley (1999, p. 72) writes, "The New Order regime embodied centripetal power."

The importance of the concepts of center and periphery under the New Order is evident in the very measures that the central government took to obfuscate these concepts. Java, which is the home of Indonesia's ethnic majority and has been the seat of both colonial and post-colonial central governments, has throughout history dominated the politics, economics, and culture of much the archipelago. This dominance is reflected in a ubiquitous folk geography that divides the country into *Jawa* and *Luar Jawa* "Java" and "Outside Java." Under the New Order regime, the central, national government in Jakarta attempted to replace this long-standing Java-centric, conceptual geography with one based on a distinction between the eastern and western parts of the archipelago, as expressed in the phrases *Indonesia Bagian Timur* and *Indonesia Bagian Barat* "Eastern Indonesia versus Western Indonesia." [9] The latter phrasing groups some of Indonesia's outer islands with Java as the western part and thus elides the Java/non-Java dichotomy. In contrast, the Java/non-Java phrasing has clear center–periphery connotations. This latter phrasing draws attention to the fact that asymmetrical center–periphery relations still exist in Indonesia, hence the government's campaign to replace the traditional phrase with one that has no such connotations. By this very action, however, the government demonstrated the continued strength of the center–periphery opposition. Indeed, who but the center could relabel such a relationship as anything else?

The center–periphery dichotomy in Indonesia has been politically and economically privileging for the center. The recent global rise in the value of "indigeneity" has offered for the first time the possibility that this dichotomy might offer some privilege to the periphery (Li, 2000). But here too, the response of the central government is illuminating. Whereas a number of organizations (including conservative ones like the World Bank) have in recent years adopted the term "indigenous peoples" to refer to peripheral, traditional communities in Indonesia, the national government insisted on using the alternate term "traditional peoples" or even "isolated peoples" (Down to Earth, 1994; Persoon, 1996). The term "isolated peoples" defines people with respect to the wider social environment from which they have been purportedly severed, whereas the term "indigenous peoples" defines them with respect to the local social and physical environment, with which they have a privileged relationship because of their settlement history and knowledge of resources. Use of the term "indigenous" thus implies recognition of differences in social histories and knowledge systems within Indonesia, and this strengthens arguments for granting greater rights to local resources to local communities. Recognition of indigeneity accordingly posed a potential threat to Indonesia's center-biased pattern of resource exploitation. The central government had as great a need to contest this claim for local privilege, therefore, as it had to deny the fact of central privilege. This contest typically took the form of asserting that "*All* Indonesians are indigenous," which is no less false and self-privileging than saying that there is no center or periphery at all.

(b) *Resource-flows to the center*

We will draw our illustrations of resource-flows from the export crop sector, beginning with rubber. Indonesia is the world's second largest producer of natural rubber, and 78% of its production (Government of Indonesia, 1998, pp. 215, 216) comes from small groves of a hectare or so, cultivated by so-called "smallholders"—ordinary farmers who produce rubber with household labor to meet part of their household's income requirements (Dove, 1993b). Rubber cultivation fits many of the requirements for local development that are articulated by national and international development agencies: it involves local peoples in production for national and international markets, it diminishes their dependence on forest-based food cropping, and it is adopted with alacrity. Counterintuitively, smallholder

rubber production has won not the support but the opposition of the successive central governments in Indonesia. There has been a long history of state disinterest in and even opposition to this smallholder production (Dove, 1993b). Until the mid-1970s, the national government directed virtually all of its technical, material, and regulatory support— including international loans, grants, and projects—to the estate sector (cf. Booth, 1988, pp. 206, 225), giving little or nothing to the smallholder sector. The attraction of the estate sector to agents of the state is its controllability: estate development better suited the overarching governmental imperative of centralized control and extraction of surplus product (cf. Booth, 1988, p. 237). Not only did smallholder production not suit this imperative, it threatened it by the market competition that it presented to the heavily capitalized and relatively less efficient para-statal estates. This is reflected in the fact that the smallholders' market share grew steadily this century at the expense of the government and private estates that initially pioneered rubber cultivation (Dove, 1993b, 1996). Although this growth appears to suit the official model of developing the rural poor, therefore, it did not suit the vernacular model of privileging elites, and thus it has not been supported—and at times it has been actively contested—by the Indonesian state.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, under pressure from its international development partners, the Indonesian government began to redirect some resources toward the rubber smallholder sector. Perhaps the most important element in this effort involved a new, hybrid model of commodity production, called *Perkebunan Inti Rakyat* or "People's Nucleus Estate." The nucleus estates consisted of so-called *plasma* "satellite" smallholdings surrounding, and selling their produce to, a central government estate. These projects were beset by difficulties (Barlow & Tomich, 1991), many of which stemmed from conflict with local communities over issues of land compenzation. [10] But arguably the greatest difficulty involved the fact that the nucleus estate projects ignored the successful experience of smallholder agriculture over the past century (cf. Barlow, 1991, pp. 100–101; Barlow & Tomich, 1991, p. 44). These projects were explicitly designed to take advantage of estate not smallholder experience (Barlow, 1991, p. 100), to make the expertise of the central government estate available to the surrounding smallholders. There was no recognition of the more relevant expertise of the rubber smallholders themselves, because this would have opened to question the captive orientation of the smallholdings toward the state nucleus estate. In fact, this orientation was not a function of the smallholders' need for plantation expertise but of the plantation's desire (and indeed need) to control smallholder production. The officially planned resource flows toward the smallholders were in fact less important to the state than the actual flow of resources toward state planters. [11]

A related development program that also was seen very differently by its designers and its purported beneficiaries was the *Tebu Rakyat Intensifikasi* "People's Sugarcane Intensification" program. The national government, beginning in 1975, made a concerted effort to regulate and intensify sugar production in Indonesia (especially in the historic cane districts of Java), principally by trying to regulate the relationship between the parastatal mills that processed the sugarcane and the wet rice farmers who raised it in rotation with their rice crops. [12] This regulation focused on fixing in advance the source of sugarcane to be delivered to each sugar mill each season, by dividing the farms surrounding each mill into blocks and specifying which blocks would be planted in sugarcane during which seasons, in effect a form of contract agriculture (Watts, 1990), as in the Nucleus estate scheme described above. This was called the *glebagan* "rotation" system. [13] Many farmers resisted their obligatory participation in these rotations, however, on the grounds that the opportunity costs of taking land out of rice to plant sugarcane far exceeded the returns. [14] For example, in the mid-1980s a delegation of Central Javanese farmers reported to the press that they had to forego 200,000 rupiahs (then equal to approximately $179) in earnings from wet rice on a given area of land, in exchange for just 34,000 rupiahs ($30) from planting sugarcane there (Kedaulatan Rakyat, 1985). Whereas sugarcane promised higher earnings in theory—which was cited as the official justification for the rotation program—this was not the case in practice, because the government rotation system provided greater opportunities to outsiders (including agents of the state) to unofficially extract a portion of the farmer's income. This *de facto* aspect of the rotation system was steadfastly ignored by government officials. In general, mill officials had little

sympathy for farmers who were unhappy about participating in the compulsory cane cultivation system or, conversely, who wanted to cultivate sugarcane outside this system. Thus, the officials of one mill in East Java asked for government sanctions against any farmer who planted sugar out of rotation and then shopped around from one mill to the next for the best price—a practice that the mill officials derisively referred to as *pariwisata tebu* "sugarcane tourism." Cultivation outside the official rotations, just like noncultivation within them, weakened the mill's control over its supply of cane, whereas the entire, if implicit purpose of the program was to strengthen this control. Resistance to this program reflected, again, folk recognition that whereas the official model of development may have favored the farmers, the vernacular model favored para-statal enterprises.

(c) *Resource-flows from the center*

The vernacular model of development in Indonesia is reflected not only in the character of resource-flows into but also out from the state center, in particular in the difficulties that they encounter. [15] In theory, Indonesia's national government gathers revenue from provincial administrations all over Indonesia and then returns these funds to the provinces in the form of national grants, favoring the neediest provinces the most. In practice under the New Order regime, the return-flow was not as equitable as intended. The conflict between an official model of development devoted to assisting the periphery and a vernacular model devoted to assisting the center was reflected in the chronic problem of *kebocoran* "leakage," which refers to the loss of funds at intermediate levels on their way out from the center. The officers of an NGO in Kalimantan provided us with a memorable metaphor for this phenomenon, namely: "Central funding is like *es batu* 'a block of ice'. The further it gets from the center, the smaller it gets." The national government itself recognized that leakage of funds is a major problem in the implementation of regional development programs, and it dealt with (but also institutionalized) this leakage by including in all centrally-funded programs monies specially earmarked to satisfy each level of officials on the way down the bureaucratic hierarchy to the community-level targeted. These are one of the "incentives" mentioned at the beginning of the paper. Another method

that the national government devised for dealing with "leakage" and related problems was direct expenditure of funds from the Presidential office, in theory by-passing much of the bureaucracy that otherwise intervenes between government and citizens. This was the professed intent of the *INPRES* (from *Instruksi Presiden* or "Presidential Instruction") [16] program under Suharto. Good intentions notwithstanding, a number of observers concluded that this program of executive grants simply helped the more central and wealthy parts of the country become stronger, exacerbating the relative position of the poorer and more peripheral regions (Ardani, 1992, p. 116; World Bank, 1990, pp. 39–40). [17] The intended recipients of central government funds also recognized and tried to mitigate these problems of disbursement. Thus, regional and local-level government offices tried to deal with this problem by paying off the higher-level government officials who have authority over the disbursement of funds: one of the most common, routinized ways of doing this was to give duplicate *per diem* payments to all visiting central government official (*viz.*, in addition to the *per diem* that the officials drew from the central government). [18]

The few instances in which the official development model was successful at delivering resources from the center to the periphery are illuminating. Three notable examples are Indonesia's (i) transmigration program, (ii) family planning program, and (iii) the programs of its *Departemen Sosial* "Social [Welfare] Department." All three programs were characterized by either relatively few resources (especially the *Departemen Sosial*), or resources that central elites had a limited or finite need for (*viz.*, family planning services), or resources that central elites did not want (*viz.*, slots in the transmigration program). An official in the transmigration program frankly admitted to one of the authors that they *preferred* to transmigrate *orang yang mampu* "better-off people" because of their perceived greater development potential, but only *orang miskin* "poor people" were interested. [19] The clear implication was that if better-off peoples *wanted* the resources of the transmigration program, they would have been given them. The more general implication is that the resources that were most successfully transferred to marginal groups were those that did not appeal to elites; the resource-flows that were allowed to proceed unhindered down and

out from the center were those that central elites did not want. According to the official model of development, the state gave valuable resources to marginal groups; according to this vernacular model, it gave value-less resources to them (cf. Dove, 1993a).

3. SUSTAINING INSTITUTIONS

The vernacular model of development in New Order Indonesia was associated with a set of norms regarding governance in general and resource-flows in particular.

(a) *Norms concerning resource-flows*

One relevant norm, derived from development economics, valorizes resource-flows that cross production or market boundaries and disparages resource-flows that do not. This norm, which is espoused by both national and international development communities, encourages resource-flows toward central political-economic structures and thus production for not local but extra-local consumers. [20] But the most important norms were perhaps traditional Indonesian ones.

(i) *Resource flows to the center*

Anderson (1990, p. 53) writes, "In the Javanese political tradition wealth necessarily follows Power, not Power wealth." Traditional rule was morally justified in terms of a principle of reciprocity: subjects sent their resources to the ruler, and the ruler reciprocated by giving his subjects protection, harmony, and fertility. [21] Reciprocity was also invoked by the New Order regime, but it was cloaked in a nationalist jargon. Thus, one of the authors was privy to the plight of a young entrepreneur from a minority Dayak background who attempted but failed to obtain a timber concession in West Kalimantan in the 1970s. The policy of the Indonesian government was then to award these concessions as political favors, mostly to prominent figures in the military (Ascher, 1998, pp. 52–53; Barr, 1998, pp. 4–5). When the Dayak entrepreneur protested this policy to the provincial government, the latter invoked the traditional value of *gotong royong* "to bear mutually," saying that it did not matter who received a concession because all of the country's citizens would benefit equally in the end. The tribesman regarded this as a transparent obfuscation of the truth, which is that all citizens do *not* benefit equally in the end. Another example involves a dispute in the 1980s between local tribesmen and a nucleus estate project near Sanggau in West Kalimantan, the gist of which was summed up by the local *Temenggung* (traditional tribal leader) as follows [22]:

> *Asal sama makan, sama kerja, tidak ada yang tidak mau. Kalau pemerintah adil, tidak ada yang tidak mau* "If [everyone] eats the same and works the same, there is no one who will not want [to cooperate with the plantation program]. If the government is just, there is no one who will not want [to cooperate]."

The tribal leader's clear implication was that, everyone was *not* working and eating the same and that was why people were not cooperating.

The terms of the vernacular model of development in Indonesia have sometimes been so poor for the subjects of development that the government has been obliged to invoke the values not of reciprocity but of out-and-out sacrifice by the citizen for the state. Sometimes this was explicit: as Hoskins (1996, p. 42) writes of Eastern Indonesia, "Local people are told they must "make sacrifices" for state development, using a phrase (*mengorbankan diri*) that suggests a literal offering up of local lives to bring these projects to completion." Sometimes this invocation was more subtle: to return to the sugar cane intensification program discussed earlier, for political reasons mill officials could not acknowledge the actual economic calculus that made it unprofitable for farmers to cultivate sugar cane. Whereas the program in effect demanded economic sacrifice by the farmers for the benefit of the para-statal mills, the mill officials could not say this. But they could and did say that the farmers should think not just about themselves but also about their country. Thus, the hard-pressed manager of one sugar mill in East Java wrote: [23]

> *Diperlukan adanya suatu usaha berupa... motivasi untuk rasa ikut berkewajiban dan mentaati ketentuan glebagan yang telah disepekati bersama antara lain dengan menjelaskan bahwa tanah mempunyai fungsi sosial* "An effort is needed in the form of motivation to increase feelings of being obligated and faithful to the provisions of the block rotation system that have been agreed upon, together with, among other things, making it clear that the land has a social function."

The concept of the "social function" of land is derived from the *Undang-Undang Pokok Agraria* "Basic Agrarian Laws" of 1960, Article 6 of which states *Semua hak tanah mempunyai*

fungsi sosial "All rights to land have a social function." The mill manager interpreted this to mean that the reduction of Indonesia's domestic sugar shortage was a social responsibility in which "obligation and faithfulness" were to be encouraged and any personal, negative economic realities of the situation were simply to be resignedly accepted. This sort of rhetorical legerdemain was a way of reconciling the contradictions between the official and vernacular models of development.

(ii) *Resource-flows from the center*

   The vernacular model of development during the New Order was associated with norms regarding resource-flows *from* as well as *to* the center. It was associated with norms not only about how the strong and wealthy attract resources, but also with norms about how the weak and poor do not. The Indonesian government generally did not problematize resource flows to peripheral and marginal members of society. The prevailing belief was that resources would eventually "trickle down" on their own to the poor (Barber, 1998, p. 35). This belief was perhaps fortified by the metaphoric representation of marginal groups as lying "downward" from the structures of power, since this implied that gravity alone would take care of resource flows to the needy. [24] When these "naturalized" resource flows did not in fact reach the poor, the blame was placed on the poor themselves.

   According to the official discourse of poverty in Indonesia, the challenge of poverty alleviation was the challenge of "reaching" the poor. There is accuracy to this representation, in the sense that many of the factors that make people poor also isolate them, and this in turn helps to keep them poor. That is, the structural factors that make them poor also make it difficult for development assistance to reach them (cf. World Bank, 1990, p. 69). This analysis becomes problematic, however, when the "difficulty of reaching the poor" is represented as the failure of the poor as opposed to the failure of society. That is, the problem with the focus on "reaching the poor" is that it blames the poor for not being reached; it blames the poor for being poor. This is evident from such explanations of poverty as "the poor are unable to reach up to the tree of opportunities," as an advisor to a poverty-alleviation project in Indonesia told one of the authors. [25]

   The most important premise behind this idea of the "unreachable" poor is that poverty is a phenomenon that is somehow separate from the wider society. This was explicitly reflected in the term for the last major New Order initiative in Indonesia for poverty alleviation, the *INPRES Desa Tertinggal* "Presidential Instruction on Left-Behind Villages" program. As this term implies, the program was based on a conception of poverty as a village-level phenomenon, a phenomenon of particular villages that had been "left behind" by the rest of society. [26] Recent scholarship on poverty, however, directly attacks this sort of "localization" of poverty. For example, Yapa (1993, p. 262) writes that

> A common assumption of development theory is that people and places are poor because they lack resources; however, a reasonable case can be made that, in many instances, modern technologies have contributed to scarcity by destroying existing sources of supply and creating demands for new ones.

Accordingly, Yapa (1993, p. 255) continues, "I argue that the 'problem' should no longer be confined to the place where we see the tangible, physical evidence of poverty..."

   The artificial localization of poverty in Indonesia was reflected in the concept not only of people beyond reach but also the concept of people who could not be helped even if they could be reached. A central government official told one of the authors, *Kalau begitu saja serahkan uang kepada orang miskin, seperti buang air di laut* "If [you] just give money to the poor, it is like urinating in the ocean." [27] According to this philosophy of poverty-alleviation, therefore, government resources are better used to invest in the long-term productive capacity of the poor rather than to just meet their short-term needs. A subset of the poor was deemed to have no such capacity, however. A class of "uninvestable poor" was thought to exist, referring to a class of people thought to be so lacking in productive potential that anything given to them could only be relief as opposed to investment. Not only is this concept dubious at best, but it lends itself to self-serving overuse. Thus, Wiebe and Mason (1992b, p. 196n.14) suggest that whereas the uninvestable poor amounted at one point to at most 5% of the Indonesian population, in some poverty-alleviation programs this label was being applied to—and was thus excluding from these programs—10–30%. Most if indeed not all of this 10–30% *was* investable, although in some cases they may have been more chal-

lenging to work with than the better-off segments. But state development workers could bypass this more challenging 10–30% of the population—the true poor—by simply labeling it "uninvestable." The concept of "uninvestable poor" thus helped to create an outer zone of Indonesian society into which development assistance did not extend.

One of the pillars of poverty-alleviation efforts, as implied in the contrast drawn above between productive investment and "urinating in the ocean," was the belief that the poor are dysfunctionally overconsumptive. According to this belief, resources given to the poor to alleviate their poverty are likely to be frittered away, so strategies to forestall this had to be designed in to all poverty alleviation programs. One of the most common strategies was making the poor responsible for one another. For example, in order to participate in one program of loans for the poor (the *Pembinaan Peningkatan Pendapatan Petani Kecil* "Creation of an Increase in Small Farmer Income" program), the prospective recipient had to formally assume shared responsibility for repayment of the loans extended to *all* members of his or her *kelompok* "group." In effect, the recipients of this government assistance had to assume for the participating national bank (*Bank Rakyat Indonesia*) most of the risk that it ran by lending to them—something that was never requested from commercial borrowers, no matter how risky. Instead of the bank subsidizing the entrepreneurial activities of these marginal borrowers, as Indonesian banks often subsidized the entrepreneurial activities of state elites, these borrowers had to in effect subsidize the involvement of the bank in its lending program to this sector of society. [28]

Echoing these government concerns about consumption, an official involved in administering the special *INPRES* funds dispensed directly from the President's office told one of the authors that *INPRES tidak boleh untuk konsumptif, hanya produktif* "INPRES [funds] cannot be used for consumption, only production." [29] By this the official meant not just that development funds should be used productively but *also* that they should be preserved or multiplied for subsequent use. He expressed this as a requirement for *nilai tambah* "added value" or *uang kembali* "return of the funds," which was supposed to be achieved through contributions from the local communities involved. Indeed, the need for such contributions was an article of faith among officials involved in Indonesia's poverty alleviation programs. It was typically stated as, simply, *Harus ada sumbangan* "There must be a self-contribution!" This concept of "contributions" from the poor was not an isolated aberration; rather it was part of the wider, vernacular system for extracting resources from Indonesia's poor, rural population under the guise of development. For example, Soetrisno (1993, p. 4) reports that local officials in Pacitan, Central Java, routinely collected from villagers seven different types of *sumbangan partisipasi pembangunan* "self-contributions for participation in development," above and beyond the official government tax on land and buildings. These included contributions for national independence day, the purchase of uniforms for the local militia, indoctrination in national values (*Penataran P4*), and the sending of religious pilgrims to Mecca. The extraction of these resources under the guise of development, which was intended to have the opposite effect, again reflects the conflicted relationship between the official emphasis on giving and the vernacular emphasis on taking. [30]

The premise of exacting a "price of admission" to poverty-alleviation programs—namely that the poor in effect have resources that they are not using for their own development but might use if prodded by the government—is dubious, and the impact of such exactions on poverty alleviation efforts also is problematic. On the one hand, whenever the government failed to extract such a contribution, there was an exclusionary impact on selection of participants for the program involved. Although the intention was to separate the unmotivated villagers from the motivated, in practice it separated the villagers who were worse-off from those who were better-off—as a result of which the former were further marginalized (cf. Wiebe & Mason, 1992a, p. A-7). On the other hand, if the government succeeded in extracting a contribution, the result was a flow of resources from one of the most needy sectors of society (*viz.*, the rural poor) to one of the least needy (*viz.*, the government). Perhaps even more important than the actual amount of resources involved is the fact that the very concept of "self-contributions" from the poor represented, again, a false localization of poverty among the poor, with a distorting impact on how poverty and the poor were viewed. It shifts attention from what the poor need to what they already have, and it shifts attention from what society needs to provide to the poor—or what society

needs to stop taking from the poor—to what the poor need to provide themselves.

(iii) *Contestation of norms*

The tortuous redefinition of resource donor and resource recipient reflected in the concept of *sumbangan* "self-contributions" was a product of the conflict between the official and vernacular models of development. There are many similar examples. For example, the national government in Indonesia long derived most of its revenue from resource extraction from the outer islands. Some of these funds were returned to the provinces in centrally-funded development programs, and in this guise they were termed *uang pusat* "central monies." As this term denotes, the center (mis)represented the resources (that originated in the provinces) that it returned to the provinces as its own. The center thus reframed the resource-flow from periphery to center as a fictional flow in the opposite direction. With increasing regional autonomy, however, this public fiction became more difficult to sustain. Thus, early in the 1990s the head of a provincial planning office in Kalimantan (BAPPEDA) told one of the authors, "There is no such thing as *uang pusat*, because the center does not generate any monies of its own but only gathers them from the provinces where they are generated." [31]

The New Order's norms regarding resource flows were increasingly contested as the regime's tenure drew to a close. This paper began with an example of an NGO's effort to expose the inconsistencies in development policy by publishing a list of "incentive" pay-offs made to local leaders. Pointed critiques also came from the citizenry, however, including those elements of it most marginal and thus most vulnerable to the gap between official and vernacular models of development. A common target for these popular critiques was official development discourse, which had become ubiquitous and near hegemonic in its framing of public discussions of economic, political, social, and even cultural life. One of the most effective efforts to undermine this hegemony consisted of folk reinterpretation of government acronyms. The landscape of development in Indonesia was (and is) one of offices, programs, and projects, each with long descriptive names, all of which are replaced in everyday usage by their respective acronyms and abbreviations—so many that there is a 668-page dictionary solely devoted to these terms (Parsidi, 1994).

Soetrisno (1993, p. 5) analyzes this assault on the language of development in terms of the perceived failure of development. He writes *Sikap sinis yang dimanifestasikan dalam kebiasaan rakyat desa 'melecehkan' singkatan nama proyek* "Cynicism [regarding development] has manifested itself in the practice by villagers of deriding the acronyms of [development] projects" (Soetrisno, 1993). He gives as an example the way that the acronym "KUD" for the *Koperasi Unit Desa* "Village Cooperatives" is reinterpreted as *Ketua Untung Dulu* "The Head Profits First" or (in Javanese) *Kongkonan Utang Duwit* "Forcible Indebtedness" (Soetrisno, 1993, p. 5)—which refers to the widely-held and oft-documented (see Santoso, 1993) belief that the cooperatives were dominated by elites at the expense of the common folk. Another example cited by Soetrisno (1993) is the widespread reinterpretation of the acronym "HPH" for the *Hak Pengusahaan Hutan* "Industrial Forestry Concessions" as *Hak Petani Hancur* "The Rights of the Farmers are Smashed," which refers to the widespread violation by HPH's of the customary land rights of forest-based swidden cultivators. Related examples gathered by the authors include reinterpretation of the abbreviation *Lit.Bang.* for the state bureau of research and development (*Penelitian dan Pembangunan*), one of the primary research bodies for development planning, as an abbreviation instead for *Sulit bangun* "difficult to develop," and reinterpretation of the term *demokrasi* "democracy" as an abbreviation for *dk mau kerasi* or (in complete form) *Yang besar tidak mau dikerasi* "the big [the rich and powerful] do not want to be forced [to give up their privileges]." [32] These folk reinterpretations did not merely criticize government development policy, they explicitly drew attention to the perceived, ironic opposition between what policy promised and what it achieved. They explicitly draw attention, that is, to the existence of two contradictory models of development, one official and one vernacular. [33]

(b) *Norms regarding information flows*

The New Order's norms regarding how resources should flow were sustained by another set of norms regarding how information should flow. Most of the research on information flows in less-developed countries has problematized flows from but not to the

state. It has been assumed that the state adequately informs itself and that what needs attention, rather, is the capacity and commitment of the state to inform others, especially its citizenry. For example, in a study that he conducted in the Philippines, Chambers (1990, p. 242) reported disparagingly that six out of seven of the government's information management systems for agriculture and natural resources provided information to central planners not local farmers. Chambers' point was that too many resources were being devoted to informing the state and too few to informing the rural peoples. In fact, there is considerable evidence that information flows to the state are as problematic as information flows from the state. This is consistent with what Chambers (1983, p. 76) himself says elsewhere, that the circumstances of rural development are typically most conducive to the flow of knowledge down and not up political hierarchies. This asymmetry is a function of the importance of certitude in the exercise of state power (cf. Dillon, 1995, p. 346).

(i) *Communication from the periphery*

There is a tradition within Indonesia (especially Java) of acceptable, critical feedback from the people to the state. One of the more subtle venues for this involved the theater. Adas (1981, p. 236) writes of pre-colonial Java:

> The *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet plays) and *wayang wong* (plays staged by actors) were 'weather vanes of public opinion' in Javanese society. The *dalang*, who, like the clowns in the *garabeg* (court festival) processions, was considered immune from punishment, was able to give voice to peasant complaints and to transmit them from one region to another.

A more direct form of critical feedback was a formal procession to the ruler. [34] Thus, Adas (1981, p. 229) continues:

> In Java, disgruntled villagers—at times led by their headmen or, in other instances, in opposition to them—organized processions to the residence of the most powerful lord in the region, which in the vicinity of the capital meant the royal palace... Given the fragmentation of power and responsibility in the precolonial... Javanese state systems and the great potential for official evasion, one suspects that petitions and protest processions rarely brought effective redress to aggrieved cultivators. But the very existence of these legal or quasi-legal channels of protest must have given some pause to even the most tyrannical officials.

These traditional mechanisms of critical feedback from below lost some of their authority during the colonial era, and they were even more undermined during the New Order. Thus, whereas the *Punakawan* "clowns" of Javanese theater traditionally played the role of the voice of state critic, under Suharto's rule there were special indoctrination sessions (*Penataran P4*) in national ideology for the *dalang* "puppeteers," in which they were instructed to deliver pro-development messages through the clowns (Soemarwoto, 1996, p. 6). [35] This reversal in the clowns' function, from informing the state to informing the citizenry, indicated the importance to the New Order regime not of acquiring information about its subjects but of holding information from them at bay. If critical clowns were seen as threatening under the New Order, this was even more true of formal demonstrations or protests. One of the authors participated in a study of the para-statal plantation sector in the mid-1980s, in the course of which an incident came to light that involved a "demonstration" by disgruntled Dayak tribesmen in front of a plantation manager in West Kalimantan (Dove, 1998). The prevention of further demonstrations—which the managers termed *ancaman mental* "mental threats"—became a primary goal of both the plantation management and the local government, which proposed the following "solution":

> *Pemecalah masalah: mencegah adanya demonstrasi penduduk yang ingin menyalurkan kehendaknya langsung kepada PTP dan Bupati Kepala Daerah atau langsung kepada Petugas PTP dengan kekerasan* "The solution to the problem: prevent the holding of demonstrations by people who want to make known their desires *directly* to the plantation and the district officer, or *directly* to plantation officials, in a harsh way [*emphases added*]."

Direct communication to higher officials was perceived, thus, as intolerable. The implication was that any plantation worker with a complaint should, at most, make it to his or her immediate superior, who could then pass it on to his or her own immediate superior, and so on, until—and if—the upper levels of plantation management and government were reached. [36] The insistence on this hierarchical structure insulated official beliefs from a contrary peasant reality.

There was an explicit commitment in the New Order's discourse of development to soliciting feedback from the subjects of devel-

opment. The language of feedback was certainly much in evidence, with key words and phrases such as "bottom-up planning," *pend-ataan* "data-gathering," and *musyawarah* "mass meetings" heavily used. But in practice, state antipathy toward feedback repeatedly manifested itself in subversion of any process that might actually provide it. This can be illustrated with another example from the above-mentioned study of the plantation sector, involving a conflict between para-statal plantations and local tribesmen in West Kalimantan. When we asked a gathering of tribesmen—who were angered over the appropriation of their lands for a para-statal plantation—what they wanted the state to do, the response was an explosion of laughter. In a circumstance of conflict with the state, the tribesmen clearly did not expect to be asked about *their* wants. This question, and the dialogic relationship with the state that it implied, left not just the tribesmen, but the government officials accompanying us, completely nonplussed. Both were used to beginning with state desires and criticisms of the shortcomings of the local community; neither was used to beginning with local desires and criticisms of the shortcomings of the government. This distinction was reflected in the plantation manager's post-meeting assessment that what these tribesmen needed was *penyuluhan yang betul-betul* "extension that is really extension" *Penyuluhan* is the government gloss for imparting government information and directions to the rural population (cf. Echols & Shadily, 1992, p. 531). The manager's concern was not that the state was not getting the tribesmen's message, but that the tribesmen were not getting the state's message. The emphasis was not on asking the tribesmen what they wanted from the state; rather, the emphasis was on telling the tribesmen what the state wanted from them—and repeating and strengthening this message until the tribesmen "got it."

Indonesia's New Order government made one of the most massive commitments to gathering data on its citizens of any less-developed country. A vast state apparatus for gathering detailed information on every conceivable aspect of socioeconomic life extended down to the smallest and most remote community in the country. This effort may have provided the state with much important data, but it failed to provide the state with very much data on some of the matters of greatest importance to the citizenry, notably how well or poorly they were faring under the state's development program and, of most importance, how they evaluated this program. The success—for such it is—in *not* gathering this latter information is linked to the very enthusiasm of the state for gathering data. For example, in the early 1990s the annual report required by the state from each of Indonesia's 67,514 villages spanned 45 pages and contained 1,842 separate questions (Government of Indonesia, 1992–93; Government of Indonesia, 1990). This enormous demand for information did not ensure greater understanding of the countryside by the central state, however, indeed it may have ensured just the reverse: a 45-page report may well convey less information and result in more obfuscation than a one-page report that is focused on community needs and complaints, problems and conflicts. If a bureaucracy needs to *not* pass information from the periphery to the center, a 1,842-question report is a good way to achieve this.

(ii) *Information as a political tool*

The way that the New Order regime carried out research on its citizenry, the way that it managed information flows to the center from the periphery, reflected an inherent suspicion of these flows. The central government associated objectivity with information generated at the center and subjectivity with information generated at the periphery. When the national government needed to obtain information from the provinces, it tended to think that the provincial governments were incapable of providing it in an objective manner. Thus, officials in Indonesia's national *Biro Pusat Statistik* "Central Bureau of Statistics" acknowledged to us that their data-gathering had sometimes been focused too much on the needs of the central government and too little on the needs of the provinces, but they did not think that the solution was to give the provinces more responsibility for data-gathering. [37] They said that the perceived threat of *unsur subyektif* "subjectivity" in the provinces was too great. Central government officials saw the difference between center and periphery not as a difference between two subjective agendas, therefore, but as a difference between a subjective agenda and an objective one.

The belief that the periphery's management of information flows is subjective was part of a more general belief among government officials that this is in fact the *purpose* of information

flows. For example, the principle that drives feedback from periphery to center, or bottom to top, was popularly characterized during this era as *Asal bapak senang* "As long as [one's] superior is happy" (cf. Santoso, 1993, p. 228). [38] This was a clear cultural statement that information that will make one's superior happy is passed on, whereas information that will make one's superior *un* -happy is not. The corollary to this rule is that when one passes on information that will not make one's superior happy, it is because one's *intent* is to make him or her unhappy. During the national debate over the extent of poverty in Indonesia that finally took place in the 1990s, for example, a number of officials complained that more poverty was reported in their jurisdictions than actually existed. The vigor of their reaction was attributed, by other government officials, to the common practice by which lower officials over-reported poverty (or other perceived failures of governance) to make their superiors (even as high as the level of provincial governor) look so bad as to warrant their removal or transfer from office. In this cultural context, the possibility that negative information will be reported for any reason other than such political machinations is not credited. The reflexive reading of ill-intent into such reporting explains why higher-level officials in Indonesia got so angry when negative information was reported by their subordinates. [39] It also explains why so little negative information was reported. [40]

These examples reveal the relationship between information and the New Order regime to be a complicated one. One of the most powerful recent analyses of the role of information-gathering in the modern state is that by Scott (1998) "Thinking Like a State." Scott emphasizes the desire of the modern state to make local systems "legible" to facilitate state political control and resource extraction. The scholarly critique of this desire is that it leads to *too much* legibility for the good of the local community itself, but the analysis here of state norms that inhibit versus promote information flows shows that some states need illegibility as much as legibility. [41] Nor is illegibility an accidental product of governance. The construction of illegibility is as much a formal state project as the construction of legibility. As van Ufford (1993, p. 157) writes, "Ignorance is a defensive construct against false assumptions which, for cultural and political reasons, underpin development policy-making."

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The anomalies, contradictions and, especially, failures of development policy in Indonesia under Suharto's New Order regime are illuminated by recognizing the existence of two, co-occurring models of development: an official one and a "vernacular" one. The former represents a formal, uniform, and idealized vision of what the state professed, whereas the latter represents a more nuanced, normative, and conflicted vision of what state agents actually strove for. The vernacular model accounts for the character of resource-related relations between center and periphery, including the privileging of resource flows to the center—which we illustrated with examples from the export crop sector—and the problematizing of flows from the center—which we illustrated with examples from various programs of government aid. The vernacular model is associated with norms concerning the resource rights of the center as well as norms concerning the inability of the periphery to cope with resources. The vernacular model also is associated with norms that inhibit the flow of information concerning resource-use from the center to the periphery. The vernacular model is a model of what some actors *desired* development to be, not the way that development *had* to be; it is a model of what happened, thus, but not a model of what *had* to happen. The vernacular model is an intentional one: it was the product not of accident but of institutionalized values and desires.

This analysis offers a new perspective on some of the perduring paradoxes of development in Indonesia and elsewhere. It illuminates some of the otherwise tortuous logic of development, such as the concept of taking from as well as giving to the poor. It helps to explain why bureaucracies often seem to fight themselves, as in providing special funds to prevent officials from skimming off development funds before they reach their targets or developing special presidential programs to target directly the most-neglected regions of the country. [42] We have treated such data not as anomalous but as systematic indicators of what development is all about (cf. Thompson, Warburton, & Hatley, 1986, p. 5, 147).

This analysis also helps us to understand better the process by which development crises and collapses occur. This applies to a variety of events that occurred during Indonesia's economic, political, and environmental crises

over the last several years but perhaps to none so clearly as the great forest fires of 1997 and 1998. The government initially blamed these fires, which occurred on a number of different islands but were especially extensive on Kalimantan, on the "usual suspects" for all manner of rural ills, the forest-based swidden cultivators. But, while the fires were still burning, international publication of satellite photos showed that the major culprits in fact were para-statal plantations (Gellert, 1998; Harwell, 2000). This revelation split the government ranks, led at least initially to sanctions against some of the para-statals, and contributed to a crisis of national as well as international confidence in the New Order's policies for managing natural resources. In short, there came a point when the resource degradation (*viz.*, the fires) was so great and the manipulation of information was so biased (*viz.*, blaming the fires on innocent farmers) that the illegitimacy of the official model and the inequity of the vernacular model were revealed for all to see.

Whereas the collapse of Indonesia's government, economy, and ecology in 1997 and 1998 all reflected massive underlying problems with the country, most observers did not admit to these problems until after the collapse. Right up until the end—and this is one of the most remarkable features of Indonesia's development history—international observers continued to call Indonesia a development success story. Positive feedback from great resource extraction coupled with little information on its consequences promoted cheery views of Indonesia until things worsened to the point where a breakdown became inescapable. The "surprise" of Indonesia's collapse, is an integral part of the underlying development paradox. Explanations of Indonesia's collapse that do not explain why it was so long misperceived as a success, fail to explain one of the most important dimensions of the story.

NOTES

1. This was then equal to approximately US$36–$48.

2. This vision is at odds with local perceptions as well. As Hobsbawm (1994, pp. 352–353) writes:

It seemed to a good many of them [Asian and Islamic peasants] that the best solution to their problems was not to get involved with those who told them that economic development would bring untold wealth and prosperity, but to keep them at bay. Long experience had shown them and their ancestors before them, that no good came from outside. Generations of silent calculation had taught them that minimizing risks was a better policy than maximising profits. . ..

3. Thus, the tribal activists wrote that one local village leader, instead of acting like a *panutan masyarakat* "leader of the people" as was proper, had himself given land to the offending para-statal corporation. Similarly, the subdistrict chief, instead of being the people's *pelindung* "protector," had told them that if they did not give their land to the corporation, they were *Keras kepala, tidak mau membangun* "Hard-headed and did not want to develop" (Dayakologi, n.d., pp. 7, 8). There are many other examples of such cooptation of local leaders. For example, these same activists found that gambling syndicates were coming in to the rural areas during national holidays and running highly predatory games of chance, which they were able to do by making a pay-off of 30,000 rupiah/day to a *panitia* "committee" composed of the local civil, police, and military officials (interview with Lembaga Dayakologi, 28 September 1993).

4. With one difference, however: Jackson writes (1984, p. 150), "By political I mean those spaces and structures designed to impose or preserve a unity and order on the land, or in keeping with a long-range, large-scale plan." Whereas Jackson opposes "vernacular" and "political," thus, we believe that such a dichotomy overly privileges political structures such as the state. Recent studies of the state have taught us that the state is not monolithic but driven by multiple and even conflicting agendas of different stakeholders; that the state may be centrally organized but it must in the end be locally imagined and constituted; and that even nation states play a local, antipodean role *vis-à-vis* a variety of international and global political structures.

5. Less visible chaos was, as we will argue in this paper, present long before this period, however.

6. We recognize that there were many changes in development policy during the New Order's 32 years, but an exegisis of these changes lies beyond the scope of this paper. The vernacular model of development that we are studying was most characteristic of the latter 20–

25 years of the New Order, and this is the period from which our cases are all drawn. We thank Douglas Kammen for drawing this point to our attention.

7. This phrase comes from Kroeber (cited in Geertz, 1984, p. 265).

8. We are grateful to Carol Carpenter for this insight.

9. Chauvel (1996, p. 61) suggests that the New Order regime's official popularization of this phraseology dates from a speech of Suharto's in January 1990.

10. For example, the managers of one nucleus estate near Singkawang in West Kalimantan told one of the authors in 1993 that most of the land on which they developed this estate was formerly *hutan karet dan hutan sekonder* "jungle rubber and secondary forest" (from fallowed swiddens). When such lands are appropriated for nucleus estate projects, compensation is routinely inadequate and long in coming if it comes at all.

11. The Nucleus Estate program's central, state-orientation and lack of attention to local expertise as well as rights is similar to that of Indonesia's long-troubled Transmigration program—with which, in fact, Nucleus Estate programs were often paired (*viz.*, with transmigrants becoming smallholders on Nucleus Estates).

12. This program was initiated by *Instruksi Presiden* No. 9/1975 "Presidential Instruction Number Nine."

13. *Glebagan* historically referred to the rotation of communal land among villagers to ensure equality of access over time to the best-irrigated parcels (Moertono, 1981, p. 125). Now it ironically refers to equality of participation in an unpopular government program.

14. Under the colonial system of sugar cultivation, the sugar mills also did not pay the Javanese farmers the true opportunity cost of putting their land under sugarcane (Gordon, 1979).

15. An example that illuminates past difficulties in gathering resources from elites and then expending them on public needs are the fees that the national government was supposed to assess on all commercial forestry operations in the country to finance much-needed reforestation efforts. Broad (1995, p. 325) has shown that the funds gathered under this aegis were actually returned to the loggers as subsidies for their own projects.

16. The *INPRES* program was explicitly established to bypass the government hierarchy and route funds directly from the office of the president to needy rural areas. The creation of the *INPRES* program thus amounts to the government's own acknowledgment of the problems besetting resource flows from the center.

17. Cf. Booth (1999a, p. 130) comment: "The spatial distribution of poverty in Indonesia has been changing to the benefit of Java. Under the New Order, real per capita consumption expenditures rose—poverty decreased—more rapidly in rural Java than in other rural areas. . ."

18. Report by a university scholar in a conference on "From Growth to Sustainable Development," Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, 24 August 1993.

19. Interview, Ministry of Transmigration, Jakarta, 12 August 1993.

20. An example of the importance of these same norms beyond Indonesia involves the widespread disjuncture between the *de facto* importance of fuelwood, charcoal, and other biomass-based fuels in meeting household energy needs on the one hand, and on the other hand, the invisibility of these resources in national forestry and energy policies. In sub-Saharan Africa (e.g.), biomass comprises 60% of the total energy supply (reaching 75% in Kenya, and up to 90% in several other nations (Kammen, 1991; Kammen & Kammen, 1993)). Its sale as fuelwood or charcoal to urban areas is a major source of capital for poor rural peoples: in Kenya, up to 50% of non-aid related rural capital is the result of biomass sales (Kammen, 1992). Most African governments do not, however, acknowledge biomass as a resource, because it is an informal sector commodity that does not generate export capital and does not contribute to national GNP figures (the principal measure of economic health used by the United Nations and other international institutions). More generally, renewable energy technologies are disfavored in much of Africa because their adoption would lead to increased local autonomy and decreased reliance on national energy services (Kammen & Lankford, 1990; Kammen, 1999). As a result, the importance of biomass fuel is underreported and it is managed largely through informal channels and in spite of official opposition.

21. Cf. Hornborg (1998, p. 134) who writes, "Centers of 'civilization' must be able to *disembed* from their peripheral sectors those goods and services which they require for their metabolism. A pervasive aspect of such appropriation is that it is *represented as a reciprocal exchange*." Hornborg cites an historic example of an

Incan emperor who "engaged local populations to work in his maize fields by offering them *chicha* (maize beer) and mimicking traditional labor exchange."

22.   Interview near Sanggau, West Kalimantan, 31 June 1982.

23.   Memo dated 7 August 1984 to the Plantation Training Center (LPP) in Yogyakarta.

24.   We are grateful to Carol Carpenter for this insight.

25.   Interview, National Planning Agency (BAPPE-NAS), Jakarta, 5 August 1993.

26.   The idea that the village is basically an autonomous unit, responsible for its own fortunes, is made explicit in the official national scale for annually ranking the development success of villages. The three-part scale consists of the ranks of swadaya "self-supporting," swakarsa "free of government," and swasembada "self-sufficient."

27.   Interview, Social Department (*Departemen Sosial*), Jakarta, 20 August 1993.

28.   This insistence on the poor taking responsibility for one another was perhaps legitimized by its success in the case of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. This and other aspects of the Grameen Bank have often been adopted without, however, adopting the Bank's overarching philosophy. The bank's founder, Muhammad Yunus, began with the explicit goal of reversing the traditional relationship between the poor and lending institutions: instead of asking how to make the poor more creditworthy, he asked how banks could be made more responsive to the needs of the poor.

29.   Interview, Social Department (*Departemen Sosial*), Jakarta, 11 August 1993.

30.   Soetrisno (1993) notes that his list does not even include the more episodic but still onerous exactions as when the local *KODIM* (military post) shows a film and requires all villagers to purchase admission tickets.

31.   Workshop,   Regional   Planning   Offices (*BAPPEDA*), Pontianak, 1 October 1993. The Indonesian government is far from unique in obfuscating the roles of recipient and donor in development. Thus, the World Bank terms its funding (in the Indonesian language) *bantuan Bank Dunia* "World Bank aid," although it mostly takes the form of interest-bearing loans. This fiction is coming under fire from disenchanted Indonesian officials and academics, however.

32.   Examples reported by scholars and government officials in the conference "From Growth to Sustainable Development," Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, 24 August 1993. Government officials also use ironic word-play as a weapon in the development contest. For example, farmers who resist participation in government development projects are sometimes referred to, by government agents, as "WTS." In the shorthand of Indonesian development, the acronym "WTS" stand for Waton Sulaya (from the Javanese), which means to argue for the sake of arguing. But, the better known referent for this acronym is wanita tuna susila "girl of damaged morals" or prostitute (personal communication, Loekman Soetrisno, August 8, 1993). The use of "WTS" thus permits the government to accuse farmers, in one breath, of both stubbornness and immorality.

33.   The gap between the official and vernacular models has been graphically illustrated in the belief among Kalimantan tribesmen that development projects sponsored by the state require their heads (*viz.*, as sacrifices). As Tsing (1993, p. 91) writes,

> The necessity of human heads for state building projects suggests Meratus appreciation of a relationship between core and periphery, city and frontier, such that the ostentation of the first requires the vulnerability of the latter. These are indeed the conditions of uneven development.

This is clearly a belief about a taking, not giving, state. As Hoskins (1996, p. 43) also writes:

> The reversal of predator and prey in the counter-mythology of headhunting presents a critique of colonialism and state domination: the violence of the periphery is turned around and said to prey on the victims of political centralization. This reversal has continued into the age of independent nation-states, and has come to focus on predatory development and the continuing inequalities between the people who once controlled areas of rich natural resources and the people who now sell them.

34.   Cf. Van Vollenhoven's (1923, p. 42) reference (cited in Moertono, 1981, p. 76) to "the right to complain to a higher official in a procession called *nggogol.*"

35.   There is a long history to the relationship between *wayang* theater and Indonesian politics. For example, see McVey (1986) on the use of *wayang* metaphors in the Communist movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

36. Schrieke (1966, p. 145) writes that during the colonial era as well, any peasant who ignored the steps of hierarchy when complaining was punished. Cf. Isaacman (1996, p. 121) on cotton plantations in colonial Mozambique.

37. Workshop, Regional Planning Offices (*BAPPEDA*) offices, Pontianak, 1 October 1993.

38. Cf. the traditional Javanese aphorism regarding candor and rank: *Dupak budjang*, *semu mantri*, *esem bupati* "A kick for a slave, an insinuation for a lower official, a smile for a high dignitary" (Moertono, 1981, p. 19).

39. It also explains why superiors try so hard to control access to subordinates. For example, during the earlier-mentioned study of peasant-planter conflict, when meetings were held between local tribesmen and visiting researchers, the local plantation managers invariably attended and their presence clearly reduced the possibility for obtaining candid feedback from the tribesmen (cf. Stoler, 1985, p. 58, 79).

40. This is an old problem in Indonesia. Thus, Multatuli (1982, p. 214), reporting on data-gathering under the Dutch colonial regime in the 19th century, wrote:

> *Export* from a Residency means [was interpreted by the Government as] prosperity; *import* into it means want. Now, when those returns are examined and compared, it will be seen that rice is so abundant everywhere *that all the Residencies combined export more rice* than *all the Residencies combined import...* The conclusion of all this is therefore the absurd thesis *that there is more rice in Java than there is*. That's prosperity, *if* you like!

41. Cf. Carpenter (forthcoming).

42. These actions also may reflect the fact that the state and its institutions are not monolithic.

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