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Local People, National Parks, and International Conservation Movements: Conflicts over
Nature in Southeast Asia

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor
of Philosophy in History

by

Steven Martin Rodriguez

2013

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Local People, National Parks, and International Conservation Movements: Conflicts over
Nature in Southeast Asia

by

Steven Martin Rodriguez

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Lynn A. Hunt, Chair

In the 1980s and 1990s, Southeast Asia became a world center for the establishment of national parks designed to foster the new conservation objectives of “collaborative management” and “ecotourism” development. Yet, by the start of the twenty-first century, these national parks programs had become notorious for their failure to achieve their management goals. International conservation organizations continued to sponsor park programs that excluded villagers from accessing the resources of the parks; meanwhile, the destruction of the parks’ flora and fauna increased due to extensive logging and other forms of large-scale exploitation.

Through an examination of management plans, government documents, the writings of conservationists, and reports from local journals and newspapers, this dissertation will put the recent history of national park development in Southeast Asia

into a longer-term historical context of international conservation, colonial initiatives, and nation-state building. This dissertation will present case studies of parks in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam in order to illustrate specific examples of the conflicts that were manifested in the process of the implementation of national parks in the region. Through an analysis of the findings of the case studies, the research will identify common defining conflicts facing national parks in contemporary Southeast Asia.

Case studies from Indonesia and Vietnam reveal that the failure of these nations' parks to achieve their management objectives was not the result of international NGOs and the imposition of their exclusionary conservation projects, but a consequence of increasing political decentralization, and the ongoing struggles between regional and national leaders over the control of natural resources. The history of Malaysia's national park, however, reveals that through a process of debate and contestation, it was possible to design an enduring national park program that reconciled the interests of local, national, and international groups. Ultimately, this dissertation suggests that the conception of a "national park" as a fixed archetype to be applied globally has been deficient. A new conception of the "national park" as an adaptable model designed to address specific and unique cultural and social contexts is essential for the future success of national parks programs in Southeast Asia.

The dissertation of Steven Martin Rodriguez is approved.

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2013

Dedicated to all of the marvelous teachers in my life.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1997, Indonesia's celebrated rainforest and orangutan sanctuary, the Kutai National Park in eastern Borneo, burned for three months consuming 95 percent of its remaining lowland forest and killing one-third of its orangutan population. The fires in East Kalimantan soon became an international affair as the unhealthy air pollution "haze" generated from the 200,000 hectares of burning forest spread westward from Indonesia to Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei. The Indonesian government blamed the El Niño effect, but conservation organizations and the neighboring countries affected placed the blame on Indonesia. International investigators discovered that the Kutai National Park was still being heavily (and illegally) logged, and the careless logging procedures had created the conditions for the catastrophic fires.¹

The fire-induced "haze" was not the first international crisis involving Indonesia's national parks. The previous year, the OPM (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka* - Papuan Freedom Organization) had taken seven European conservation workers and several others recently captured by a local tribe (the Nduga) as hostages. These conservation professionals, representatives of IUCN, UNESCO, and WWF, were investigating the 1.2 million ha of territory slated to become Lorentz National Park.² The Nduga and OPM wanted compensation for the loss of the tribal lands to be included in the transaction, and failing to receive any recognition of their rights and any compensation they decided to take direct action hoping to attract media attention to their cause. After several months of

¹ James Cotton, "The Haze Over Southeast Asia: Challenging the ASEAN Mode of Regional Engagement," *Pacific Affairs* 72 (1999): 331-335; S. Robert Aiken, "Runaway Fires, Smoke-Haze Pollution, and Unnatural Disasters in Indonesia," *Geographical Review* 94 (2004): 66-72.

² International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

lengthy negotiations, including intervention by the Pope and the International Red Cross, their strategic protest ended with the Indonesian military moving in and slaughtering the Papuan rebels (all the Westerners survived). Lorentz National Park was gazetted the following year.³

These problems are not unique to Indonesia's national parks. Examples of the failures of national parks programs of the 1980s and 1990s can be repeated throughout Southeast Asia, and indeed much of the developing world of the global South. In case after case, national parks programs in Southeast Asia suffered from corrupt or incompetent administration, or at best a lack of enthusiasm for the programs, and widespread ignorance of their existence or purpose by the domestic populations. The parks' resources continued to be exploited—often by the agencies that were supposed to be protecting them. Moreover, the misery caused by national parks programs has created a legacy of distrust and proposals for new parks are often met with widespread resistance. The notion that national parks are “America's greatest idea” is not a sentiment that would be shared by many residents of the developing nations of the global South.

What is surprising, however, is that in many cases, these national parks were designed in order to avoid these problems. In the 1980s and 1990s, Southeast Asia's parks had been specifically developed to provide benefits to the people surrounding the parks. Southeast Asia became an important testing ground for new national park initiatives formulated to foster “sustainable development,” “collaborative management,” and “ecotourism.” Yet, in case after case these parks failed to protect the environment,

³ Daniel Start, *The Open Cage: The Ordeal of the Irian Jaya Hostages* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997). The Indonesian western part of New Guinea has a complicated history of names. Irian Jaya has been used, then Papua.

and gained a reputation as another source of government corruption by the residents in and around them.

Through an examination of management plans, government documents, and the writings of conservationists, as well as reports from local journals and newspapers, in this dissertation I will examine the contentious history of national park development in Southeast Asia. I will explore why these parks failed to achieve their conservation and management objectives and what these failures teach us about how conservation organizations might more effectively contribute to developing sustainable models for national parks in these nations. The goal of my research is to elucidate a neglected facet of the environmental history of Southeast Asia, but it is also designed to stimulate ideas on how national parks in Southeast Asia might improve their ability to provide the benefits of conservation, economic development, and recreation.

Although national parks were developed in Southeast Asia as early as 1925, national parks were slow to evolve in the region. Angkor Wat in Cambodia, declared a *parc national* by the French in 1925, was the first protected area in Southeast Asia to be designated as a “national park.” However, this area was designed for the protection of architectural monuments, not for the protection of nature, and reflected a particular French vision of national parks, emphasizing tourism and protection of landscapes.⁴ King George V National Park created in Malaya in 1939 was arguably the first and only national park in Southeast Asia during the colonial era that was specifically created for

⁴ Caroline Ford, “Nature Culture and Conservation in France and Her Colonies 1840-1940,” *Past & Present* 183 (2004): 192; Andrea E. Gaughan, Michael W. Binford, Jane Southworth, “Tourism, Forest Conservation, and Land Transformations in the Angkor Basin, Cambodia,” *Applied Geography* 29 (2009): 213-14; Henri Jaffeux, “La long et passionnante histoire des parcs nationaux français,” *Pour Mémoire* 9 (2010): 149-150.

the protection of flora, fauna, and wilderness.⁵ In the post-colonial era, the eastern regions of Malaysia—Sabah and Sarawak—also developed parks, while Thailand in the 1960s became the regional leader for conservation initiatives, developing a system of parks that included Khao Yai, which would soon become the most popular national park in Southeast Asia.⁶

In the 1980s, Southeast Asian nations moved to the forefront of global initiatives for the development of national parks. Between 1980 and 2010, the number of national parks in the region expanded from fewer than thirty to over one hundred and fifty. Moreover, while previously most national parks were “paper parks” with few facilities, staff management, or visitors, by the 1990s many of the parks were more regularly funded, staffed, and visited by a growing numbers of tourists.⁷

The relatively late blossoming of national parks in Southeast Asia was due to several factors. In the 1920s and 1930s, when imperial conservation groups first lobbied for the creation of national parks in Southeast Asia, there were concerns over upsetting the domestic populations who were resistant to any restrictions over their access to forest resources.⁸ Moreover, at the time the focus for imperial conservationists was Africa, and

⁵ Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells, *Nature and Nation: Forests and Development in Peninsular Malaysia* (Copenhagen: NIAS, 2005), 195-97

⁶ Lee M. Talbot and Martha H. Talbot, eds., *Conservation in Tropical South East Asia* (Morges, Switzerland: IUCN, 1968), 349-82.

⁷ United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Center, and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), “World Database on Protected Areas,” Protectedplanet.net; IUCN, *Protected Areas of the World: A Review of National Systems. Volume 1: Indomalaya, Oceania, Australia and Antarctic* (Gland, Switzerland, IUCN, 1992), 1-6.

⁸ Raymond Bryant, “Forest Problems in Colonial Burma: Historical Variations on Contemporary Themes,” *Global Ecology and Biogeography Letters* 3 (1993): 130-37; Robert Cribb, *The Politics of Environmental Protection in Indonesia* (Melbourne: Monash University, 1988), 12-14; Thomas Frédéric, “Protection des forêts et environnementalisme colonial: Indochine, 1860-1945,” *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*

the creation of national parks for that continent's extraordinary "mega-fauna." In Africa, the colonial powers were able to forge agreements regarding conservation and national parks, but the French, Dutch, and British conservationists were unable to achieve the same coordination of their conservation efforts in the politically volatile and densely populated colonies of Southeast Asia.⁹

In the 1960s, when the development of national parks surged in popularity in the recently decolonized nations of Africa, most Southeast Asian nations were in the midst of political and economic turmoil during which the development of national parks was not a priority. There was great suspicion of the US dominated conservation organizations, while the rise of Communism in Southeast Asia, a doctrine not especially supportive of "national" parks or conservation, also inhibited the creation of parks.¹⁰

It was not until the 1980s and 1990s that the implementation of national parks programs became pervasive in Indonesia, Vietnam, and other nations in the region. At the time, Vietnam, Cambodia, and other Southeast Asian nations were moving towards regularizing their relations with developed nations. In this more open political climate, Southeast Asian governments were more amenable to participating in the expanding international conservation movement. Among other advantages, implementing conservation initiatives provided these developing nations access to financial and technical assistance from international conservation organizations.

56 (2009): 121-26.

⁹ John MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 190-94.

¹⁰ Michael L. Lewis, *Inventing Global Ecology: Tracking the Biodiversity Ideal in India, 1947-1997* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004), 23-35.

The expansion of national parks was also a result of the tourism boom in Southeast Asia during the 1980s and 1990s. The positive support and national importance accorded by Southeast Asian governments to tourism development; the search by tourists for alternative, exotic destinations away from the overdeveloped resorts of the West; as well as the increasing availability of affordable international travel led to a surge in tourism. Extraordinary flora and fauna, and magnificent natural scenery were the principal attractions for tourists in Southeast Asia, and national parks were promoted as an important feature in the region's tourism portfolio.¹¹

The international conservation organizations for their part had entered a new phase in their development that made them more sensitive to the need to integrate development and conservation in the management of national parks. National parks programs had often been sources for conflict because they imposed a "fortress" style of conservation that prohibited any human occupation or exploitation of the parks' resources. National park programs were rejected by central and local governments that sought to exploit the valuable forests, and the villagers in and around national parks who depended on the parks' resources for their survival. Recognizing that park programs needed to take these factors into account, in the 1990s conservationists formulated new management models that made provisions for "traditional use" of park resources and promoted ecotourism as a source of alternative livelihoods for local residents in and around the parks.¹² National park development became popular in Southeast Asia at the

¹¹ Peggy Teo and T.C. Chang, eds., "Tourism in Southeast Asia," *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 19 (1998): 119-26.

¹² Earthwatch Europe, IUCN, and The World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Business, and Biodiversity, *The Handbook for Corporate Action* (Switzerland: ATAR Roto Presse SA, 2002), 3-12; Adrian Phillips, "Turning Ideas on Their Head: The New Paradigm for Protected Areas," *The George*

same time when these new management initiatives were being promoted; the region became a popular testing ground for putting these new conservation models into practice.¹³

The spread of national parks in the global South has been an increasingly popular area for research. Scholars have evaluated the implementation of sustainable development, collaborative management, and ecotourism programs in national parks in different regions of the global South. This research has overwhelmingly emphasized the failures of these initiatives. Scholars have argued that despite the claims of conservationists, these new policies merely repackaged the previous protectionist conservation paradigm; they continued to embody the emotional, ethical, and scientific feelings and ideas about the natural world that were characteristic of traditional notions of conservation.¹⁴ Interpretation of the ambiguous notion of “sustainability” remained the domain of the scientists of the international conservation community, and despite claims

Wright Forum 20 (2003): 1-6.

¹³ Jeffrey A. McNeely, J. Harrison and P. Dingwall, eds., *Protecting Nature: Regional Reviews of Protected Areas* (Gland, Switzerland: World Conservation Union, 1994), 16-24; Steve Dery and Romain Vanhooren, “Protected Areas in Mainland Southeast Asia, 1973-2005: Continuing Trends,” *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 32 (2001): 185-202.

¹⁴ Ramachandra Guha “Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique” *Environmental Ethics* (1989): 71-83; Michel P. Pimbert and Jules N. Pretty, “Parks, People and Professionals: Putting ‘Participation’ into Protected-area Management,” in Krishna B. Ghimire and M. P. Pimbert, eds., *Social Change and Conservation: Environmental Politics and Impacts of National Parks and Protected Areas* (London: Earthscan, 1997), 300-06; Stanley Stevens, *Conservation through Cultural Survival: Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas* (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1997); Arturo Escobar, “Whose Knowledge, Whose Nature? Biodiversity Conservation and The Political Ecology of Social Movements,” *Journal of Political Ecology* 5 (1998): 53; Lisa M. Campbell, “Human Need in Rural Developing Areas: Perceptions of Wildlife Conservation Experts,” *Canadian Geographer* 44 (2000): 171-79; Vasant K. Saberwal, Mahesh Rangarajan, and Ashish Kothari. *People, Parks and Wildlife: Towards Coexistence* (New Delhi, 2001); N.A. Sloan, “History and Application of the Wilderness Concept in Marine Conservation,” *Conservation Biology*, 16 (2002): 294-305; Lisa M. Campbell, “Conservation Narratives in Costa Rica: Conflict and Co-existence,” *Development and Change*, 33 (2002): 29-56; P. R. Wilshusen, Steven R. Brechin, C. L. Fortwangler, and Patrick C. West, “Reinventing a Square Wheel: Critique of a Resurgent ‘Protection Paradigm, in International Biodiversity Conservation,” *Society and Natural Resources* 15 (2002):17-40.

to embrace traditional use in national parks, in practice, any consumptive resource use practices by local populations in national parks were invariably considered “unsustainable” by conservationists.¹⁵

Collaborative management initiatives in national parks that were promoted by conservationists have also come under attack. In theory, collaborative management programs advocated active participation between representatives of local residents, the scientific community, and government agencies that shared knowledge, power, and responsibility for the management of the national parks.¹⁶ However, according to critics conservation experts assumed that the objectives of conservation efforts were set, and that participation and collaborative management was solely about getting the locals “onboard.”¹⁷ Moreover, critics alleged that conservationists rarely gave the local

¹⁵ Daniel H. Janzen and INBio/Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad, “A North-South Perspective on Science in the Management, Use and Economic Development of Biodiversity,” in Odd Terje Sandlund, Kjetil Hindar, and Anthony H. D. Brown, eds., *Conservation of Biodiversity for Sustainable Development* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1992), 26-30; Odd Terje Sandlund, Kjetil Hindar, and Anthony H.D. Brown, “Introduction,” in Odd Terje Sandlund, Kjetil Hindar, and Anthony H. D. Brown, eds., *Conservation of Biodiversity for Sustainable Development* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1992), 9-11; John L. Hough, “Obstacles to Effective Management of Conflicts Between National Parks and Surrounding Human Communities in Developing Countries,” *Environmental Conservation* 15 (1988): 129-36; Curtis Freese, *The Commercial, Consumptive Use of Wild Species: Managing It for the Benefit of Biodiversity* (Gland, Switzerland: WWF International, 1996); Kent H. Redford and Steven E. Sanderson, “Extracting Humans From Nature,” *Conservation Biology* 14 (2000): 1362-64; Kent H. Redford and Brian D. Richter, “Conservation of Biodiversity in A World of Use,” *Conservation Biology* 13 (1999): 1247-50; Henning Borchers, *Jurassic Wilderness: Ecotourism as a Conservation Strategy in Komodo National Park, Indonesia* (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2004), 25-26.

¹⁶ Mark Poffenberger, ed., *Keepers of the Forest: Land Management Alternatives in Southeast Asia* (West Hartford, Kumarian Press, 1990); Harold Brookfield and Yvonne Byron, *Southeast Asia's Environmental Future: The Search for Sustainability* (Tokyo, United Nations University Press, 1993); Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, “Collaborative Management of Protected Areas,” in Sue Stolton and Nigel Dudley, eds., *Partnerships for Protection: New Strategies for Planning and Management for Protected Areas* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd., 1999), 224-34; A.W. Ingles, Arne Musch, and Helle Qwist-Hoffmann, *The Participatory Process for Supporting Collaborative Management of Natural Resources: An Overview* (Rome: FAO, 1999), 1-6; Stephen R. Kellert et al., “Community Natural Resource Management: Promise, Rhetoric, and Reality,” *Society and Natural Resources* 13 (2000): 706; Marcus B. Lane, “Affirming New Directions in Planning Theory: Comanagement of Protected Areas,” *Society and Natural Resources* 14 (2001): 658.

communities the attention required to implement a successful collaborative management program. Conservationists overlooked or disregarded the conflicting interests that existed within communities and between communities. Instead, conservation discourses furthered a generalized image of homogeneous “local communities” allowing for a collective approach to the complex socio-political aspects of collaborative conservation practice and natural resource management.¹⁸

Scholars have also pointed out that by the late-1990s, the acceleration of deforestation, species extinction rates, and population growth in the global South resulted in a renewed emphasis on exclusionary practices in international biodiversity conservation. By the late-1990s, the development goals propagated in the Convention for Biological Diversity and other conservation documents of the early-1990s were swallowed up by the fear of a new global extinction crisis and the need to protect biodiversity above all else. With these assumptions, the solution was a return to “fortress conservation” and the restriction of resource extraction in national parks.¹⁹ Critics alleged

¹⁷ Yannis A. Phillis and Luc A. Andriantatsaholiniaina, “Sustainability: An Ill-defined Concept and Its Assessment Using Fuzzy Logic,” *Ecological Economics* 37 (2001): 435-56.

¹⁸ John L. Hough, “Obstacles to Effective Management of Conflicts Between National Parks and Surrounding Human Communities in Developing Countries,” *Environmental Conservation* 15 (1988): 130-33; Michael R. Dove, “A Revisionist View of Tropical Deforestation and Development,” *Environmental Conservation*, 20 (1993): 21-23; Bonnie J. McCay and Svein Jentoft, “From the Bottom Up: Participatory Issues in Fisheries Management,” *Society and Natural Resources* 9 (1996): 239-42; J. Peter Brosius, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, and Charles Zerner, “Representing Communities: Histories and Politics of Community-Based Natural Resource Management,” *Society and Natural Resources* 11 (1998): 158-63; Arun Agrawal and Clark C. Gibson, “Enchantment and Disenchantment: The Role of Community in Natural Resource Conservation,” *World Development* 27 (1999): 632-35; G. Mohan and K. Stokke, “Participatory Development and Empowerment: The Dangers of Localism,” *Third World Quarterly* 21 (2000): 247-268; Pamela J. Jakes and Dorothy Anderson, “Introduction: Diverse Perspectives on Community,” *Society & Natural Resources* 13 (2000): 395-97; M. B. Lane, “Affirming New Directions in Planning Theory: Comanagement of Protected Areas,” *Society and Natural Resources* 14 (2001): 662-67; Adrian Martin and Mark Lemon, “Challenges for Participatory Institutions: The Case of Village Forest Communities in South India,” *Society and Natural Resources* 14 (2001): 589-90; Borchers, *Jurassic*, 17-18.

¹⁹ Katrina Brandon, Kent H. Redford, and Steven E. Sanderson, eds., *Parks in Peril: People, Politics, and Protected Areas* (Washington, D.C: Island Press, 1999); John G. Robinson, “The Limits to Caring:

that conservation experts perpetuated the characterization of local inhabitants and their practices as the destructive source of environmental degradation in national parks in order that these conservationists could authorize their own control over the management of the parks' natural resources.²⁰ The threat of mass biological extinction was instrumental in increasing conservationists' influence in policy decisions, access to resources for research, and role in shaping the way nature was managed in national parks.²¹

In the 1980s and 1990s, ecotourism development in national parks was promoted as a panacea for reconciling the conflicts between development and conservation objectives of national parks, as well as providing a source of alternative livelihoods for local residents.²² Ecotourism was distinguished from other forms of nature tourism in that it was "low impact" tourism, and it provided direct economic benefits to the local villagers.²³ However, case studies revealed that as rural communities and local

Sustainable Living and the Loss of Biodiversity," *Conservation Biology* 7 (1993): 20-24; Arthur H. Westing, "Core Values for Sustainable Development," *Environmental Conservation* 23 (1996): 218-22; James Meadowcroft, "Sustainable Development: A New(ish) Idea for A New Century?" *Political Studies* 48 (2000): 373; John Terborgh and Carel Van Schaik, "Why The World Needs Parks," in John Terborgh et al., eds., *Making Parks Work: Strategies for Preserving Tropical Nature* (Washington: Island Press, 2002), 3-8; John Terborgh and Carlos A. Peres, "The Problem of People in Parks," in John Terborgh et al., eds., *Making Parks Work: Strategies for Preserving Tropical Nature* (Washington: Island Press, 2002), 302-07.

²⁰ Melissa Leach and Robin Mearns, "Introduction," in Melissa Leach and Robin Mearns, eds., *The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment* (Oxford: The International African Institute, 1997), 4-13.

²¹ David Takacs, *The Idea of Biodiversity: Philosophies of Paradise* (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 40-47.

²² Elizabeth Boo, *Ecotourism: The Potentials and Pitfalls* (Washington, D.C: Worldwide Fund for Nature, 1990), 1-4; Katrina Brandon, *Ecotourism and Conservation: A Review of Key Issues* (Washington: The World Bank, 1996); Fiona Burton, "Can Ecotourism Objectives Be Achieved?" *Annals of Tourism Research* 25 (1998): 756-57; Martha Honey, *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?* (Washington, D.C: Island Press, 1999), 12-15; Stephen J. Page and Ross K. Dowling, *Ecotourism* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), 50-58.

²³ Fern L. Filion, James P. Foley, and André J. Jacquemot, "The Economics of Global Ecotourism," in Mohan Munasinghe and Jeffrey McNeely, eds., *Protected Area Economics and Policy: Linking Conservation and Sustainable Development* (Washington, D.C: The World Bank, 1994), 235-52; David Newsome, Susan A. Moore, and Ross K. Dowling, *Natural Area Tourism: Ecology, Impacts, and*

entrepreneurs often lacked the education and money to become involved in tourism, and it was the national and local elites who reaped the benefits from tourism developments.²⁴ Moreover, despite the claims to its low-impact on the environment, ecotourism often resulted in pollution and the disturbance of wildlife.²⁵ According to its detractors, the ambiguity of ecotourism, its roots in notions of wilderness, and its subsequent marketability made it an ideal tool for furthering traditional conservation efforts in national parks, while its adoption as a sustainable use approach was also a means of securing political and economic control of a tourist destination area.²⁶

In addition to the broader scholarship that has criticized the sustainable development, collaborative management, and ecotourism initiatives for national parks in developing nations, this dissertation also draws upon research on the environmental history of Southeast Asia, in particular the substantial literature that has focused on the

Management (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2002), 15-19.

²⁴ Marnie P. Bookbinder; Eric Dinerstein, Arun Rijal, Hank Cauley, and Arup Rajouria, "Ecotourism's Support of Biodiversity Conservation," *Conservation Biology* 12 (1998): 1399-1403; Lisa M. Campbell, "Ecotourism in Rural Developing Communities," *Annals of Tourism Research* 26 (1999): 534-553; Sheryl Ross and Geoffrey Wall, "Ecotourism: Towards Congruence Between Theory and Practice," *Tourism Management* 20 (1999): 124; Sheryl Ross and Geoffrey Wall, "Evaluating Ecotourism. The Case of North Sulawesi, Indonesia," *Tourism Management* 20 (1999): 673-82; J. McCarthy, *Nature Based Tourism Case Study: Gunung Leuser, Indonesia* (Perth: Murdoch University, 1999); Regina Scheyvens, "Ecotourism and the Empowerment of Local Communities," *Tourism Management* 20 (1999): 246-48; Matt Walpole and Harold J. Goodwin, "Local Economic Impacts of Dragon Tourism in Indonesia," *Annals of Tourism Research* 27 (2000): 559-76; Maribeth Erb, "Ecotourism and Environmental Conservation in Western Flores: Who benefits?" *Antropologi Indonesia* 66 (2001): 72-88.

²⁵ R. W. Butler, "Tourism: An Evolutionary Perspective," in James Nelson, R. Butler, and Geoffrey Wall, eds., *Tourism and Sustainable Development: Monitoring, Planning, Managing* (Waterloo: Heritage Resources Center, University of Waterloo, 1993), 38-41; Harold J. Goodwin, "Sustainable Tourism and Poverty Elimination" (1998), accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.propoortourism.org.uk/dfidpaper.pdf>; A. Collins, "Tourism Development and Natural Capital," *Annals of Tourism Research* 26 (1999): 101-02; R. Van der Duim and J. Caalders, "Biodiversity and Tourism: Impacts and Interventions," *Annals of Tourism Research* 29 (2002): 749-51.

²⁶ Borchers, *Jurassic*, 32-33; Anita Pleumarom, "The Political Economy of Tourism," *The Ecologist* 24 (1994): 142-48; C. Scott Shafer and Dominique Benzaken, "User Perceptions about Marine Wilderness on Australia's Great Barrier Reef," *Coastal Management* 26 (1998): 79-81; Jinyang Deng, Brian King, and Thomas Bauer, "Evaluating Natural Attractions for Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 29 (2002): 421-26.

history of forestry and protected areas policy in Southeast Asia, and the ecological and social consequences of these policies. “Political ecology” broadly defined as “an inquiry into the political sources, conditions, and ramifications of ecological change” became a prominent field of inquiry in the 1990s.²⁷ Exploring the political dimension of deforestation and forest degradation, political ecologists argued that environmental change was not merely a technical problem, it was a political and economic one, and neither the quest for sustainable development nor the process of environmental change itself could be understood without reference to political processes. These scholars acknowledged the important role of the ideas, policies, and actions of state elites, and the impact of capitalist development on the environment. These environmental transformations, in turn, affected human relationships, and had serious social and economic consequences.²⁸

Social scientists have described, for example, how state policies provided economic incentives for large-scale logging, and the manner in which the empowerment of political and economic elites was linked directly to profit making from environmentally destructive practices.²⁹ Scholars have also investigated how the abundance of forest resources led to political problems, arguing that areas that exported renewable resources were more likely to become exploitative through the easy

²⁷ Raymond L. Bryant, “Political Ecology: An Emerging Research Agenda in Third-World Studies.” *Political Geography* 11 (1997): 12-36; Raymond L. Bryant, “Explaining State-Environmental NGO Relations in the Philippines and Indonesia,” *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 22 (2001): 15-37.

²⁸ Victor T. King, ed., *Environmental Challenges in South-East Asia* (Surrey: Curzon, 1998).

²⁹ Michael J.G. Parnwell and Raymond L. Bryant, eds. *Environmental Change in South-East Asia: People, Politics, and Sustainable Development* (London: Routledge, 1996).

manipulation of the rents and from the scramble by different groups competing to control the windfall.³⁰

Environmental historians of Southeast Asia have also examined the conflicts between local residents and protected areas. These scholars have argued that environmental degradation is not necessarily the result of human disturbances. Local people were rarely solely responsible for degradation; the impacts of national elites and their resource use policies were the problem.³¹ In developing nations it was rarely local inhabitants who caused the greatest amount of damage to national parks, but corrupt government officials, foreign and local businessmen and investors, and large-scale commercial enterprises.³²

Social scientists have contended that many of the key institutions and management programs, including national parks, international research centers, and Western legal mechanisms undermined the power of local residents. National elites gained the benefits of these programs, and they were not passed on to the local groups, while the discourse produced by international research institutes enhanced centralized control over local communities. Instead of cultivating the sustainable practices of

³⁰ Michael L. Ross, *Timber Booms and Institutional Breakdown in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

³¹ Sandra Pannell, "Managing The Discourse of Resource Management: The Case of Sasi from 'Southeast' Maluku, Indonesia," *Oceania* 67 (1997): 299-302; J. Peter Brosius, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, and Charles Zerner, "Representing Communities: Histories and Politics of Community-Based Natural Resource Management," *Society and Natural Resources* 11 (1998): 158-60.

³² Herb Thompson, "Social Forestry: An Analysis of Indonesian Forestry Policy," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 29 (1999): 188; Pamela D. McElwee, "Displacement and Relocation Redux: Stories from Southeast Asia," *Conservation and Society* 4 (2006): 396-403.

indigenous peoples, local knowledge was generally ignored by Western scientists who represented the international conservation organizations.³³

In addition to the research by environmental historians, this dissertation also employs the growing scholarship on the history of tourism in Southeast Asia and the wide-ranging theoretical contributions to the study of social, cultural, and political processes from which it draws. Kathleen Adams, Erik Cohen, Michel Picard, and Linda Richter introduced many of the themes that would be prominent in tourism studies, including the conceptualization and re-conceptualization of culture, tradition, and authenticity; the positive and negative consequences of tourism for Asian economies, societies, and cultures; the political, policy, and practical dimensions of the development of sustainable tourism activities; and the implications of the increasing “touristification” and “commoditization” of certain communities and cultures.³⁴

Tourism research on heritage sites, globalization, and inter-Asia travel has been especially relevant for this dissertation.³⁵ Researchers have analyzed the political uses

³³ Michael R. Dove et al., eds., *Beyond the Sacred Forest: Complicating Conservation in Southeast Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Michael R. Dove et al., eds., *Conserving Nature in Culture: Case Studies from Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Gerhard Gerold et al., eds., *Land Use, Nature Conservation and the Stability of Rainforest Margins in Southeast Asia* (Belin: Springer, 2004); Paul R. Greenough, and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, eds., *Nature in the Global South: Environmental Projects in South and Southeast Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Nancy Peluso and Peter Vandergeest, “Empires of Forestry: Professional Forestry and State Power in Southeast Asia, Part 2,” *Environment and History* 12 (2006): 359-93.

³⁴ Linda K. Richter, *The Politics of Tourism in Asia*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1989); Michel Picard and Robert Wood, eds., *Tourism, Ethnicity and the State in Asian and Pacific Societies* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997); Eric Cohen, *Thai Tourism, Hill Tribes, Islands and Open-ended Prostitution* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2001); Kathleen Adams, *Art as Politics: Re-crafting Identities, Tourism, and Power in Tana Toraja, Indonesia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006); Victor T. King, “Tourism in Asia: A Review of the Achievements and Challenges.” *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 23 (2008): 104-36.

³⁵ Trevor H.B. Sofield, “Rethinking and Reconceptualizing Social and Cultural Issues in Southeast and South Asian Tourism Development,” in C. Michael Hall and Stephen J. Page, eds., *Tourism in Southeast and South Asia: Issues and Cases* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2000), 45-57; Poh Poh Wong, “Southeast Asian Tourism: Traditional and New Perspectives on the Natural Environment,” in Peggy Teo,

and construction of heritage sites by the state, and how tourism development at these sites has been implicated in nation-building enterprises and political “showcasing.”³⁶ Tourism research has also focused on the interconnected processes of globalization and localization, examining how heritage sites are contested and transformed by representatives of the state, international organizations such as UNESCO, as well as foreign and domestic tourists, local communities, and their neighbors.³⁷ Local cultural meanings and interpretations have been disregarded as the overriding commitment of international conservation agencies has been to the freezing of heritage sites and preventing local encounters with the site.³⁸ The major markets in most Southeast Asian countries are other Asians, and not Western tourists, and another emerging theme in Southeast Asian tourism has been to focus more carefully on the importance of domestic tourism and intra-Asia tourism.³⁹ These scholars have also tended to emphasize the more

T. C. Chang, and K. C. Ho, eds., *Interconnected Worlds: Tourism in Southeast Asia* (Oxford: Elsevier Science, 2001), 215-230; Michael J. G. Parnwell, “Tourism and Natural Heritage Management in Vietnam and Thailand,” in Micheal Hitchcock, Victor T. King, and Michael J. G. Parnwell, eds., *Heritage Tourism in South-East Asia* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2010): 236-63.

³⁶ Michael Hitchcock, “Tourism and Ethnicity: Situational Perspectives,” *International Journal of Tourism Research* 1 (1999): 17-32

³⁷ Michael Hitchcock, Victor T. King, and Michael J. G. Parnwell, eds. *Tourism in South-East Asia*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993); Michael Hitchcock and Sian Jay “Eco-tourism and Environmental Change in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand,” in Victor T. King, ed., *Environmental Challenges in Southeast Asia* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1998), 305-16; Peggy Teo and T.C. Chang, eds., “Tourism in Southeast Asia,” *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 19 (1998): 122–24; Michael Hitchcock and Wiendu Nuryanti, eds., *Building on Batik: The Globalization of a Craft Community* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Michael Hitchcock and Victor T. King. “Discourses with the Past: Tourism and Heritage in South-East Asia.” *Indonesia and the Malay World*. 31 (2003): 3-15 Michael Hitchcock, Victor T. King, and Michael Parnwell, eds., *Tourism in Southeast Asia: Challenges and New Directions* (Copenhagen: NIAS, 2008);

³⁸ Heather Black and Geoffrey Wall “Global-local Inter-relationships in UNESCO World Heritage Sites,” in Peggy Teo, T.C. Chang, and K.C. Ho, eds., *Interconnected Worlds: Tourism in Southeast Asia* (Oxford: Elsevier Science, 2001): 121-36.

³⁹ Tim Winter, “Rethinking Tourism in Asia,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 34 (2007): 27-44; Janet Cochrane, ed., *Asian Tourism: Growth and Change* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2008); Shalini Singh, ed., *Domestic Tourism in Asia: Diversity and Divergence* (London: Earthscan, 2009) Tim Winter, Peggy Teo, and T.C.

practical issues of tourism development such as how to improve the management of heritage sites or increase tourism flows.

Primary source material for a study on national parks in Southeast Asia is plentiful. First, there is the literature regarding national parks and protected areas produced by the various international conservation organizations, including official reports and management plans, the proceedings of the numerous conferences, as well as articles from the journals and newsletters produced by these conservation organizations. Moreover, by the 1980s, these numerous reports, plans, proceedings, and articles were produced by teams that included Southeast Asian and Western scholars, and were sanctioned by Southeast Asian agencies; hence, they are an important source of both international and domestic Southeast Asian opinions on national parks.

Government archives and libraries were a second source for this research project. European archives in Britain, France, and the Netherlands have extensive collections of documents related to initiatives for national parks and reserves, wildlife conservation, forestry, and tourism during the colonial period. While I was not granted admission to Vietnamese, Indonesian, or Malaysian national archives, nevertheless, research at the region's national libraries, universities, research centers, and zoos, provided access to copies of government documents and reports by domestic Southeast Asian government agencies. However, the largest source of archival documents in Southeast Asia was at the national parks themselves, where I was able to view a range of letters, pamphlets, photos, and various official and unofficial documents related to the parks. National parks have frequently provoked controversy and become popular news items and journals and

Chang, eds., *Asia on Tour: Exploring the Rise of Asian Tourism* (London: Routledge, 2009).

newspapers from Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America were a third important source for information on contemporary popular attitudes towards parks.

Finally, in my research project I have also drawn upon my own experiences visiting national parks in Southeast Asia. From 2006 to 2010, I conducted three research trips during which I visited twenty-one national parks in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam, as well as Cambodia and Thailand. Indeed, the impetus for this dissertation derived from my own experiences trying to visit these parks, which I quickly discovered were often very difficult to reach or completely inaccessible, undeveloped, and often unstaffed. Moreover, as I continued to travel in Southeast Asia, I discovered that many of the region's famous national parks were unknown to most of the residents, and I only rarely encountered anyone who had ever visited any national park. While this conclusion initially led to me agree with the researchers who disparage Southeast Asian national park programs, as I continued to talk with more and more people—H'mong cab drivers, Minahasa villagers, Javanese politicians, Bugis shopkeepers—I also realized that the notion that Southeast Asians lack an aesthetic, spiritual appreciation of nature was also inaccurate. Indeed, many Southeast Asians had recounted enjoying visiting natural areas. It was not the lack of interest in nature tourism, but rather that the areas that had been created as national parks were either inaccessible to them or not amenable to their tastes in nature tourism. It is this fascinating disjuncture that inspired my interest in pursuing this topic further.

In the following chapters I will focus on the history of national park development in the Southeast Asian nations of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam. The nation states in question possessed varied economic development, political systems, and population densities; nevertheless, they shared features that make comparison useful. In all three nations, the negotiation processes surrounding the foundation of parks involved contests between different local and national interests, and an international conservation lobby that sought to direct the design and management of these parks. In each encounter, the national park idea evolved, and after each negotiation, proponents of conservation, tourism, and development were forced to modify or adjust their strategies and objectives in order to formulate new park management models.

As I have indicated above, research on national parks in Southeast Asia has overwhelmingly emphasized how these national parks have “failed, failed, failed” in achieving their sustainable development, collaborative management, and ecotourism objectives. While it is impossible to discuss national parks programs in Southeast Asia without acknowledging the shortcomings of these initiatives, it is not my project to merely narrate another history of conservation and development failures. Instead, in my research I will also focus attention on instances in which these national parks programs have “succeeded” in achieving their conservation and sustainable development objectives. I will examine cases in which national parks were not destroyed through corrupt practices, indigenous people were not relocated from the parks, and these parks provided an important source of domestic tourism. Contrasting the numerous national park failures with examples of success will, I argue, help to explain why the failed parks

went awry, and contribute new insights on how to develop more sustainable models for future national parks programs.

Social scientists have often emphasized the suffering caused by national parks programs initiated by international organizations in Southeast Asia, describing how these conservation groups imposed their programs on weak or passive populations that became victims of these conservation regimes. In my research, I will point out the inability of international conservation organizations to implement their management plans for national parks in Southeast Asia. Focusing on the multiple actors involved in national parks at the international, regional, provincial, local, and village level, I will explore how national park development was constantly contested and negotiated. Moreover, I will emphasize the domestic conflicts between forces for government centralization and local demands for decentralization and local autonomy, revealing how the tensions between centralization and devolution of control of natural resources, including national parks, affected the implementation and management of national parks, as well as the relationships between local, national, and international conservation organizations.

By the twenty-first century, domestic and regional Asian tourism had supplanted the dominance of Western tourism in Southeast Asia. In this dissertation, I will focus attention on Southeast Asian attitudes towards nature tourism and how these compare with the so-called romantic and wilderness ideals promoted by Western conservationists. Ultimately, I will argue that the ways in which national parks have been conceived has proved lacking and that a different conception of the “national park” might be more effective in the Southeast Asian context. The goal of this historical project is not merely to expose the failures of national parks projects in Southeast Asia, but rather to employ

this history in order to stimulate practical solutions to achieving the conservation, development, and recreation objectives of these programs.

Chapter One examines the development of an international lobby for the creation of a global system of national parks. This chapter traces the evolving management objectives of national parks in the twentieth century, concluding in the 1990s when the issues of indigenous rights and sustainable development became established features of the global national parks agenda. This chapter sets the stage for the remainder of the dissertation by introducing the principal organizations and debates that influenced the creation of national parks in Southeast Asia.

Chapter Two focuses on the creation of King George V National Park in Malaysia. Established in 1939, this national park remains one of the oldest, extant national parks in Asia, and its successful longevity is an important contrast to the failed parks programs of other nations in the region. This chapter examines the conditions that led to the creation of this park and explains how this park succeeded in balancing the interests of conservation and development, national and local governments, and the populations that resided in and around the park.

Indonesia's national parks program developed during the New Order regime of General Suharto (1967-98) is the subject of Chapter Three. This chapter argues that the privileging of biodiversity conservation in the management of Indonesian national parks hindered the development of a meaningful and lasting indigenous program for national parks based on a widespread Indonesian aesthetic appreciation for mountains and volcanic landscapes.

Chapter Four focuses on the local, regional, and international conflicts in the development of Komodo National Park, one of the centers for conservation initiatives in the 1990s and 2000s. The recent history of Komodo National Park demonstrates how the failure to account for the local and regional political dynamics has hindered the implementation of a sustainable model for Komodo National Park. Moreover, this history also reveals the limitations of the power of international conservation organizations in implementing their national park programs without the cooperation of local elites.

Chapter Five examines national parks and ecotourism in Vietnam during the 1990s and 2000s, the so-called *doi moi* (“renovation”) era. Despite the promotion of ecotourism, the Vietnamese government developed the national parks as locations for mass nature tourism, while the conservation organizations reverted to exclusionary principles and funded projects for the removal of people within the parks. This chapter makes the argument that by removing people from the parks, the conservationists opened an opportunity for more destructive groups to move in and exploit the parks’ resources, while increased tourism may in fact provide the most benefits for both the environment and the local population.

By the end of the century all Southeast Asian nations increasingly looked upon national parks as crucial to their political and cultural identity. Moreover, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the number of national parks in the region has continued to expand. As national parks seem destined to remain an important feature of Southeast Asian national identity, conservation strategy, and tourism development, it will become increasingly relevant to determine how Southeast Asian parks can be managed in

order to maximize their potential for development, conservation, and recreation. The purpose of my dissertation is to make a contribution towards this objective.

Chapter One. The Green Net: National Parks and International Conservation in the Twentieth Century

Throughout the twentieth century, Southeast Asian national parks were created, promoted, and funded with the support of Western-based, international conservation organizations. In the era of European empire, imperial conservation organizations united metropolitan and colonial hunters and naturalists, and together they initiated programs, formulated management plans, and pressured governments to make financial provisions for national parks in Southeast Asia. In the post-colonial era, Western-based international conservation organizations funded and supported the development of Southeast Asia's national parks through United Nations related organizations and international NGOs, including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), among others. An introduction to the history of the international conservation lobby that promoted the expansion of national parks, their motivations for the creation of a global system of national parks, and how the management objectives they supported evolved and developed in the twentieth century is a vital foundation for the remainder of this dissertation which will focus more narrowly on individual case-studies.

The development of an international conservation lobby before the Second World War and its contribution to the expansion of national parks has been a popular subject for scholars studying the background to the rise of “global environmental governance” in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁰ Scholars have pointed out that the development of national parks and

⁴⁰ Regina S. Axelrod, David Leonard Downie, and Norman J. Vig., eds, *The Global Environment*

wildlife reserves was a principal objective for the members of the British Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire (SPFE), the International Office for the Protection of Nature in Brussels, and other elite, early twentieth-century international conservation organizations.⁴¹ The expansion of protected areas became a platform for uniting groups of prominent conservationists into a global conservation movement, while their united efforts were successful in spreading—or imposing—conservation ideas globally.⁴² The 1933 London Conference, which produced the first international definition for “national park,” has been cited by historians as a landmark in the history of international conservation agreements, and an influential precursor for subsequent international conventions in the later twentieth century.⁴³

The international expansion of national parks and other protected areas has also been featured in research that explores the relationship between conservation and empire. Scholars have argued that in the 1920s and 1930s, national park development was infeasible in metropolitan Europe, either because there was not the political will, or there was insufficient land that was unoccupied or unowned, or because the flora and fauna had already been destroyed.⁴⁴ Consequently, the colonies in Africa and Asia became the focus

Institutions, Law and Policy (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2005), 10-22; W. Bradnee Chambers and Jessica F. Green, eds., *Reforming International Environmental Governance, From Institutional Limits to Innovative Reforms* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005), 5-11.

⁴¹ John McCormick, *The Global Environmental Movement: Reclaiming Paradise* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1989), 6-20; Richard Fitter and Peter Scott. *The Penitent Butchers: The Fauna Preservation Society 1903-1978* (London, Fauna Preservation Society, 1978), 10-12; David K. Prendergast and William M. Adams, “Colonial Wildlife Conservation and the Origins of the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire (1903–1914),” *Oryx* 37 (2003): 251-60.

⁴² Jean-Paul Harroy, *World National Parks: Progress and Opportunity* (Brussel: Hayez, 1972), 2-6; William M. Adams, *Against Extinction: The Story of Conservation* (London: Earthscan, 2004), 100-03.

⁴³ P. van Heijnsbergen, *International Legal Protection of Flora and Fauna* (Amsterdam: IOS, 1997), 70-72.

⁴⁴ Henri Jaffeux, “La longue et passionnante histoire des parcs nationaux français,” *Pour Mémoire* 9

for the implementation of conservation and national park policies, which conservationists promoted as an imperial responsibility.⁴⁵ The organization of an international system of protected areas was facilitated by imperial networks through which foresters, biologists, hunters, and naturalists in the colonies were in turn linked to metropolitan organizations.⁴⁶

Frost and Hall who have examined the “internationalization” of national parks in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries have emphasized the wide variation in the motivations for developing parks, as well as the design and management of areas officially designated as a “national park.” By the early 1920s, the US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, and Algeria had created national parks. While many of these nations shared similar features that encouraged national park development—the closing of a frontier, the expansion of the railroads, and the need to enhance their national identity—the definition and management of national parks in these states was widely divergent.⁴⁷ Frost and Hall have characterized the international development of national parks as haphazard, the only unifying feature among these areas being a common appeal to tourism and recreation as a justification for the parks. Moreover, they argue that it is of crucial importance that the national parks concept spread without any central institutional control. The absence of a controlling body led to

(2010): 148-50.

⁴⁵ John MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 35-40

⁴⁶ Paul Jepson and Robert J. Whittaker, “Histories of Protected Areas: Internationalisation of Conservations Values and their Adoption in the Netherlands Indies (Indonesia),” *Environment and History* 8 (2002): 130-35; Gregory A. Barton, *Empire Forestry and the Origins of Environmentalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9-14.

⁴⁷ C. Michael Hall and J. Shultis, “Railways, Tourism and Worthless Lands: The Establishment of National Parks in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States,” *Australian Canadian Studies* 8: 57-74;

adaptations of the national park idea, and this early variation in national park models prevented subsequent international organizations from imposing any control over the expansion of national parks.⁴⁸

Regrettably, the research does not generally address the continuing international expansion of national parks after the 1960s. Research on development of global environmental governance has largely focused on the global politics of species conservation, transboundary and atmospheric pollution, and the oceans commons. When national parks are touched upon in this literature, it is in the context of the global politics of species conservation or subsumed in broader discussions of the global expansion of “protected areas”—a category that includes nature reserves, protected landscapes, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and other conservation areas.⁴⁹ This is a significant flaw because it is after the 1960s that national park expansion began to surge internationally, while it is not until the 1990s that national parks become a universal feature of the modern nation-state and a legitimately “global” phenomenon. It is in this era that permanent international institutions for national parks were developed. It is also in the 1980s and 1990s that debates regarding the management models and definitions for national parks underwent their most radical transformations. It is in this period that the problems of “people and parks” would become the most pressing issue that would

⁴⁸ Warwick Frost and C. Michael Hall, “American Invention to International Concept: The Spread and Evolution of National Parks,” in Warwick Frost and C. Michael Hall, eds., *Tourism and National Parks: International Perspectives on Development, Histories and Change* (London: Routledge, 2009), 30-44. Ingo Mose and Norbert Weixlbaumer “A New Paradigm for Protected Areas in Europe?” in Ingo Mose, ed., *Protected Areas and Regional Development in Europe: Toward a New Model for the 21st Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 3-20.

⁴⁹ Peter M. Haas, Robert O. Keohane, and Marc A Levy, eds., *Institutions for the Earth* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 12-25; Lorraine Elliott, *The Global Politics of the Environment* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 29-59; Elizabeth R. DeSombre, *Global Environmental Institutions* (London: Routledge, 2006): 42-68.

confront the continued global expansion of national parks in the twenty-first century. Finally, it is not until the 1980s and 1990s that Southeast Asian nations fully embraced national park development, becoming a focus for international conservation organizations, and therefore an introduction to the global development of national parks in this later period is particularly necessary for this dissertation.

In my history I will recount the expansion of the national park movement in three broad phases—the first examining the expansion of national parks in the imperial era leading up to the 1933 London Conference; the second focusing on the development of the United Nations-related apparatus for national parks, including the International Commission on National Parks, the United Nations List of National Parks, and the World Conferences on National Parks; and the third examining the global spread of national parks in the 1970s when the conservation organizations promoted a new conservation “paradigm” based on sustainable development, collaborative management, and ecotourism as the ideal management principles for national parks programs.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a context for the remaining chapters that will focus more narrowly on individual case studies. However, by beginning a study on Southeast Asian national parks with an introductory discussion of the development of Western-based international lobby for national parks implies a privileging of these international organizations that, as indicated above, is debatable. In fact, in this dissertation I will demonstrate that international organizations had a great influence on the creation and development of national parks in Southeast Asia, although as will become clear in the course of this study, the outcome of that influence would not necessarily be what these groups had anticipated.

In the early twentieth century, and especially after the First World War, the pace of global wildlife extinction accelerated at an astonishing rate. In the 1920s and 1930s, the expansion of agriculture and forestry, commercialized hunting for the fashion industry, and the growing prevalence of modern firearms, motor-cars, flashlights, and steel traps rendered more and more wildlife extinct. The increasing extermination of animals began to alarm a larger segment of the population, and in the 1920s reports on the status of wildlife became an increasingly popular subject in the newspapers and journals of the day.⁵⁰

Ethical and aesthetic concerns for wildlife conservation were supplemented by the scientific facts of the potential hazards of mass extinction. Extinction certainly was not an unknown phenomenon—the extermination of the dodo, the quagga, and the passenger pigeon were famous events in the late-nineteenth century. However, while extinction was an accepted fact, the dominant theories among the British and Americans, following Darwin, had indicated that it was a slow, imperceptible process. Biological theories of a mass and catastrophic extinction, usually associated with a French tradition leading back to Cuvier, were largely suspect as an attempt to prove the Deluge.⁵¹

However, by the 1920s there was growing concern about human induced, mass extinction. The increasing knowledge of the fossil record revealed new information indicating mass extinction of species had occurred several times in Earth's history. Moreover, the extermination of the new world species around 40,000 years ago, about the

⁵⁰ William M. Adams, *Against Extinction: The Story of Conservation* (London: Earthscan, 2004), 20-27.

⁵¹ Michael J. Benton, *When Life Nearly Died* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 23-40.

same time when humans arrived into North America, led to the formulation of the “over-kill” hypothesis, which attributed the mass extinction of the North American mastodon to human hunters. In an ominously entitled 1922 essay “Close of the Age of Mammals,” Henry Fairfield Osborn, one of the most respected zoologists of the day, publicized the human contribution to the mass extermination of mammals.⁵²

In this new era, conservation organizations underwent a dramatic transformation. Previously wildlife conservation organizations had been established and funded by nationalist leagues of wealthy hunters. However, after the “shooting craze” of the 1890s and 1900s, the effects of the carnage of World War One, and the rising concern of mass-extinction of the 1920s, hunting waned as a fashion among the new generation. Accurate observation, photography, and description of animal behavior, not bag numbers, became the new barometer of status among these elites.⁵³ With the decline of elite hunters in the movement, in the 1920s the composition of the leadership of the Western conservation organizations shifted away from high-ranking politician/hunters towards academics and scientists.⁵⁴ The rise of scientists in the conservation movement brought new rationales for wildlife conservation to supplement the aesthetic and moral arguments employed by the previous generation of conservationists. The concept of “ecology” began to be employed in place of “balance of nature” in order to refer to how changes could influence

⁵² Henry Fairfield Osborn and Harold Elmer Anthony, “Close of the Age of Mammals,” *Journal of Mammalogy* 3 (1922): 219-37.

⁵³ F.W. Champion, *Hunting with Rifle and Camera* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1926) 5-8; A.A. Dunbar-Brander, *Animals of Central India* (London: E. Arnold and Co., 1922), 9-12.

⁵⁴ MacKenzie, *Empire*, 23-30; Jepson and Whittaker, “Histories,” 132.

the entire system. By the 1920s, ecology had become an international, scientific catchphrase, and provided a new, powerful rationale for wildlife conservation.⁵⁵

Ecology provided the wildlife conservation lobby a catchy concept similar to “dessication” popularly employed by foresters in the nineteenth century. In the middle of the nineteenth century, foresters had established their authority in part by convincing administrators that there was a direct link between forests and agriculture. Deforestation led to a decrease in rainfall, and an increase in soil erosion and flooding; hence, forests needed to be protected and not cut down. Early wildlife conservationists were hindered by their inability to formulate an equally convincing argument for the preservation of species. However, the combination of “mass extinction” and “ecology” supplied the movement with a powerful, new, easily graspable argument—the mass extinction of animals would alter the ecology and eventually lead to the extinction of humans.

The conservation lobby was able to advance at this time through their agreement on the development of a global network of protected areas—in particular, national parks—as the principal solution to the problems of wildlife extinction. A global system of national parks, generally depicted as vast and inalienable wilderness areas, would form a “green web” functioning as the “lungs of the earth” as well as providing laboratories for scientific research. The leading British zoologist, Peter Chalmers Mitchell, in an often cited speech to the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire (SPFE) in 1931, described this global system linking (1) “urban zoos” designed to exhibit animals, attract attention, and raise revenue; (2) “zoo parks,” larger parks outside of the urban

⁵⁵ Susan L. Flader, *Thinking like a Mountain: Aldo Leopold and the Evolution of an Ecological Attitude toward Deer, Wolves, and Forests* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974), 8-11; Frank Benjamin Golley, *A History of the Ecosystem Concept in Ecology: More than the Sum of its Parts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 133-38.

centers where animals are in more natural conditions and could be bred in captivity; and (3) “national parks” where local animals are in a state of nature and available for research. All of the world’s regions and all of the world’s animals would be protected, managed, and available for research in this “global zoo.”⁵⁶

Founded in London in 1903, the SPFE from its inception had promoted the creation of an imperial system of national parks for wildlife conservation.⁵⁷ An elite organization of accomplished hunters, naturalists, and zoologists the main focus of the SPFE was the British government, and between 1905 and 1909, the SPFE had no less than three meetings with different Secretaries of State for the Colonies.⁵⁸ The SPFE promoted imperial wildlife conservation, basing their claim on the British government’s responsibility to protect all the resources of the Empire—including animals. In 1906 Lord Curzon, Vice President of the Society, made a plea for conservation to the Colonial Secretary that reflected this imperial vision of global responsibility:

We owe the preservation of these interesting and valuable, and sometimes disappearing, types of animal life as a duty to nature and to the world. I have seen enough of the world in traveling to know not merely that many of these types have irretrievably gone, but that owing to the scandalous neglect of our predecessors there are others which are tending to dwindle and disappear now. We are the owners of the greatest Empire in the universe; we are continually using language, which implies that we are the trustees for posterity of the Empire, but we are also the trustees for posterity of the natural contents of that Empire, and among

⁵⁶ Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire (hereafter SPFE), “Reports of Annual General Meeting, 27 Feb 1931,” *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire* (hereafter *JSPFE*) 13 (1931), 5-9.

⁵⁷ Fitter and Scott, “Penitent Butchers,” 3-12; Prendergast and Adams, “Colonial Wildlife Conservation,” 251-55.

⁵⁸ For example, Sir H.H. Johnston, Governor of Uganda, was one of the society’s founding members; Lord Curzon, the Vice-President of the Society, had served as Viceroy of India.

them I do undoubtedly place these rare and interesting types of animal life to which I have referred.⁵⁹

Previously, conservation efforts in the British colonies emphasized regulations and the establishment of “game reserves”—both had proven ineffective. Regulations, such as licenses and closed seasons, had been unsuccessful because violations were difficult to detect and harder to enforce. Game reserves suffered from their lack of permanence—these areas existed at the discretion of the current colonial governor. Indeed, it was precisely the decision by Lord Cromer, the governor of the Sudan, to abandon the celebrated Sobat game reserve in 1903 that provoked the organization of the SPFE in that year. National parks, inalienable and public, became the new model for conservation, and their development the top agenda of the SPFE.⁶⁰

Early SPFE publications frequently cited the merits of Yellowstone national park. In 1905, the journal of the SPFE noted: “we may occasionally derive useful lessons from the experience of other nations. The Yellowstone National Park in the United States, was the forerunner of true Game Reserves, of which the American nation and its President may well be proud.”⁶¹ In that same year, the “success” of Yellowstone was referred to repeatedly in the first delegation of the SPFE to the Colonial Office: “perhaps I may mention, for the sake of illustrating this point, that outside the Empire, in America, they are spending enormous sums on their Reserve.”⁶² In 1906 Rhys Williams of the SPFE

⁵⁹ SPFE, “The Year,” *JSPFE* 4 (1907): 3-5.

⁶⁰ Adams, *Against Extinction*, 61-65.

⁶¹ SPFE, “The Year,” *JSPFE* 2 (1905): 5-8

⁶² SPFE, “Minutes of Proceedings at a Deputation from the SPWFE to the Right Hon Alfred Lyttelton (His Majesty’s Secretary for the Colonies), February 2 1905,” *JSPFE* 2 (1905): 9-18.

wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies pointing out that the people of the United States had given up a large area for Yellowstone Park, and that “we maintain that it is the duty and the interest of Great Britain to follow this example in East Africa.”⁶³ The SPFE continued to lobby for national parks throughout the 1920s. However, it was the national parks’ status as inalienable “permanent sanctuaries,” not their role as a “public pleasuring grounds,” that was emphasized by the SPFE.⁶⁴

French conservationists also proposed the development of an empire-wide system of national parks in the colonies. In 1925, professors at the Museum of Natural History in Paris organized the Commission for the Protection of Colonial Fauna in order to specifically address the issue of conservation in the colonies. The members of the Commission designed a comprehensive system for wildlife conservation in the French African and Asian colonies based on what they referred to as a *parc national de refuge* (“sanctuary national park”). The *parc national de refuge* was a departure from the *parc national* (“national park”) model that had been previously employed by French conservationists. Unlike the *parc national*, the *parc national de refuge* would not permit tourism, nor would they protect outstanding and monumental landscapes. Rather they were areas where the flora and fauna would be preserved “intact” for the purposes of scientific experimentation.⁶⁵

⁶³ SPFE, “Rhys Williams to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 9 June 1906,” *JSPFE* 3 (1906): 15. In fact, Yellowstone was poorly managed and lacked funds for decades. Moreover, its principal purpose was not wildlife conservation. Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in American Parks* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 101-03; Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 189-95; Alfred Runte, *National Parks: the American Experience* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1979), 78-82.

⁶⁴ Fitter and Scott, “Penitent Butchers,” 10; Prendergast and Adams, “Colonial Wildlife Conservation,” 22-25.

The Commission proposed the development in each colony of a comprehensive system of small, medium, and large *parcs nationaux de refuge* that in turn would be managed and controlled directly by the professors at the Museum of Natural History in Paris. The office of the Ministry of Colonies requested that the governors of the French colonies of Africa and Asia consider the feasibility of implementing the proposals of the 1925 Commission, in particular the development of *parcs nationaux de refuge*.⁶⁶ However, the program was not implemented in Vietnam due in large part to the enormous cost involved, as well as the resistance from colonial governments that were unwilling to relinquish control over parts of their territories to metropolitan scientists.⁶⁷

The principal hindrance to the development of an imperial system of national parks in the British and French colonies was that conservation cost money. When the SPFE sent their first deputation to the Colonial Office in 1905, the Colonial Secretary made clear that there was to be no money from the Imperial Exchequer for conservation. Lord Elgin, who succeeded him, likewise promised consideration, but not money. The preservation of animals was antithetical to the principal objective of increasing revenue in the colonies. Wild animals endangered humans and domesticated animals, destroyed fences and damaged crops, and spread diseases, making it difficult to justify spending money to preserve destructive animals.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Archives d'Outre Mer (hereafter AOM): L85, N92: Folder 3041, "Voeux de la commission de protection de la faune coloniale."

⁶⁶ AOM: L85, N92: Folder 3041. "Le Gouverneur Général de l'Indochine à Monsieur le Résident Supérieur au Tonkin." December 24, 1925.

⁶⁷ AOM: L85, N92: Folder 3041. "Création des parcs nationaux de refuge pour certaines espèces animales." March 13, 1926. AOM: L85, N92: Folder 3041. "Procès Verbal, La Commission chargée de l'étude des questions relative à la création des parcs nationaux de refuge pour certaines espèces animales."

⁶⁸ Mackenzie, *Empire of Nature*, 23-38; Adams, *Against Extinction*, 66-72; Richard Grove, *Green*

Local colonial administrators generally viewed the decline of wildlife as a necessary by-product of the spread of agriculture and urbanization. Indeed, many colonial administrators perceived wild animals as a direct threat to the expansion of civilization and derided those who pressed for wildlife conservation. However, even those administrators who sought to preserve wildlife for aesthetic, moral, or ecological reasons were generally met with complaints from farmers and plantation owners who clamored for the extermination of all destructive wildlife. Well until the 1930s, colonial administrations in Asia and Africa offered bounties and employed professional hunters in order to exterminate all noxious and carnivorous beasts, including tigers, leopards, elephants, crocodiles, elephants, wolves, and snakes.⁶⁹

Another hindrance to the expansion of national parks was the antagonism of the powerful British and French colonial forestry departments, which had authority over forests and forest products, including wildlife.⁷⁰ Forestry departments were hostile to any wildlife conservation initiatives that would curb their control over the forests—any national park legislation was perceived as a threat. The foresters' priority was ensuring the successful management and regeneration of valuable timbers—they often viewed wildlife with outright hostility. Moreover, unlimited hunting was for many foresters a jealously guarded perk of their profession, and they resented any impingement on their

Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 157-89; Gregory R Barton, *Empire Forestry*, 3-10.

⁶⁹ Mahesh Rangarajan, *Fencing the Forests: Conservation and Ecological Change in India's Central Provinces, 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 2004), 171-79. In the 1880s, the British government in India experimented with a program for the total extermination of tigers in the subcontinent of Asia. The program was discontinued only due to the cost involved. India Office Records (IOR): L/E/7/1352, File 3178, "Report on the destruction of wild animals and venomous snakes," 26 July 1924; IOR/L/PJ/3/1052, File 10, "Report on the destruction of wild animals and venomous snakes," 27 November 1874; IOR/L/PJ/6/2, File 66, "Report on the destruction of wild animals and venomous snakes," 7 July 1879. Also see Joseph Fayrer, *The Royal Tiger of Bengal* (London: Collins, 1879), 37-39.

⁷⁰ Barton, *Empire Forestry*, 18-25.

privileges.⁷¹ They were especially fierce in their condemnation of SPFE recommendations that license fees and poaching fines from hunting should be allocated to a separate game department for wildlife conservation.⁷²

The Belgians were the first imperial power to create a vast national park for wildlife conservation in the colonies, developing the King Albert National Park in the Belgian Congo in 1925. King Albert, who had visited Yosemite in 1919, was inspired by the national park concept and encouraged the idea of establishing a similar region in the Congo. The opportunity arose in 1925, when a joint expedition to the Congo was organized by Carl Akeley of the American Museum of Natural History and Victor van Stralen, Director of the Brussels Museum of Natural History. In conjunction with the expedition, Carl Akeley presented a proposal that a gorilla sanctuary be established in the Belgian Congo. King Albert commissioned Akeley and the Belgian zoologist Dr. Jean M. Dersfeld to survey the proposed sanctuary area, and as a result the King Albert National Park was established in 1925.⁷³

The King Albert National Park was important in that it demonstrated that the international conservation network could work together to achieve results in establishing national parks for wildlife conservation. It also set a precedent for future national parks in the colonies. The Albert Park was created to protect the gorilla, and flora and fauna more generally; the park was not created for the protection of monumental landscapes,

⁷¹ Hunting memoirs of Indian foresters frequently make mention that hunting was one of the perks for joining the service. E.P. Stebbing, *The Forests of India* (London: The Bodley Head, Ltd., 1922), 214-16; James Forsyth, *The Highlands of Central India* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1871), 261-64.

⁷² "Editorial," *Indian Forester* 24 (1904): 16-17.

⁷³ Regrettably, Akeley died while traveling to the site. Jepson and Whittaker, "Histories of Protected Areas," 150-51. M.J. Akeley, *Carl Akeley's Africa: The Account of the Akeley-Eastmann-Pomeroy Africa Hall Expedition* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1931).

mountains, waterfalls, or canyons. The park was managed as an international biological laboratory for scientific research and experimentation; the park was not designed to be visited for recreation and pleasure.⁷⁴

The 1933 London Conference on African Wildlife, which resulted in the first international conventions on national parks, was a landmark for international conservation organizations and demonstrated the importance of national parks in the programs for conservation. The conference brought together sixty delegates from colonial powers with territories in Africa, but also included observers from conservation organizations in the US and the Netherlands. With Onslow of the SPFE serving as Chair, the delegates for the conference were drawn principally from the membership of the prominent international conservation lobby. The conference was held in the House of Lords and had royal patronage.⁷⁵

The significance of the 1933 conference was that it marked international agreement on the definition for national parks and nature reserves, and promoted their establishment as the primary method for achieving wildlife preservation. The conference participants emphasized creating stricter categories and definitions for national parks. This was in part a response to the growing popularity of establishing national parks and other protected areas during this period. An array of categories—“national park,” “nature

⁷⁴ The management of the Virunga park was under the newly established *l'Institut deParcs Nationaux du Congo Belge* in 1934. The office of this organization was placed in The Belgian Parks Institute and it shared offices in Brussels with the International Bureau from 1935 to 1940. The International Bureau was influential in pressing the national park and sanctuary idea on the British government, particularly with regard to the region of Uganda backing on to the King Albert national park in the Belgian Congo. This was finally concluded in 1936. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, 177-81.

⁷⁵ SPFE “International Congress for the Protection of Nature” *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire* 15 (1931):43-52.

reserve,” “wildlife sanctuary,” “nature monument”—was being employed interchangeably without any strict definitions for how these areas were managed. The conservation lobby was especially concerned that the definition of “national park” would be degraded by its overuse. Since the 1920s, too many national parks had been created with different objectives and degrees of protection. Now that the national park idea had gained currency the conservation lobby urged that the term be reserved for areas that fulfilled their specific criteria.⁷⁶

However, the representatives at the conference disagreed on the appropriate definition for the term “national park.” The British representatives conceived of a “national park” as a piece of inalienable public land wherein fauna and flora were preserved in a near natural state, and public entry was facilitated for recreation and observation. The French and Portuguese representatives viewed national parks primarily as scenic areas for tourism. As a compromise the Belgians proposed a “strict nature reserve” category denoting an area immune to any sort of human exploitation or alteration where entry was permitted by special permit only.⁷⁷ These two categories were finally accepted and defined at the conference:

Article 2. 1. The expression “national park” shall denote an area (a) placed under public control, the boundaries of which shall not be altered or any portion be capable of alienation except by the competent legislative authority, (b) set aside for the propagation, protection, and preservation of wild animal life and wild vegetation, and for the preservation of objects of aesthetic, geological, prehistoric, historical, archaeological, or other scientific interest for the benefit, advantage, and enjoyment of the general public, (c)

⁷⁶ K. Caldwell, “The International Conference for the Protection of Fauna and Flora of Africa,” *Journal of the Society for Preservation of Fauna of the Empire* 22 (1934): 45–52; Harroy, *Global National Parks*, 2-3.

⁷⁷ Jepson and Whittaker, “Histories of Protected Areas,” 142-43.

in which the hunting, killing, or capturing of fauna and the destruction or collection of flora is prohibited except by or under the direction or control of the park authorities.

In accordance with the above provisions facilities shall, so far as possible, be given to the general public for observing the fauna and flora in national parks.

2. The term “strict natural reserve” shall denote an area placed under public control, throughout which any form of hunting or fishing, any undertakings connected with forestry, agriculture, or mining, any excavation or prospecting, drilling, levelling of the ground or construction, any work involving the alteration of the configuration of the soil or the character of the vegetation, any act likely to harm or disturb the fauna or flora, and the introduction of any species of fauna and flora, whether indigenous or imported, wild or domesticated, shall be strictly forbidden; which it shall be forbidden to enter, traverse, or camp in without a special written permit from the competent authorities; and in which scientific investigations may only be undertaken by permission of those authorities.⁷⁸

Despite their differences, these two categories both shared a similar objective—their principal purpose was to facilitate conservation of wildlife.⁷⁹

The extraordinary success of the wildlife movement did not last, and by the middle of the 1930s the movement had lost momentum. The worldwide depression from 1930 to 1932 resulted in retrenchments that eliminated proposals for national parks.⁸⁰

Once the depression had passed, the general political instability of the late-1930s prevented further international agreements. Moreover, members of the growing

⁷⁸ SPFE, “International Conference for the Protection of the Fauna and Flora of Africa,” *JSPFE* 21 (1934) 19-47; SPFE, “Report of General Meeting, 4 Dec 1933,” *JSPFE* 21 (1934): 3-5.

⁷⁹ S. S. Hayden, *The International Protection of Wildlife* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 6-12.

⁸⁰ SPFE, “Introduction,” *JSPFE* 22 (1931): 2-4.

independence movements in India, Burma, and Indonesia viewed wildlife conservation and restrictions on hunting as another example of colonial oppression, while increased political tensions in Europe and Asia in the late-1930s made colonial administrators reluctant to enter into discussions regarding further international conservation agreements.⁸¹

After the Second World War, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) would emerge as the leading organization for the promotion of the international expansion of national parks. Created in 1948, the IUCN was direct descendant of the pre-war international conservation movement and included many of the same figures who were prominent conservationists in the 1930s. The celebrated biologist Julian Huxley, who had been a prominent leader of the SPFE in the 1930s, became the first Director of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Huxley successfully lobbied UNESCO to establish an international conservation union under its remit, resulting in 1948 in the foundation of the International Union for the Protection of Nature (IUPN), later renamed the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The Union was a hybrid body that brought together over one hundred private national and international organizations and representatives from government agencies.⁸² Its purposes were to promote the

⁸¹ Robert Cribb, *The Politics of Environmental Protection in Indonesia* (Victoria: Monash University, 1988), 2-5. IOR/M/3/232 FILE B1284/37(i), “International conference for protection of fauna and flora of Africa, Tropical Asia and Western Pacific,” 30 Jun 1937—28 Sep 1939. This file contains documents related a proposed Asian wildlife conference that never occurred. It was postponed indefinitely on 28 Sep 1939 due to the looming war. This file includes a large amount of correspondence describing the shortcomings of the 1933 conference.

⁸² The name of the organization was initially the International Union for the Protection of Nature (IUPN). In 1958, the name was changed to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). In 1998 the organization again changed its name to the World Conservation Union,

preservation of wildlife and the natural environment, public knowledge of the issues, education, research, and legislation.⁸³

The American Harold Coolidge was the principal figure responsible for the establishment of IUCN's role in the promotion and monitoring of a global system of national parks. Coolidge had been a prominent member of the Boone & Crockett Club and represented that organization at the London African Conference in 1933. As Secretary of the American Committee for International Wildlife Protection in the 1930s, Coolidge had been responsible for establishing a comprehensive list of endangered mammals.⁸⁴ In the 1950s, Coolidge sought to transfer responsibility of updating and revising these volumes, and monitoring the world state of wildlife to the IUCN, and in 1952 he formed the Species Survival Commission (SSC) as a permanent Commission of the IUCN charged with this task.⁸⁵

However, it was the international expansion of national parks that was Coolidge's main objective for the IUCN. According to Coolidge, "It was all very well to have a

however they continue to retain IUCN. To avoid confusion, I will use IUCN throughout this dissertation.

⁸³ Johann Büttikofer, *Report on the Conference for the Protection of Nature. Conference for the Protection of Nature*. (Basle: Swiss Library for the Protection of Nature, 1946); Johann Büttikofer, *International Conference for the Protection of Nature: Proceedings, Resolutions and Reports. International Conference for the Protection of Nature, 1947. Brunnen, June 28th–July 3rd 1947* (Basle: Swiss Library for the Protection of Nature, 1947); SPFE, "Conservation at Lake Success," *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire* 61 (1950): 31-33. Martin Holdgate, *The Green Web: A Union for World Conservation* (London: Earthscan, 1990), 5-12.

⁸⁴ Compiled by a team of zoologists at Harvard, the list was published in two volumes: Glover Morrill Allen, *Extinct and Vanishing Mammals of the New World* (New York: American Committee for International Wildlife Protection, 1945); Francis Harper, *Extinct and Vanishing Mammals of the Old World* (New York: American Committee for International Wildlife Protection, 1942). Coolidge was a young and up-and-coming personality in the Boone & Crockett Club and American museum circles. He was assistant curator of mammals at the Museum of Comparative Zoology in Harvard University and had a special interest in gorillas, spending a year in Central Africa in 1928 with the Harvard Medical Expedition. As a result of his experience he was appointed in 1929 as leader of the prestigious Kelly-Roosevelt Expedition to Indochina, which brought him into the elite circles of the conservation network.

⁸⁵ Holdgate, *Green Web*, 58.

survival service with all the information you can get about species, but what good does it do? You cannot save species just by bringing them into zoos; you have to take strenuous measures to protect their native habitat.”⁸⁶ At the IUCN General Assembly in Athens in 1958, he proposed a new IUCN Commission that would collect information on the world’s national parks and facilitate their establishment, and the International Commission on National Parks (ICNP) was created later that year with Coolidge serving as its first director.⁸⁷

Following the strategy employed for endangered species, Coolidge set the main goal of the ICNP to prepare an official “world list” of existing parks and reserves. This list would serve as an honor-roll that would give prestige to the countries that had parks and reserves. Coolidge wanted the new world list of national parks to be established under the United Nations, but he soon ran into conflict with the leaders of UNESCO and FAO, who were jealous on this point—they felt that such a list should be authorized by their agencies. Coolidge was able to outmaneuver these agencies, and in 1960 IUCN became the official body responsible for the compilation and editing of the United Nations List of National Parks.⁸⁸

The first “World List of National Parks and Equivalent Areas,” was published in two parts in 1961 and 1962. The first list aimed at quantity over quality of locations—the strategy was that the prestige of the UN and the power of listing would provoke nations to take the national park programs seriously. According to Coolidge, “The first thing to

⁸⁶ “Profile of Harold Jefferson Coolidge” *The Environmentalist* 1 (1982): 70

⁸⁷ Holdgate, *Green Web*, 109-11.

⁸⁸ “Profile,” 69-72; Holdgate, *Green Web*, 112.

do was to get the area set aside, and then reinforce the legislation and shame them into making it more meaningful.”⁸⁹ The list was endorsed by the UN in 1963, and subsequently the UN List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves would be regularly updated providing an important reference for organizing and defining the global system of national parks.

Coolidge was also instrumental in the convening of the First World Conference on National Parks, held in conjunction with the World’s Fair in Seattle in July 1962. The conference brought together prominent foresters and conservationists from forty-two nations, who formulated a preliminary global agenda for national parks. Based on the success of the first conference, the representatives decided to reconvene every ten years to evaluate the progress of national parks around the world and to formulate new agendas for the global system of national parks.⁹⁰ A second national park conference was held in Yellowstone in 1972 and subsequent national parks conferences have been held in Bali, Indonesia in 1982, Caracas, Venezuela in 1992, and Durban, South Africa in 2003.

The establishment of the International Commission on National Parks, the UN List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves, and the World Conference on National Parks provided the framework for the creation of an organized global network of national parks. It helped to distinguish IUCN as the central body responsible for the global system of national parks, providing it with a purpose that distinguished it from other UN agencies: UNESCO, FAO, and UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). The conservation organizations established during the imperial era were able to find a clearly

⁸⁹ Ibid., 70.

⁹⁰ Alexander Adams, ed., *First World Conference on National Parks: Proceedings of a Conference: Seattle, Washington, June 30-July 7, 1962* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1964), 376.

defined purpose that distinguished the IUCN from the many other development organizations, thereby securing permanent place for themselves and the agenda of the global expansion of national parks in the new UN system.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the newly organized park movement was able to situate itself at the center of the rising environmental and wilderness movements. With the advancement of industrialization and the increasing awareness of the environmental impacts of technological and economic development, national parks became significant for reasons of species and habitat protection and as the storehouses of the diversity of life.⁹¹ The emergence of newly decolonized nations in the undeveloped and biologically rich regions of the global South also spurred the spread of national parks. Nationalist leaders were anxious to solidify their credibility by accumulating the trappings of the modern nation-state, including national parks. The international conservation community was concerned that the new nations would not adequately protect their biological wealth, and helped to fund the creation of national parks in these emerging nations in order to safeguard their most important flora and fauna from overexploitation.⁹²

In 1972, the IUCN published the second edition of the United Nations List of National Parks and Equivalent Areas. In the ten-years since the first list, the number of national parks around the world had more than doubled, and in the introduction to the new UN List, a resolution of the IUCN indicated that considering the importance given by the United Nations to the national park concept and considering the increasing use of the term “national park” to designate areas with increasingly different status and

⁹¹ McCormick, *Reclaiming Paradise*, 40-45; David Takacs, *The Idea of Biodiversity: Philosophies of Paradise* (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 13-21.

⁹² Adams, *Against Extinction*, 109-11.

objectives, that all governments should agree to reserve the term “National Park” to areas that adhered to the official IUCN definition:

a National Park is a relatively large area 1) where one or several ecosystems are not materially altered by human exploitation and occupation, where plant and animal species, geomorphological sites and habitats are of special scientific educative and recreative interest or which contains a natural landscape of great beauty and 2) where the highest competent authority of the country has taken steps to prevent or to eliminate as soon as possible exploitation or occupation in the whole area and to enforce effectively the respect of ecological, geomorphological or aesthetic features which have led to its establishment and 3) where visitors are allowed to enter, under special conditions, for inspirational, educative, cultural and recreative purposes.⁹³

The IUCN resolution also requested that governments that had designated areas as “National Parks” that do not fit the new IUCN definition, such as the national parks in England and Japan where human habitation was allowed, should be redesignated in due course.⁹⁴ Moreover, in the introduction to the UN List, the editor Jean-Paul Harroy pointed out that unlike the first list, there would be minimum standards for inclusion in the revised UN List, and that the national parks had to adhere to a new official IUCN definition for national parks.⁹⁵

The new revised UN List was produced in conjunction with the second World Congress of National Parks in 1972. This congress was much larger affair than the first

⁹³ Jean-Paul Harroy, ed., *United Nations List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves* (Brussels: Hayez, 1971), 13-14.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

park conference, attracting 1,200 delegates from 80 nations.⁹⁶ The recommendations adopted by the Second World Conference on National Parks were much more clearly focused on what were then seen as the global priorities for protected areas. For example, the recommendations included “Conservation of Representative Ecosystems;” “Conservation of Tropical Forest Ecosystems;” “Conservation of North and Sub-Polar Ecosystems;” “Marine National Parks and Reserves;” “Establishment of Antarctica as a World Park under UN Administration;” “Wetlands Convention;” “Standards and Nomenclature for Protected Areas;” “Integrity of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves;” “Usage of National Parks;” and “Detrimental Effects of Vehicles, Boats and Aircraft in National Parks and other Protected Areas.”⁹⁷

What is surprising about the list of recommendations is that it did not include any consideration of the problems of indigenous people or the power politics involved in creation of national parks. The list of recommendations revealed a complete failure to address the connections between national parks and economic development, or between national parks and the areas around them. The representatives failed to address that the great global expansion of national parks after the 1960s had occurred in the developing nations of the global South where much of the population depended on the resources that would be locked up in a wilderness national park. National parks that excluded resident peoples in developing countries were displaced or blocked from traditional uses of the parks and left to suffer severe deprivation. Groups began to challenge these ideas and asserting the agendas of Aboriginal land claims, cultural preservation, rural development,

⁹⁶ Sir Hugh Elliott, ed., *Second World Conference on National Parks* (Morges, IUCN, 1974), 15-16.

⁹⁷ “Recommendations,” in Sir Hugh Elliott, ed., *Second World Conference on National Parks* (Morges: IUCN, 1974), 441-52.

and human rights. Others began documenting the harmful social, economic, and cultural impacts this movement was having on resident peoples and cultures in developing nations. The concern with indigenous groups became the dominant problem confronting the continued global expansion of national parks.⁹⁸

Only three years after the Yellowstone Conference, at IUCN's eleventh General Assembly held in Zaire in 1975, the rights of indigenous groups became an important concern. In a resolution entitled "Protection of Indigenous Ways of Life," IUCN officially revised its previous position by recommending that governments devise ways so "that indigenous people can bring lands into conservation areas without relinquishing their ownership, use or tenure rights." The General Assembly specifically stated that people should not be routinely relocated and went so far as to recommend that local people be consulted in the designation of a protected area.⁹⁹ The Resolution recognized the importance of traditional ways of life and land ownership, and called on governments to maintain and encourage customary ways of living. It urged governments to devise means by which indigenous peoples could bring their lands into conservation areas without relinquishing their ownership, use, and tenure rights. It also noted that indigenous peoples should not normally be displaced from their traditional lands by national parks, nor should national parks be established without adequate consultation with the peoples to be directly affected.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Adrian Phillips, "Turning Ideas on their Head: The New Paradigm for Protected Areas," *The George Wright Forum* 20 (2003): 1-6.

⁹⁹ IUCN, "Resolutions of the 12th General Assembly, Kinshasha, Zaire," (IUCN, 1975).

¹⁰⁰ Thomas O. McShane, "Protected Areas and Poverty—The Linkages and How to Address Them," in Dilys Roe and Joanna Elliott, eds., *The Earthscan Reader in Poverty and Biodiversity Conservation* (London: Earthscan, 2010), 150-52.

The third World Congress on National Parks convened by IUCN, FAO, and UNESCO in 1982 aimed to address many of the development and social justice issues that had emerged as a consequence of the rapid expansion of national parks. The title of the congress, “National Parks, Conservation, and Development: The Role of Protected Areas in Sustaining Society,” announced the new agenda for national parks.¹⁰¹ The decision to convene the congress in Bali, Indonesia (instead of the US) was indicative of the new developments in national parks.¹⁰² Indonesia in the late-1970s was considered an exemplar of the successes of US economic “modernization theory.” By working with international development organizations, in particular the World Bank, Indonesia had recovered from economic collapse in the 1960s to become one of most rapidly advancing economies in the developing world.¹⁰³ Suharto, the leader of Indonesia from 1966 to 1998, had actively promoted the expansion of national parks in the 1980s, and conservationists viewed Indonesia as a model for how national parks could contribute, or at least harmonize, with economic development objectives.

In his opening address to the conference, “Protected Areas and Political Reality” Indonesian Vice-President Adam Malik emphasized this new focus for national parks. According to Malik, national parks must confront three basic interconnected issues: poverty, an ever-increasing need for land, and the processes of development. For Malik, the linkage between development and parks reflected an economic reality—the rapid

¹⁰¹ Jeffrey McNeely and Kenton R. Miller, eds., *National Parks, Conservation, and Development: The Role of Protected Areas in Sustaining Society* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984).

¹⁰² The first Conference on National Parks was held in Seattle in 1962. The Second was in Yellowstone in 1972. The name of the meeting was changed from “World Conference” to “World Congress” in 1982.

¹⁰³ Michael E. Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 171-72.

proliferation of national parks had occurred in the Third World. If these parks were to succeed they needed to demonstrate that they would provide substantial economic benefits.¹⁰⁴

According to the conveners, the purpose of the congress was to consider the principles and policies to guide the establishment and management of national parks and other types of protected areas in light of the broad principles governing the interrelationships among populations, resources, environment, and development formulated by the series of intergovernmental conferences that began at the celebrated Stockholm Conference in 1972. The Congress took particular note of the World Conservation Strategy (1980) and the World Charter for Nature (1982) and reaffirmed the fundamental role of national parks and other protected areas in contributing to sustainable development and the spiritual and cultural needs of mankind.¹⁰⁵

Ten major areas of concern were recognized by the congress, but several themes in particular were emphasized. Among these was an increased concern with local populations in and around the national parks. Moreover, the congress stressed that national parks should be linked with sustainable development as nature conservation is not accomplished only by the setting aside of specially protected natural areas.¹⁰⁶ Even familiar topics, like poaching, are considered from a much more constructive viewpoint,

¹⁰⁴ Adam Malik, "Opening Address: Protected Areas and Political Reality," in Jeffrey A. McNeely and Kenton R. Miller, eds., *National Parks, Conservation, and Development: The Role of Protected Areas in Sustaining Society* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984), 10-11.

¹⁰⁵ Jeffrey McNeely, "Introduction: Protected Areas Are Adapting to New Realities," in Jeffrey A. McNeely and Kenton R. Miller, eds., *National Parks, Conservation, and Development: The Role of Protected Areas in Sustaining Society* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984), 1-7.

¹⁰⁶ "Recommendations of the World National Parks Congress," in Jeffrey A. McNeely and Kenton R. Miller, eds., *National Parks, Conservation, and Development: The Role of Protected Areas in Sustaining Society* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984), 768-69.

with as much stress on alternative sources of income for local people as on combating illegal activities. In place of education in protected areas has come the much bigger challenge of building public support for protected areas.¹⁰⁷ In this way, by making the link between protected areas and development questions, and by acknowledging the key role of local and indigenous groups, Bali represented a real watershed.

At the fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas held in Caracas, Venezuela in 1992, conservationists emphasized the need to develop stronger relationships between people and national parks, and the need for building a stronger constituency for conservation. One of the major messages of the conference was that the relationship between people and national park had too often been ignored: the Congress emphasized that social, cultural, economic and political issues are not peripheral to national parks but were central to them. It called for community participation and equality in decision-making processes, together with the need for mutual respect among cultures.¹⁰⁸

These themes were reconfirmed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED or “Earth Summit”) in Rio de Janeiro, which took place a few months after the Caracas Conference. The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the major achievement of UNCED, expanded the importance of economic, social, and cultural aspects of nature conservation along with the traditional emphasis on scientific, educational, ecological, recreational, and aesthetic values.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 765-76.

¹⁰⁸ IUCN, *Parks for Life; Report of the IVth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas* (Gland, Switzerland: IUCN, 1993).

¹⁰⁹ Convention on Biological Diversity, accessed May 2, 2012, <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/legal/cbd-en.pdf>,

According to the Convention, the sustainable use of biological diversity was defined as: “...the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.”¹¹⁰ Moreover, the Convention specified that one objective of sustainable use was to “Protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements.”¹¹¹ The Convention also outlined the equitable sharing of benefits as an objective for contemporary management of national parks.¹¹²

Collaborative management initiatives, which involved resident populations in the planning and management of national parks, were increasingly promoted as the most effective method of insuring that residents groups would benefit from the establishment of national parks and an essential component in achieving conservation objectives. The collaborative management approach attempted to integrate conservation efforts with economic, social, and cultural agendas by fostering democracy, equity, and social justice.¹¹³ Conservationists argued that the empowerment of local residents through

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¹¹⁰ Convention on Biological Diversity, 4.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 7.

¹¹² Ibid., 2.

¹¹³ A.W. Ingles, Arne Musch, and Helle Qwist-Hoffmann, *The Participatory Process for Supporting Collaborative Management of Natural Resources: An Overview* (Rome: FAO, 1999), 1. Alfonso Peter Castro and Erik Nielsen, “Indigenous People and Co-management: Implications for Conflict Management.” *Environmental Science and Policy* 4 (2001): 230.

shared responsibility and active involvement would generate support and voluntary compliance with management objectives.¹¹⁴

Ecotourism development was an important new policy increasingly promoted by conservationists and was widely discussed at the Caracas conference. At its inception in the late-1980s, ecotourism was defined as the experience of “traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas.”¹¹⁵

Ecotourism was distinguished from other forms of nature tourism in that it was designed to be directly beneficial to conservation efforts.¹¹⁶ Ecotourism integrated the recreation and tourism objectives of national parks into the new paradigm of sustainability.

Conservationists considered ecotourism a means by which to stimulate the local economy

¹¹⁴ Janet Cochrane, “Tourism and Conservation in Indonesia and Malaysia,” in Michael Hitchcock, Victor T. King, and Michael J.G. Parnwell, eds., *Tourism in Southeast Asia*. (London: Routledge, 1993), 322; Brian Furze, Terry de Lacy, and Jim Birkhead, *Culture, Conservation and Biodiversity* (New York: John Wiley, 1996), x; Marcus B. Lane, “Affirming New Directions in Planning Theory: Co-management of Protected Areas,” *Society and Natural Resources* 14 (2001): 665; Jeffrey A. McNeely, “The Biodiversity Crisis: Challenges for Research and Management,” in Odd Terje Sandlund, Kjetil Hindar, and Anthony H.D. Brown, eds., *Conservation of Biodiversity for Sustainable Development* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1992), 15-26; David Western and R. Michael Wright, “The Background to Community-Based Conservation,” in David Western and R. Michael Wright, eds., *Natural Connections: Perspectives in Community-Based Conservation* (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1994), 1-12; Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, “Collaborative Management of Protected Areas,” in Sue Stolton and Nigel Dudley, eds., *Partnerships for Protection New Strategies for Planning and Management for Protected Areas* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd., 1999), 224-34; Rodney V. Salm and John R. Clark, *Marine and Coastal Protected Areas: A Guide for Planners and Managers* (Gland, Switzerland: IUCN, 2000); Lisa M. Campbell, “Conservation Narratives in Costa Rica: Conflict and Co-Existence,” *Development and Change* 33 (2002): 29-56.

¹¹⁵ Cited in Elizabeth Boo, *Ecotourism: The Potentials and Pitfalls* (Washington, D.C: Worldwide Fund for Nature, 1990), xiv.

¹¹⁶ Fiona Burton, “Can Ecotourism Objectives Be Achieved?” *Annals of Tourism Research* 25 (1998): 756.

through employment generation, small enterprise development, and reliance on locally produced goods and services.¹¹⁷

The emphasis on sustainable development, collaborative management, and ecotourism in national parks was a significant departure from the previous agenda for the global network of national parks. Nevertheless, these principles would continue to be at the center of debates regarding the global governance of national parks in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Southeast Asian national parks, which expanded rapidly after the 1970s, were created in a climate in which these ideas predominated, and the national parks programs in these nations integrated these concepts into their management plans. National parks in Indonesia and Vietnam in particular were test-sites for the implementation of these principles. The remainder of this dissertation will examine the fate of these national parks programs, and assess the degree to which the purported benefits of sustainable development, collaborative management, and ecotourism were achieved.

¹¹⁷ Anita Pleumarom, "The Political Economy of Tourism," *The Ecologist* 24 (1994): 142-48; Richard Gehrman, "Tourism, Exploitation and Cultural Imperialism: Recent Observations From Indonesia," *Social Alternatives* 13 (1994): 12-16; John Brohman, "New Directions in Tourism for Third World Development," *Annals of Tourism Research* 23 (1996): 48-50; John E. Wagner, "Estimating The Economic Impacts of Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 24 (1997): 598-600; Carolyn Hill, "GREEN GLOBE: The Tourism Industry and Sustainability," in Marea Eleni Hatzios, Anthony J. Hooten, and Martin Fodor, eds., *Coral Reefs—Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Management* (Washington, D.C: The World Bank, 1998), 118; Maribeth Erb, "Ecotourism and Environmental Conservation in Western Flores: Who Benefits?" *Antropologi Indonesia*, 66 (2001): 75; David Barkin, "Ecotourism: A Tool for Sustainable Development in an Era of International Integration?" *Yale F&ES Bulletin* 99 (1996), <http://environment.research.yale.edu/documents/downloads/0-9/99barkin.pdf>; Sheryl Ross and Geoffrey Wall, "Ecotourism: Towards Congruence Between Theory and Practice," *Tourism Management* 20 (1999): 124; David Newsome, Susan A. Moore, and Ross K. Dowling, *Natural Area Tourism: Ecology, Impacts, and Management* (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2002), 19.

Chapter Two. Negotiating Conservation and Development in Malaysia's National Park

Formally established in 1939, Taman Negara National Park in Malaysia is among the oldest national parks in Asia. The park protects a region that biologists claim is the oldest surviving rainforest on Earth (130 million years old) and home to thousands of species of plants and animals. Located in the park is the Gunung Tahan peak, the tallest peak on Peninsular Malaysia and a spiritual center for the approximately 1,000 Batek, Pie, and Semang people who reside within the park's boundaries. These mobile, forest-dwelling groups are non-Malay indigenous inhabitants (*Orang Asli*) who survive through hunting-and-gathering and temporary settlement in small villages. The initial 1939 legislations recognized the rights of these groups to remain in the park boundaries, and the national park has been managed as an "inhabited wilderness" until the present day. From its inception, tourism has been an important management objective for the park, and despite its remote location it has become a popular attraction for domestic and international tourism. Many of the *Orang Asli* have found employment with the national park.¹¹⁸

Surprisingly, from its inception Taman Negara has remained intact—its integrity has not been compromised due to logging, mining, or other large-scale exploitation, legal or otherwise. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Malaysian government initiated several development programs for dam construction across the Tembeling River that flows through the park, but in each instance these initiatives were blocked through the interventions of domestic conservation groups, in particular the Malayan Nature Society.

¹¹⁸ Norman Backhaus, *Tourism and Nature Conservation in Malaysian National Parks* (Munter: LIT, 2005), 93-95.

The success of Taman Negara in achieving its conservation and recreation objectives while accommodating indigenous peoples makes this national park an interesting contrast to many of Southeast Asia's parks, which are so often characterized by corrupt and incompetent management, and policies that result in the disenfranchisement and increased impoverishment of the people in and around the parks. In order to help explain the park's "success," in this chapter I will focus on the history of the park's origins in the colonial era, revealing the process by which a "Malayan" national park became the ideal compromise for resolving the conflicts of development and conservation.

Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells, one of the most prominent scholars of Malaysian environmental history, has examined the early history of Taman Negara as part of a broader history of forestry and forest politics in Malaya during the colonial era. Drawing upon sources ranging from government documents to newspaper reports, she has argued that the concept of a national park was promoted as a formula for reconciling the interests of agriculture and nature preservation, considered both a national duty and a source of national pride. In colonial Malaya, the wildlife preservation lobby was able to successfully promote nature, and its protection in a national park, as an integral part of national heritage at a time of new Malaysian self-awareness and political awakening.¹¹⁹ The development of a national park also helped draw public attention away from the economic depression of the early 1930s by emphasizing the enduring value of nature as a cohesive, apolitical force of common identity.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ In this chapter "Malaya" will be employed for "Peninsular Malaya." "Malaysia" will be employed for the modern nation that includes Peninsular Malaya and the eastern states of Sarawak and Sabah in northern Borneo.

The anthropologist Lye Tuck-Po, who researches the forest-dwelling Batek people who reside in and around the park, has also examined the colonial origins of Taman Negara in order to understand how changing definitions of wild and tame have shaped the administration's view of the role of the indigenous people in the park. Employing the 1931 Wildlife Commission as a principal source, Lye Tuck-Po argues that from its inception a key characteristic of the Taman Negara administration has been its ambivalence regarding the place of people in the parks, and that this ambivalence reflects a deeper Malaysian and European cognitive unease with the relationships among people, the forests, and wildlife. As a consequence of this early inability to categorize the people inside the park, there has been a continuous ambiguity regarding which agency has jurisdiction over the park and the people, and it is this bureaucratic uncertainty that has created a space that has allowed for the continuous occupation of indigenous people in the park.¹²¹

While these scholars have differing objectives for examining the colonial history of Malaya's national parks, both scholars have drawn attention to the rapid agricultural expansion and forest clearance activities in Malaya in the 1920s, and they have pointed to the fact that the park served as a compromise between the interests of agriculturalists, forestry departments, and conservationists. They have also described the scientific, utilitarian, and aesthetic objectives of species preservation that motivated the creation of the park, as well as the importance of colonial conservation organizations.

¹²⁰ Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells, *Nature and Nation: Forests and Development in Peninsular Malaysia* (Copenhagen: NIAS, 2005), 200-17.

¹²¹ Lye Tuck-Po, "The Wild and the Tame in Protected-Areas Management in Peninsular Malaysia," in Michael R. Dove, Percy E. Sajise, and Amity A. Doolittle, eds., *Beyond the Sacred Forest: Complicating Conservation in Southeast Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 37-61.

However, these scholars have not focused on why a national park was created in Malaya and not in the other British and European colonies of Southeast Asia that had similar concerns with reconciling forestry and agricultural development with conservation or that had cognitive unease with the relationships between people and forests. These other colonies also had vibrant conservation lobbies that promoted the creation of national parks; yet, only in Malaya did these efforts succeed. Moreover, the establishment of Malaya's national park does not sufficiently explain why Taman Negara has survived and flourished over the years. National parks in Southeast Asia are notorious for existing only as "paper parks," eventually degraded due to widespread illegal logging, mining, and hunting. Yet, for over seventy years, through numerous colonial and post-colonial administrations, Taman Negara has largely succeeded in fulfilling its stated management objectives for conservation, research, and recreation. The goal of this chapter is to try to uncover the conditions that made possible the development and continued survival of Malaya's national park.

As the head of the 1931 Wildlife Commission and the game warden of Malaya from 1924 to 1936, Theodore Hubback, the indefatigable promoter of wildlife conservation in Malaya, has been widely regarded by scholars as the architect of Malaya's national park. In my analysis, I will draw attention to the neglected career of E.O. Shebbeare, who I will argue was equally responsible for the creation and enduring survival of Taman Negara. It was in fact Shebbeare who formulated the final legislation for the park, and it was Shebbeare who forged the compromise that allowed indigenous peoples to continue to reside in the park. As the game warden of Malaya from 1938, Shebbeare shepherded the fledging park in its first years, restored the park after the

Second World War, and perhaps most importantly, founded the celebrated Malayan Nature Society, which has continued to lobby for the survival of the park to the present day. While Hubback was fundamental for putting the creation of a national park in Malaya on the imperial agenda, it was Shebbeare who was largely responsible for establishing the legislation and organization for an enduring park.

It was in the 1920s that the government of colonial Malaya first mooted the possibility of creating a national park for the protection of the region's flora and fauna. Prior to that time, the colonial government had made desultory attempts at wildlife conservation—the 1903 game laws made provisions for protecting certain rare animals; a 1905 enactment defined five regions to be designated as wildlife reserves. However, these game reserves were small and designed for hunting. As for the regulations, they were widely admitted to be a “dead letter” as there were many loopholes in the rules and funds were not regularly allocated for their enforcement.¹²²

The rapid economic development of Malaya in the 1920s introduced an era in which there was increasing debate regarding the appropriate exploitation and conservation of its natural resources. In the 1920s, rubber plantation rapidly expanded across Malaya.¹²³ Plantations impinged on the habitat of elephants and other wildlife and the displaced animals often turned to devouring rubber saplings, causing severe damage to the plantations. Agricultural interests in the colony, led by the influential Rubber

¹²² Theodore Hubback, “Game in Malaya,” *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire* (hereafter *JSPFE*), 3 (1923): 20-26; Theodore Hubback, “Conservation of Malayan Fauna,” *JSPFE* 6 (1926): 35-41.

¹²³ J.H. Drabble, *Rubber in Malaya, 1876-1922: The Genesis of the Industry* (Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1987), 214-16; J.H. Drabble, *An Economic History of Malaysia, c. 1800-1990: The Transition to Modern Economic Growth* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 183-87.

Growers' Association (RGA) based in London, pressed for the extermination of all wildlife that inhibited the expansion of agriculture.¹²⁴

Colonial foresters also pressed for the extermination of noxious wildlife. The value of tropical timber reached unprecedented levels in the 1920s, and the British increasingly focused on efforts to exploit the vast forests of Malaya. For the foresters, wildlife, especially the elephant, was a destructive nuisance, and the Malayan Forestry Department joined with the Rubber Growers' Association in lobbying for the extermination of wildlife in and around forestry plantations. The rubber planters and foresters had legitimate arguments. Investment in rubber and timber plantations was a long-range investment in the country. For the government, economic development took precedence over conservation, and the colonial leaders generally supported the elimination of animals that threatened rubber and timber interests.¹²⁵

But the rapid development of the colony had also created an environment in which the protection of wildlife became increasingly important. As the colony became wealthier, there was less of an interest in making money quickly through overexploitation of natural resources. "Wise use" advocates condemned the extermination of wildlife as a waste of a valuable resource and pressed for the improved management of wildlife. The colonial government for its part was especially concerned about the unregulated state of the wildlife trade. The trade was considerable and included the large commerce in

¹²⁴ See "Exhibits of the Rubber Growers' Association, Etc," in Wild Life Commission of Malaya, *Report of the Wild Life Commission, Volume III—Malayan Enactments, Extracts from Laws of Other Countries, etc* (hereafter, *Wild Life Commission III*) (Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1932), 275-320.

¹²⁵ S. Robert Aiken and C.H. Leigh, *Vanishing Rain Forests: The Ecological Transition in Malaysia* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992), 55-56. Leonard Andaya and B.W. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001) George Maxwell, "Big Game and Planters," *British Malaya* 2 (1927): 197-201; Colin Barlow, *The Natural Rubber Industry: Its Development, Technology, and Economy in Malaysia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 57.

tropical bird feathers for women's hats; lizard and crocodiles skins for the shoe and luggage trade; exotic animals for zoos, circuses, and museums; and the expanding demand for primates for research laboratories. The unregulated trade not only resulted in a loss of tax revenue, but also threatened to drive species to extinction, wasting an opportunity for a sustained source of revenue.¹²⁶

Wildlife was also valuable for Malaya's tourism portfolio. The expansion of trade, transportation, and general prosperity enabled people to casually travel around Malaya, and tourism was becoming a substantial feature of the colonial economy. Because Malaya lacked the extraordinary architectural monuments such as those in Burma, Cambodia, or Java, tour books and tourism agencies of the period emphasized the pleasures of Malaya's nature: bird-watching, hiking, hunting, and vacationing in hill stations such as Fraser's Hill.¹²⁷

Aesthetic and scientific arguments for conservation also became widespread, at least amongst the bourgeoisie in Malaya. Malaya was potentially one of the last habitats for the Javan rhino—considered the world's rarest mammal—and there was great pressure to seek out and protect any survivors. Even if the colonial government were unaffected by aesthetic or scientific arguments for the conservation of wildlife, they would be subject to international criticism for allowing rare animals to perish.¹²⁸

The recognized leader of the wildlife conservation lobby in Malaya was Theodore Hubback. Born in Liverpool in 1872, Hubback arrived in Malaya in 1895, serving in the

¹²⁶ John MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester, Manchester University Press 1986), 122-26.

¹²⁷ S. Robert Aiken, *Imperial Belvederes: The Hill-Stations of Malaya* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), 2-8.

¹²⁸ Hubback, "Conservation" 37-38.

Public Works Department and later turning to rubber planting. In 1920, he settled as a planter in the state of Pahang in central Malaya, making his home in Bukit Betung, a remote village on the Jelai River. The author of several books on hunting and wildlife, and a regular contributor to newspapers and journals, he was widely recognized as the greatest authority on wildlife in Malaya, and his knowledge of Malayan wildlife and devotion to its preservation won respect and admiration.¹²⁹

Hubback had three priorities: (1) the formulation of new game laws, (2) the creation of a centralized game department, and (3) the development of a system of parks and sanctuaries for preservation of the natural features of the primeval jungle.¹³⁰ In 1921, Hubback's lobbying succeeded in getting the colonial government to pass an enactment that made provision for an "honorary game warden" and the creation of reserves.¹³¹ Hubback was appointed the first game warden, but he was quickly dissatisfied with the lack of commitment to conservation initiatives in the colony. The game laws were a dead letter—there was no budget for conservation, and the game laws were not enforced.¹³²

In 1925, Hubback travelled to London where he enlisted the support of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire (SPFE). Peter Chalmers Mitchell, Chairman of the SPFE, introduced Hubback to W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies (1921-29). Ormsby-Gore supported efficient wildlife

¹²⁹ J.M. Gullick and G. Hawkins, "Theodore Hubback," *Malayan Pioneers* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1958); and J.M. Gullick, *A History of Kuala Lumpur, 1857-1939* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS Monograph 29, 2000), 236-37; J.M. Gullick, "Theodore Rathbone Hubback," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007), accessed August 10, 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/96296/96867?back=,96296>.

¹³⁰ Theodore Hubback, "Letter from T. Hubback to the Chairman of the Fauna Society on the Preservation of the Fauna of Malaya," *JSPFE* 4 (1924): 60-63.

¹³¹ "Federated Malay States Enactment No. 18 of 1921," *JSPFE* 3 (1923): 26-61.

¹³² Hubback, "Letter from T. Hubback," 62.

management through a game department and the creation of wildlife reserves. A game department would enforce the hunting laws, exterminate or capture dangerous animals, and monitor the wildlife trade. Ostensibly, the revenue from hunting licenses and the taxes on exports would fund the department. Ormsby-Gore sent a directive to the High Commissioner Laurence Guillemard to develop a game department and improve the enforcement of game laws.¹³³

Despite the support from London, Hubback was crippled by the resistance from the colonial administrators. Moreover, the patchwork of different states that comprised British Malaya made the enforcement of game laws impossible. The game department only had jurisdiction in the Federated Malay States, while the hunting and trapping of birds and wildlife for export to Singapore—a global center for the wildlife trade—continued though the independent Unfederated Malay States of Kelantan and Terengganu.¹³⁴

Moreover, the implications of Hubback's move to tighten protection over elephants and other endangered species threatened the planting community. The Rubber Growers' Association contended that Hubback's recommendation for fencing plantations against crop raids was expensive and ineffective, and they pressed for the total withdrawal of protection for elephant and sambhur deer.¹³⁵ The Chief Secretary, George Maxwell, upheld the principle that the interests of agriculture were paramount and must prevail. Accordingly, a 1928 amendment to the Wild Animals and Bird Protection

¹³³ Kathirithamby-Wells, *Nature*, 201.

¹³⁴ Hubback, "Letter from T. Hubback," 62-63; Theodore Hubback, "Conservation of Malayan Fauna," *JSPFE* 4 (1926): 35-36; The Federated Malay States included Selangor, Perak, Negeri Sembilan, and Pahang. The Unfederated Malay States included Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis, and Terengganu.

¹³⁵ *Wild Life Commission III*, "Exhibits of the Rubber Growers' Association," 275-80.

Enactment allowed planters with permits from the District Officer to shoot big game within a half-mile radius of a cultivated area.¹³⁶ Although Hubback succeeded in receiving sufficient government support for the appointment of three salaried assistant game wardens, there were conflicts regarding the actual purpose and goals of these wardens. District Officers viewed them as guards for protecting crops and often ordered the game wardens to exterminate elephant herds.¹³⁷

The increasingly powerful Malayan Forest Service was also hostile to the creation of a separate game department. Forests and forest products, including wildlife, were under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service, which was unwilling to relinquish any of its control to an independent wildlife administration. Both Cubitt (the chief architect of the Malayan Forest Service) and his successor J. P. Mead insisted that integration of wildlife preservation and forest management under the Forest Service would be the optimum method for protecting wildlife.¹³⁸

The collision between agriculturalists and foresters, and a tenacious imperial wildlife conservation lobby forced Hugh Clifford, High Commissioner of Malaya, to find a compromise solution. It was at this juncture that the creation of a national park gained prominence as a practical solution to the wildlife conservation problem. In April 1927, Hubback had recommended extending the Gunung Tahan Wild Life Reserve in the state

¹³⁶ George Maxwell, "Big Game and Planters. From *British Malaya* of December, 1927," in *Wildlife Commission III*, 309-13.

¹³⁷ CO 717/62/4, Hubback, "Preservation of Game," 28 July 1928; CO 717/62/4, "Hubback to W.D. Ellis," 30 December 1929; CO 717/89/7, "Hubback to E. Campbell, M.P.," 10 November 1932; CO 717/96/1, "Hubback to A. Caldecott," 12 April 1933; Wild Life Commission of Malaya, *Report of the Wild Life Commission. Volume II—Recommendations* (hereafter *Wild Life Commission, II*) (Singapore, Government Printing Office, 1932), 76.

¹³⁸ J. P. Mead, "Preservation of Wild Life in Malaya," *Wild Life Commission, I*, 415-16.

of Pahang, into the headwaters of the Terengganu and Kelantan Rivers, located in the neighboring states of Terengganu and Kelantan, in order to create a vast national park—the first national park in Asia.¹³⁹ Parliamentary Under-Secretary W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore, who had earlier supported Hubback’s proposals for a game department and wildlife reserves, indicated his support for the national park idea as a solution to the wildlife controversy. High Commissioner Clifford also accepted the plan for developing a large national park as an effective compromise between conservationists and planters.¹⁴⁰ When Hubback had first proposed the national park, he had envisioned that this park would be part of a larger system of reserves, sanctuaries, and national parks, supported by a comprehensive system of game laws, and all administered by a strong game department. Clifford envisaged that the creation of a single large national park would permit him to eliminate existing sanctuaries and regulations; hence, in 1929 Clifford withdrew control over elephant and sambhur deer, regarded as the most destructive to crops, and abolished most of Malaya’s other game reserves.¹⁴¹

Outraged by these developments, in September 1929 Hubback returned to London to rally metropolitan support. He received the full support of the SPFE whose influential membership was able to raise the issue of conservation in Malaya in both Houses of Parliament.¹⁴² As a result of Parliamentary pressure, the Colonial Office called for the organization of a wild life commission in order to investigate the question of wildlife

¹³⁹ CO 717/62/4, Hubback, “Game Preservation in Malaya,” n.d.

¹⁴⁰ CO 717/96/1, “Extract from the Report of W.G.A Ormsby-Gore on a visit to Malaya, Ceylon and Java during 1928,” n.d.

¹⁴¹ Kathirithamby-Wells, 204.

¹⁴² Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, “Preservation of Wild Fauna,” 21 November 1929, *Hansard* 75, 625-60.

conservation in the colony, and in particular the creation of a national park. On the basis of the commission's report, the colonial secretary hoped to formulate a comprehensive policy applicable for wildlife administration in Malaya as well as Burma, India, and other British colonies where wildlife conservation, and the development of sanctuaries and national parks had become an important administrative concern.¹⁴³

The Colonial Office appointed Hubback Chairman of the Wild Life Commission. Hubback was recognized as the foremost authority on wildlife conservation in Malaya, but he was not impartial, so the Colonial Office also appointed Gerald Hawkins, a civil servant, as independent and impartial Assessor.¹⁴⁴ The Wild Life Commission held sixty-four interview sessions across British Malaya from August 1930 to March 1931. Drawing evidence from a cross-section of society—ranging from Malay peasantry to British civil servants to Chinese and Indian members of the business community—the Commission presented a remarkable account of the attitudes towards wildlife and conservation of different groups in Malaya. According to Hubback, “Evidence was taken from anyone who wished to come forward, from High Government Officials to *Sakai*; sessions being held in places as widely apart as a sandbank on the Kelantan River near Kuala Pergau and the awe-inspiring surroundings of the Federal Council Chamber in Kuala Lumpur.”¹⁴⁵ Due to the high degree of contestation regarding the park, native opinion became especially important to both supporters and enemies of conservation. Critics of conservation frequently insisted that Malay and Chinese opinion was opposed to

¹⁴³ CO 717/69/3 “Passfield to FMS,” 6 March 1930.

¹⁴⁴ CO 717/69/3, “Memo: Colonial Office,” 28 March 1930.

¹⁴⁵ *Wild Life Commission*, I, 12.

conservation and that to implement wildlife policies would excite anti-colonial violence. Supporters of wildlife conservation and the national park needed to demonstrate that native groups were supportive of proposals for wildlife conservation and the creation of a national park.

Most of the native witnesses were wealthier Malays, often village or district leaders (*penghulu*), planters, teachers, game wardens, supervisors, and shopkeepers. The Commission's evidence revealed that the rural "middle-class" Malay attitudes towards wildlife conservation was rooted in mixed utilitarian and aesthetic concerns, similar to those common in the West.¹⁴⁶ They were unanimous in their opinion that both elephants and sambhur deer were destructive and that any and all wildlife that threatened cultivation should be exterminated. However, they also expressed that provided that animals did not destroy agriculture, they could be protected in a wildlife reserve. According to Wan Mohammad Ali bin Wan Abdollah, Penghulu of Tembeling, "All animals doing damage to cultivation should be destroyed, though I would have no objection to their survival in places remote from cultivation."¹⁴⁷ As another Malay witness from Negeri Sembilan put it, "so long as the beast keeps to his proper haunts and limits, no action should be taken against him."¹⁴⁸

However, the attitudes of the Malay witnesses did differ in interesting ways from those of the Westerners. For example, the Malays generally supported close seasons for hunting, but were opposed to regulations regarding the minimum age or size of animals

¹⁴⁶ CO 717/62/4, No. 62310, "Hubback, Pahang, to Chief Secretary FMS," 1 Sept. 1929. Rupert Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 506-08.

¹⁴⁷ "Wan Mohammad Ali bin Wan Abdollah," *Wild Life Commission, I*, 328.

¹⁴⁸ "Omar H. Ahmad," *Wild Life Commission, I*, 135.

to be shot. They were worried about more restrictions on hunting because they might be forced to pay for what they were previously able to take for free. Others were concerned about the fee for hunting licenses because it was considered beyond the financial means of most Malays. Many were opposed to “night-shooting,” but not due to ethical “sportsmanship” reasons, but rather because it would be difficult to determine if the meat were *halal*. Finally, they were also dismissive of arguments for conservation based on the claims of descendants. As one witnesses said, “I do not care about what will happen to the future which can take of itself.”¹⁴⁹

The Commission then was a unique event in the history of wildlife conservation. It was perhaps the most complete survey of the opinions on the issues of wildlife conservation and national parks in any European colony up to that time. It provided a rare insight into the native Malay and Chinese opinions towards the entire range of issues regarding wildlife conservation and national parks.

The conclusions of the Commission found that the diverse views and attitudes came together in a consensus favoring a national park. Both the Malayan groups and the British groups favored the creation of the large sanctuary for wildlife in the form of a large national park, the Gunung Tahan National Park. The Colonial Office approved the recommendations of the Wild Life Commission, but their implementation, including the creation of an independent game department and the national park, were shelved due to the Great Depression and subsequent administrative retrenchment in 1932. Within the

¹⁴⁹ Wildlife Commission, 1, 14-15. See the following witnesses from Kelantan: “Hussin bin Ahmat,” “Haji Mohamed Ali bin Mohamed Salleh,” “Abdul Jalil bin H. Salim,” *Wild Life Commission, I*, 265-69; witnesses from Trengganu, *Wild Life Commission, I*, 273-80; witnesses from Pahang: “Awang bin Lebai Itam,” “H. Yusop bin Abdollah,” “Uda bin Abdulrahman,” “Musim bin Sitam,” “Mat bin Sahat,” “Seman bin Sabtu,” “Tungku Hamid bin Tungku Kudin,” “Mohammed Dahan bin Imam Teh,” “Ismail bin Mat,” Wan Mat bin Wan Hussin “Lebai Abdul Rani bin Lebai Buang,” *Wild Life Commission, I*, 319-32.

retrenchment plan, wildlife administration was transferred to State control. The drastic retrenchments in 1932 resulted in a further setback, with a substantial thirty-five percent cut in the 1934 budget for wildlife administration.¹⁵⁰

Cecil Clementi, who served as High Commissioner for the Malaya colonies from 1930 to 1934, had proposed to decentralize the colony, and devolve control of the bureaucracy in order to give the twelve individual Malay states more power. The decentralization scheme that Clementi revived as part of his wider vision for a Pan-Malayan Union had mixed implications for wildlife conservation. While a “Union” promised some uniformity and coordination, decentralization threatened the Wild Life Commission’s recommendations for creating an integrated Federal Wildlife Department.¹⁵¹

Despite the setbacks caused by the economic depression and decentralization, the issues of wildlife conservation and the proposed national park were kept alive in the English language press. The Wildlife Commission had encouraged newspapers to advertise its proceedings and wildlife conservation had continued to be a popular subject for reports and editorials. The dailies had provided comprehensive coverage of the sittings of the Commission, with comments on its findings.¹⁵² Editorials in the English-

¹⁵⁰ Kathirithamby-Wells, 206.

¹⁵¹ For decentralization and Clementi’s plan see Rupert Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 190-91, 314-35.

¹⁵² Anthony Milner: *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya* 89-99. For a discussion of possible newspaper readerships and literacy percentages see Roff, *Origins*, 167. Dailies that reported on the Commission included the *Times of Malaya*, *Straits Times*, *Sunday Times* (the Sunday edition of *Straits Times*), *Malayan Daily Express*, *Malaya Tribune*, and *Malay Mail*. Kathirithamby-Wells, 208-212.

language press generally canvassed support for the concept of a national park, considered an effective means of segregating wildlife from agricultural and mining settlements.¹⁵³

English language newspapers continued to report on the lack of progress on the national park and criticized the government for the delays in implementing the recommendations of the Commission. Unlike the censored native press, the English language press was free to criticize the colonial government and its initiatives, and a series of editorials in the *Straits Times*—the most prominent English-language newspaper in the colony—blasted the colonial government. The administration was accused of lagging behind civilized world opinion on the subject of wildlife conservation and national parks. Other editorials argued the national park would be integrating the long-term interests of society with nature preservation and provide a valuable source of recreation.¹⁵⁴

Newspaper articles increasingly depicted the national park as a location for the development of Malay nationalism. The national park was promoted as “the first of its kind in Asia” and a pride to the nation.¹⁵⁵ “Nation,” entered the environmental press propaganda as an apolitical concept transcending contemporary issues of decentralization, identity, and ethnicity. Wildlife and nature preservation were contextualized within a socially and politically disparate “Malaya” that lacked a clear national identity. The territorial contributions by the rulers of Pahang, Terengganu, and Kelantan for the proposed national park symbolized a historic pan-Malayan initiative. A

¹⁵³ Kathirithamby-Wells, *Nature*, 208-10.

¹⁵⁴ Editorial, “Sanctuary for Wild Life,” *Straits Times*, August 27, 1931; Editorial, “The Wild Life Report,” *Straits Times*, August 15, 1932; Editorial, “Wild Life Proposals,” *Straits Times*, August 19, 1932; Editorial, “Wild Life,” *Straits Times*, May 22, 1936.

¹⁵⁵ “Will Malaya Have the First National Park in Asia?” *Straits Times*, August 25, 1931.

national park was considered a symbolic monument that would capture the collective imagination.¹⁵⁶

The development of a national park for fostering a common sense of heritage contributed to High Commissioner Clementi's political objectives. Support for the notion of a national park could advance his own vision of a pan-Malayan union within which the Unfederated Malay States might conceivably be attracted. The creation of a national park as a building block of a common national identity, nurtured by the conservation lobby, could help mend fissures in the new union.¹⁵⁷ The proposed national park offered a solution for resolving the wildlife controversy in a way that would enhance pan-Malayan identity.

The creation of a national park in British Malaya also contributed to the Colonial Office's promotion of wildlife conservation in the British Empire. In 1933, the International Convention for the Protection of African Fauna and Flora convened in the House of Lords and established the creation of national parks as an international and imperial concern (see Chapter One).¹⁵⁸ The following year, a committee was organized in order to consider a meeting on similar lines as the African Convention for the protection of the fauna and flora of Asia, but this conference never materialized. In the 1920s, the creation of a national park in Malaya was promoted as an ideal compromise between the interests of the agriculturalists, foresters, and conservationists. In the 1930s, the park also

¹⁵⁶ Kathirithamby-Wells, *Nature*, 212-13 William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 137-46.

¹⁵⁷ CO 717/62/4, "Hubback to Campbell," 1 January 1933; Emerson, *Malaysia*, 313-14; Means, *Malaysian Politics*, 22-23, 30-31.

¹⁵⁸ Jepson and Whittaker, "Histories of Protected Areas," 142; John MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester, Manchester University Press 1986), 287-88.

became the perfect method for enhancing a stronger sense of Malayan national identity and helped to fulfill British imperial obligations towards international wildlife conservation.

In 1935, the arrival of Shenton Thomas, the new High Commissioner, created fresh opportunities for conservation. Shenton Thomas had been a governor in several British African colonies; he was familiar with the issues of wildlife conservation, and he had experience with the development of reserves. Moreover, by 1935 the economy had recovered, and the commitment of funds towards conservation became more palatable to the colonial administration.

Thomas was a close friend of Hobley, President of the SPFE. In a letter to Thomas in February 1935, Hobley made the recommendation to Thomas that he might consider the Jubilee of King George V—an enthusiastic hunter—as an opportunity to propose to the Sultans of Pahang, Terengganu, and Kelantan that they consider donating land for the creation of a national park in the King's honor. During a tour of the east coast states of the colony, Thomas followed Hobley's suggestion and gained the consent of the rulers of Pahang, Kelantan, and Terengganu to set aside land for the creation of the King George V National Park in celebration of the British monarch. The new national park would be a demonstration of the respect of Malay royalty for the British King.¹⁵⁹

The Colonial Office considered the co-operative action of the three rulers in this matter to be “a fitting measure for His Majesty's approval” and viewed the development of the national park as an important step in giving effect to the proposals of the Wild Life Preservation Commission on Malaya. For the King's part, he read with pleasure the

¹⁵⁹ CO 717/113/2, “Thomas to Hobley,” 15 April 1935.

proposal and entirely approved of the park, and the Prince of Wales wrote a formal letter of thanks to Shenton Thomas.¹⁶⁰

The park had been agreed upon in principle in 1935, but the negotiations for the formal enactment would take another four years. Although the Sultans agreed to grant the land for the national park, they had several conditions to their “donation.” The lands would remain under the control of the respective states, and the Sultans retained the right to exploit minerals in the park. Moreover, they indicated that they would not provide any financial support for the national park. By August 1936, a draft bill had been composed that accounted for these demands.¹⁶¹

Hubback, who had not participated in composing the draft bill, was outraged by the concessions and the lack of sufficient financial support for the park. Once again, Hubback travelled to London to make his case directly to the Colonial Office. Hubback initially was well received. His demands for more substantial financial support for the national park—Thomas had only budgeted \$2,500— yielded results. The Colonial Office conceded that the meager sum of \$2,500 for the park was inadequate, and Thomas was directed to increase the sum for the park so that it would not be an embarrassment to the King.¹⁶²

However, Hubback’s unwillingness to acknowledge the political realities of the creation of the national park and the unique conditions of its development became increasingly irritating to many of his supporters. As Thomas indicated in a letter to the

¹⁶⁰ CO 717/113/2, “Memo from Gent,” 25 April 1935.

¹⁶¹ CO 717/118/6 “Report: Meeting of Thomas, Shuckesburgh, Gent, and Cowell,” 19 May 1936.

¹⁶² CO 717/62 “Lord Plymouth to Shenton Thomas,” 26 January 1936.

Colonial Office, the Sultans dictated certain conditions that had to be met in the draft bill. Without these concessions, there would be no park. Shenton Thomas complained that Hubback had become an obstacle to the creation of the park, and in July 1936, at a meeting at the Colonial Office, Thomas requested that Hubback be replaced as the Game Warden.¹⁶³

Even Hubback's supporters at the SPFE were beginning to feel that Hubback had become too fanatical. The SPFE was always careful to distance itself from the extremists. As Hopley, leader of the SPFE, indicated to the Colonial Office, "Our Society has no desire to interfere with the reasonable control of game by planters, settlers or others, or with legitimate sport or trade. The object of our Society is to preserve for future generations a certain number of animals living under their natural conditions."¹⁶⁴ The uncompromising positions of wildlife fanatics such as Hubback were exactly what they were trying to avoid. In 1936, Comyn-Platt, a respected member of the SPFE, visited Malaya under the auspices of the Colonial Office and the SPFE in order to report on the progress of the park and conservation in general in the colony. Comyn-Platt agreed with Thomas that Hubback was inflexible and that his brittle attitude necessitated his replacement as the honorary Game Warden.¹⁶⁵

Edward Oswald Shebbeare (1884-1964) became the new Game Warden in 1938. A forester in the Indian Forest Service since 1910 and a celebrated hunter, Shebbeare had been the architect of a reserve system in Bengal, created the first colonial elephant

¹⁶³ CO 717/118/6 "Report: Meeting of Thomas, Shuckesburgh, Gent, and Cowell," 19 May 1936.

¹⁶⁴ CO 717/62/4, No. 62310, "C.W. Hopley, to the Under-Secretary, Colonial Office," 2 September 1929.

¹⁶⁵ CO 717/109/9, No. 51514, "Onslow to Malcolm MacDonald," 24 July 1935.

sanctuary, and was one of the promoters of the “Hailey National Park” in India. Shebbeare was also a mountain climber and participated in the 1924 and 1933 expeditions to climb Mt. Everest, acting as transport officer and Deputy Leader. Although not a climber, he reached the North Col of Everest at the age of nearly 50.¹⁶⁶ He was the ideal choice for establishing the King George V National Park.

Shebbeare was widely respected for his levelheaded commitment to both conservation and development. He felt that species could be preserved without hampering economic development. He also did not believe in preserving animals at the detriment of human development or preventing the fair and legitimate pursuit of sport. Thomas was immediately impressed by Shebbeare and indicated to the Colonial Office his positive impression of him.¹⁶⁷

By the end of the 1938, Shebbeare had completed the construction of park headquarters at Kuala Tahan and nine Rangers’ posts from Merapoh on west to Sungei Spia in the south. They had installed a Resident Superintendent at the headquarters at Kuala Tahan and thirteen Park Rangers employed at the nine posts. He also established a trail system in the park. Like Hubback before him, Shebbeare emphasized that although the principal goal of the park would be to protect flora and fauna, tourism was an essential feature of the park. Although he “did not want crowds,” Shebbeare argued that tourism in the park could generate a profit and pointed out that many people had already expressed interest in touring the park. An accomplished alpinist, Shebbeare also saw the

¹⁶⁶ “Obituary: Edward Oswald Shebbeare” *JSPFE* 61 (1964): 2-4.

¹⁶⁷ CO 717/62 “Shenton Thomas to Colonial Office,” 15 January 1939.

potential for opening up Gunong Tahan, the highest peak in Malaya, for climbing enthusiasts.¹⁶⁸

Shebbeare was able to overcome what in 1938 became the greatest hindrance to the creation of the park—human habitation. In Pahang and Terengganu, some 700 Malays who lived in the Ulu Tembeling region located near the eastern edge of the park, on the border between Pahang and Trengganu, made representations to the Sultan that the restrictions imposed by the creation of a national park would deprive them of their traditional rights. In addition to the Malays, the Batek, Semang, and other *Orang Asli* (aboriginal groups) of the region also came forth declaring that they had a long history of occupation and deserved the right to continue to live in the region. The Sultan and the Pahang State Council indicated that they would refuse to accept the draft park legislation unless certain provisions were made to protect the rights of these aboriginal people. The ruler of Terengganu also insisted on protecting the rights of these indigenous groups. Initially the leaders of these states demanded that a portion of the proposed national park be excised—a catastrophe from the point of view of conservation. Shebbeare sought to avoid altering the park boundaries at all costs, and instead he negotiated a compromise with the Sultans by which a clause protecting the rights of aboriginals would be inserted in the legislation for the establishment of the national park in these two states.¹⁶⁹

The National Park Enactment was not approved in all three states until 14 March 1939 and was gazetted 23 June.¹⁷⁰ The Agreement on which the existence of the parks

¹⁶⁸ Edward Oswald Shebbeare, “Annual Report on the Game Dept. FMS for year 1938” *JSPFE* 38 (1939): 32-35.

¹⁶⁹ CO 717/62 “Shenton Thomas to Colonial Office,” 15 January 1939.

¹⁷⁰ King George V National Park Taman Negara Enactment (Pahang) No. 2, 1939 [En. 2 of 1938], Taman

was based stipulated that the respective portions of the park would be administered as State lands and the land was not to be alienated. Hence, the national park was in effect three State parks joined together and these three parks would be subject to what was in effect one piece of legislation. There was no “central legislation” to cover the three separate and independent governments of Pahang, Trengganu, and Kelantan. However, this was not considered necessary as the legislations were virtually identical. Shebbeare and Thomas argued that no practical difficulty need arise since each pair of Trustees would make identical rules; and each pair of Trustees appointed the same man (the Chief Game Warden) as officer in charge of their park. Moreover, according to the legislation, in each case King George V would be one of the two Trustees, and since each government is by treaty bound to accept his advice in matters of administration, he can in effect ensure that the rulers, even in the capacity of trustees, would follow his advise in respect of the park.¹⁷¹

As part of the legislation principle that mining must be allowed within the park in certain circumstances, the National Parks Act stipulated that if any minerals beneath the lands were “commercially exploitable” the “value of such deposits shall not be lost to the State.” Section 7 (ii) of the National Parks Act states:

(i) if at any time the Trustees have reason to believe that in a particular portion of the State Park a mineral deposit exists of such richness that it would be contrary to the interests of the State that it should not be mined the Trustees may take such steps as may be necessary to consent to the issue under the Mining Enactment of licenses to prospect such portion of the State Park and if

Negara Enactment (Kelantan) No. 14, 1938 [En. 14 of 1938], and Taman Negara Enactment (Terengganu) No. 6, 1939 [En. 6 of 1358].

¹⁷¹ CO 717/131/1, “Sheton Thomas to MacDonald,” 5 November 1938; CO 717/131/1, “Memo from Thomas,” 9 June 1939.

necessary for the issue thereafter of mining certificates or of mining leases in respect of the portion of the State Park or any part of such portion of the State Park.¹⁷²

This principle was admittedly contrary to that followed in respect of sanctuaries in other parts of the world. However, the legislation did not allow prospecting the park. The vague wording limited the possibility of mining in the park. Only if a large deposit was discovered at the border of the park, and there was reason to believe that it continued into the park, would it be permissible to mine in the park.¹⁷³

The aboriginal groups were provided for in Provision 15. (c). “The officer in charge of the Park is given powers to allow certain aboriginal tribes the use of the Park if he thinks it advisable.” A schedule is supplied giving the designation of six aboriginal tribes (*Orang Asli*): Ple, Temiar, Ple-Temiar, Senoi, Semang, and Pangan. Section 16 allowed the Trustees the right to grant certain privileges to persons who “...living on or near the borders of the State Park, had been, immediately before the coming into force of this Enactment, habitually in the enjoyment of any privileges of way, of fishing, of collecting produce, or otherwise, claimed by such person or persons...”¹⁷⁴

The fact that the legislation indicated that the parks would remain under the control of state governments, and that there would provision for mining and human habitation in the park were features that distinguished King George V from the wilderness model for parks that conservation organization advocated. Nevertheless, it was this compromise position that allowed the park to become a possibility. According to

¹⁷² King George V National Park Taman Negara Enactment, 4.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

the strategy of both Shebbeare and Thomas, the point was to establish the park, and once it proved its worth it would be protected because of emotional reasons, and not because of legislation.¹⁷⁵

Between 1939 and 1941, the Government spent seventy thousand Straits dollars a year in order to convert King George V into a first-rate national park. By 1941 there were two rest houses at each end of the park and twelve ranger's posts. Campsites were planned for the park, and Shebbeare had started to lead small groups into the parks on two-week excursions on elephant.¹⁷⁶

In 1940, Shebbeare founded the Malayan Nature Society, serving as both President and Editor of the Society's journal. According to Shebbeare, he created the Society because at the time he felt that there was sufficient interest in the colony—about 150 people. Though not committed initially to conservation and conceived as an amateur rather than a specialist organization, the Society, like the King George V National Park, signaled the emergence of nature appreciation as popular culture in Malaya. By the publication of the second volume of the Society's journal in 1941, Shebbeare had indicated that the popularity of the Society was rapidly expanding and there was great enthusiasm for naturalist pursuits in Malaya. Regrettably, only the first two issues were published before war broke out.¹⁷⁷

The Second World War brought an end to the expanding interest in King George V and the Malayan Nature Society. The British colonies of Malaya and Singapore

¹⁷⁵ CO 717/62 "Shenton Thomas to Colonial Office," 15 January 1939.

¹⁷⁶ Edward Oswald Shebbeare "A Malayan National Park," *JSPFE* 46 (1946): 558-62.

¹⁷⁷ Edward Oswald Shebbeare "Foreward" *The Malayan Nature Journal* 1 (1940): 1-3.

surrendered in 1942. Shebbeare and many other British colonial administrators were imprisoned by the Japanese from 1942 to 1945. After the conclusion of the war, Shebbeare returned to the park and made an inventory of the state of wildlife. In his report, he indicated that the park had more wildlife than before the war. He ascribed this condition to the confiscation of firearms during Japanese occupation. In fact, Shebbeare viewed the moment as an opportunity to keep stocks above pre-war levels by protecting the wildlife as an attraction for hunters and naturalists.¹⁷⁸ Pointing out that the government would not spend on a losing venture, Shebbeare re-emphasized the importance of tourism as a source of revenue. In particular, he pointed to a new post-war generation with less interest in hunting and more interest in photography and camping.¹⁷⁹ Having helped to reestablish the national park and nature conservation in Malaya, Shebbeare retired in 1947 and returned to London.

As it would turn out, the Emergency would soon convert the park into a hideout for Communist guerillas, and it was not until 1957 that rangers could enter the park without armed escorts.¹⁸⁰ By that time, Britain was preparing leave the country and in 1957 King George V National Park became the new Taman Negara National Park. Taman Negara, frequently translated as “national park” has a broader meaning than “nation” and is perhaps better translated as “the country” rather than “the nation,” as in “The Country’s Park National Park.” The new name was indicative of a transition from imperial nationalism to post-colonial nationalism. The park became a symbol of a new

¹⁷⁸ CO 414/155, Edward Oswald Shebbeare, “Report on National Park and Game Compared with Pre-war Conditions.” 30 April 1947.

¹⁷⁹ CO 414/155, Edward Oswald Shebbeare, “Memo on Game” 23 May 1947.

¹⁸⁰ Arthur Locke, *Tigers of Trengganu* (London, 1954), 8-10.

Malayan nationalism, yet a nationalism rooted in the fiber of the country and land of the Malay Peninsula.

Taman Negara remains one of the most successful examples of the promise of national parks to harmonize the interests of conservation, development, and indigenous groups in Southeast Asia. The creation of Malaysia's national park was due in large part to the tenacity of a series of game wardens who tirelessly campaigned for the establishment of the national park. These conservationists were aided by international conservation networks in order to promote their cause. All parties acknowledged that Hubback's twenty years of relentless lobbying was responsible for the creation of the park. However, it was Shebbeare who was able to forge compromise when Hubback could not. By founding the Malayan Nature Society, Shebbeare also created what remains the most important nature and conservation society in Malaysia, which has continued to be instrumental for lobbying the government to continue to protect the national park.

However, the enduring survival of the park was a result of several other factors. The need to create a national park as a method for galvanizing an otherwise decentralized state proved an enduring benefit of the park. The Malaysian nation has remained a decentralized nation, and the national park has continued to provide cohesion and a source of national prestige for the country. Nationalist sentiments were cultivated through the public debate surrounding the wildlife commission and the colonial press contributing to the cultivation of a Malaysian "public sphere." The Commission remains a unique event in the creation of national parks in Southeast Asia—to this author's knowledge there was not another instance in a European colony in which a countrywide polling was conducted regarding the creation of a national park.

However, it was contestation that forged Taman Negara into an enduring national park. The equal distribution of power between supporters and those hostile to the park forced compromise. Hubback and his supporters were unable to implement radical “fortress” conservation initiatives, including the exclusion of the indigenous people or the absolute prohibition of mining in the park. In the event, this was a good thing. By conceding to these demands, the park could be created in a manner that would be sustainable. On the other hand, in order to satisfy a conservation lobby, the government and the agents of development had to respect the park, contribute to its upkeep, and institute legitimate laws to protect it.

In the event, the park has survived the twentieth century intact. By 2000, the park had not been mined, nor its rivers dammed. Indigenous people have continued to survive in the park without suffering relocation or without destroying the park’s resources. Tourism has also expanded and visitation numbers in 2000 reached 60,000 a year.¹⁸¹ In 2003, the Malaysian government nominated Taman Negara for World Heritage Status.

Malaysia’s national park satisfied local, regional, federal, colonial, imperial, and monarchical interests. The Malaysian national park become the optimal compromise between the interests of conservation, development, tourism; urban conservation elites and local populations that surrounded the park; and also provided a location for the development of nationalist and imperialist identities. Moreover, the park has endured in the post-colonial era, transformed into an enduring feature of the Malaysian nation. Examining the history of Taman Negara National Park then is important not only as a source for later debates between the promoters of conservation, development, and the

¹⁸¹ Backhaus, *Tourism*, 62.

rights of indigenous people, but also as a concrete example on how these multiple agendas have been harmonized to create an enduring national park.

Chapter Three. Nature Loving and National Parks in New Order Indonesia, c. 1965-

2000

No country now presents a more outstanding example of the failures of national parks in developing nations than Indonesia. During the authoritarian New Order regime of General Suharto (1967-98), the Indonesian government established thirty-six national parks between 1980 and 1998. Yet by the end of the Suharto's rule, it had become evident that Indonesia's celebrated system of national parks had not succeeded in achieving its purported biodiversity conservation and development objectives—the many parks established during his rule failed to protect biodiversity, failed to contribute to the development of the local economy, failed to provide recreation for the population, and failed to provide meaningful locations for national identity.

The abuse and corruption that have characterized the management of Indonesia's forests and protected area during the Suharto regime have been the source of substantial research and criticism. Much of this criticism of Indonesia's national parks programs has come from conservation representatives of the WWF, IUCN, and other organizations that contributed to implementing these national parks programs in Indonesia. In a World Bank funded review of so-called Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDP) implemented in nineteen Indonesian national parks, a team of conservationists came to a stark conclusion: "The results of the study are unambiguous. It is clear that most of the attempts to enhance biodiversity conservation in Indonesia through ICDPs are unconvincing and unlikely to be successful under current conditions."¹⁸² Kathy MacKinnon, one of the prominent conservationists involved in national park

¹⁸² Michael Wells et al., *Investing in Biodiversity: A Review of Indonesia's Integrated Conservation and Development Projects* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1999), 8.

development in Indonesia in the 1980s and 1990s, described the condition of Indonesia's parks as a "crisis." According to MacKinnon, the crisis has been exacerbated by the lack of governance and effective enforcement to protect the country's national parks, while the national and local governments have been unable, or unwilling, to stop the widespread illegal logging activities in the parks.¹⁸³

The establishment of national parks in Indonesia has also come in for much criticism from social scientists who have criticized the effectiveness of collaborative management in widening access to resources and decision-making in Indonesia's parks. They have examined the relations of power and ideas that supported Indonesia's resource-management regimes, and have demonstrated that these ideas are historically contingent, socially specific, and based on an erroneous understanding of culture-nature relations amongst Indonesians.¹⁸⁴

This chapter will focus on the development of Indonesian national parks in the 1980s and 1990s. It examines why the government chose to implement a system of national parks, and attempts to explain why Indonesia's national parks program proved unsuccessful. In particular, this essay will argue that the national park model adopted by Suharto's New Order regime failed in large measure because—for a variety of reasons—it paid scant attention to the actual desires, interests, and tastes of Indonesians. By

¹⁸³ Kathy MacKinnon, "Megadiversity in Crisis: Politics, Policies, and Governance in Indonesia's Forests," in William Laurance and Carlos Peres, eds., *Emerging Threats to Tropical Forests* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 304-05

¹⁸⁴ Michael Hitchcock, "Dragon Tourism in Komodo, Eastern Indonesia" in Michael Hitchcock, Victor T. King, and Michael Parnwell, eds., *Tourism in South-East Asia* (London: Routledge, 1993), 303-16; Henning Borchers, "Dragon Tourism Revisited: The Sustainability of Tourism Development in Komodo National Park," in Michael Hitchcock, Victor T. King, and Michael Parnwell, eds., *Tourism in Southeast Asia: Challenges and New Directions* (Copenhagen: NIAS, 2008), 270-85; Janet Cochrane, "National Parks in Indonesia: An Alien Construct," in Warwick Frost and C. Michael Hall, eds., *Tourism and National Parks: International Perspectives on Development, Histories, and Change* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 211-24;

pointing to the disjuncture between official motives and popular interests, this essay will not only explain the puzzling failure of the New Order's parks initiative, but will also highlight a more general problem with the development of national parks in countries controlled by authoritarian regimes. In this chapter, I will expand on this previous research on Indonesia's national parks by contrasting the history of Indonesia's "failed" national parks program with the story of the rising nationwide popularity of mountain climbing in the 1960s, and its role in modern Indonesian nationalism and cosmopolitan youth identity. By offering a counter-narrative to the story of Indonesia's failed parks programs, this chapter will provide a new perspective to the causes for Indonesia's malfunctioning national parks program and indicate alternatives for how these parks might be more successfully managed in the future.

On 1 March 1964 an Indonesian team planted the Indonesian flag at the peak of Puncak Jaya, the peak in West Papua (on the island of New Guinea) that had been designated not only the highest in Indonesia, but at 3,265m was considered the highest in all of Southeast Asia. The event had been calculated by the Indonesian leader Soekarno, who shortly after the Republic of Indonesia took control of West Papua in 1964, renamed the remote peak "Puntjak Soekarno" ("Soekarno's Peak") and sent a team organized by the Indonesian military to climb this daunting mountain. It was the first time that an Indonesian team had conquered the peak, and the event was considered a great triumph for the nation and was widely reported in the media. Soekarno's injunction to the team,

“advance...no retreat,” became a popular slogan for Indonesian nationalists as well as mountaineers.¹⁸⁵

Westerners of course have a long history of conquering peaks as a sign of possession, national pride, and a demonstration of physical and scientific expertise. In the colonial period, the Dutch in Indonesia had been fascinated by the country’s mountains and volcanoes, and they had avidly climbed them. Climbing mountains was popular enough in colonial Java to lead to the publication of guidebooks devoted to the topic, while an active Netherlands Indies mountaineering association included important figures from the colonial establishment, reflecting the interest of colonial society in mountaineering.¹⁸⁶

Mountains have an acute objective reality in Indonesia, which is after all an archipelago of thousands of mountainous volcanic islands. Mountains and volcanoes, both active and extinct, are a shared experience for all residents of Indonesia.¹⁸⁷ However, mountain climbing had not been a popular sport for Indonesian nationalists or the military. Soekarno’s employment of alpinism for nationalist propaganda introduced a new element in the relationship between Indonesian nature and nation providing a source of patriotic pride by showcasing military and technical sophistication, demonstrating both territorial control and equality with the West.

¹⁸⁵ Lieut-Colonel Hadji Anwar Hamid, et al., eds., *Madju Terus...Pantang Mundur!* (Jakarta: KTI, 1964).

¹⁸⁶ Robert Cribb, *The Politics of Environmental Protection in Indonesia* (Melbourne: Monash University, 1988), 4.

¹⁸⁷ O. Bruun and A. Kalland, “Images of Nature: An Introduction to the Study of Man-Environment Relations in Asia,” in *Asian Perceptions of Nature*, 8-9 ; M. St. E. Kilmaskossu and G. S. Hope, “A Mountain Research Programme for Indonesia,” *Mountain Research and Development* 5 (1985): 339-48; John Einarsen, ed., *The Sacred Mountains of Asia* (Boston: Shambala, 1995), 3. Astri Wright, *Soul Spirit, and Mountain: Preoccupations of Contemporary Indonesian Painters* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Mountain climbing would become an increasingly popular outlet for Indonesian nationalism after the 1960s. Although Soekarno's adventure in Papua might have elevated the status of mountain climbing as a national project, it was "Mapala" and other university students hiking clubs that converted mountain climbing into a popular nationwide activity. On 12 December 1964, eight months after Soekarno's adventure in Papua, the celebrated journalist and youth leader Soe Hok Gie and a group of fellow students at the prestigious University of Indonesia, founded the organization "Mapala," ("Mahasiswa Pencinta Alam," literally "University Student Nature Lovers").¹⁸⁸ From these small beginnings, within twenty years mountain climbing among university students would expand into a nationwide movement.

The rise of the popularity of mountain climbing among students was due in part to the political violence of the era. After the collapse of the Soekarno regime in 1966, General Suharto, the new leader of Indonesia, implemented a purge of Communism from Indonesia, resulting in the slaughter of an estimated 500,000 Indonesians. Student activists, who had initially been instrumental in the downfall of Soekarno and the rise of Suharto, became disillusioned with the new regime.¹⁸⁹ Responding to the tumultuous political violence of the era, mountain climbing became an activity that could organize students outside of political struggles.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Soe Hok Gie, *Catatan Seoran Demonstran* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1983); John R. Maxwell, "Soe Hok Gie: A Biography of a Young Intellectual" (PhD diss., Australia National University, 1997); Rudy Badil, Luki Sutrisno Bekt, and Nesy Luntungan, *Soe Hok-Gie...Sekali Lagi: Buku Pesta dan Cinta* (Jakarta: Grammedia, 2009).

¹⁸⁹ Roger Kent Paget, "Youth and the Wane of Soekarno's Government" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1970), 216-49.

¹⁹⁰ Edward Aspinall, *Student Dissent in Indonesia in the 1980s* (Clayton: Center of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1993), 7; Edward Aspinall, "Indonesia: Moral Force Politics and the Struggle against Authoritarianism," in Edward Aspinall and Meredith Weiss, eds., *Student Activism in Asia: Between Protest*

The popularity of mountain climbing among the student activists was a surprising development—provoking even as knowledgeable an observer as Benedict Anderson to ask Gie why he engaged in the activity:

On my side, I was rather surprised to discover that he was an enthusiastic mountain-climber. He had then already climbed many of the legendary mountains of Old Java: Pangrango, Gede, Slamet, and Merapi. At first I put it down to a compulsion to “keep fit,” perhaps in protest at the *kemalasan* [laziness] he sometimes complained of among his fellow-students. Then one day I asked him directly. He said it was partly to *latih diri*, [train himself] but also because it was only on the top of a mountain that he really felt *bersih* [clean].¹⁹¹

After becoming a professor at the University of Indonesia in 1967, Gie continued to promote the expanding Mapala movement and climb the major peaks on Java, eventually giving his life for his passion. On 14 December 1969, Gie succumbed to the inhalation of poisonous volcanic fumes while attempting to climb the semi-active volcano Mt. Semeru—the highest peak on Java—dying at the age of 27. Gie would subsequently become one of the great martyrs of student activism, as well as mountain climbing, and continues to be a popular cult hero for many Indonesians.¹⁹²

The Mapala movement that Gie inspired continued to expand after his death. From its modest beginnings of an initial twelve members, by the 1970s other universities had also developed their own “nature loving” groups that regularly organized hiking

and Powerlessness (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 159-72; Enin Supriyanto, *Menolak Menunduk: Menentang Budaya Represif* (Jakarta: Grasindo, 1999), vii-ix.

¹⁹¹ Ben Anderson, “In Memoriam: Soe Hok-Gie,” *Indonesia* 9 (1970): 227.

¹⁹² In 2005, Gie was the subject of a sanitized popular movie (“*Gie*”) directed by Riri Riza. The film won multiple awards and has been the source for praise and criticism. For a discussion of the film and references to other reviews see Ariel Heryanto “Citizenship and Indonesian Ethnic Chinese in Post-1998 Films” in Ariel Heryanto, ed., *Popular Culture in Indonesia: Fluid Identities in Post-authoritarian Politics* (London: Routledge, 2008), 84-92.

expeditions.¹⁹³ Mapala and associated mountain climbing groups continued to proliferate throughout the 1980s, and by the 1990s mountain climbing had expanded into a nationwide movement with organizations in practically every university in Indonesia.¹⁹⁴ As students from middle class backgrounds, Mapala members formed a tight-knit society—the members matured together, graduated together, and climbed mountains together. Indonesian nature clubs and mountain climbing in this era therefore became a method for creating a distinctly Indonesian, middle class, youth identity that was also strongly nationalistic.

At its inception, Soe Hok Gie sought to promote Mapala as the expression of patriotism, and the deep nationalism has remained a basic feature of the organization. The three stated purposes of Mapala are (1) to foster a “healthy patriotism” among its members, achieved by the active participation of a person through “life in the middle of nature and the people of Indonesia in general;” (2) to educate the members, mentally, physically, and spiritually through “homeland activity” and (3) to achieve “a spirit of mutual cooperation and social consciousness.”¹⁹⁵

However, “Mapala nationalism” has always been a decidedly anti-politics patriotism, and it was this “apolitical nationalism” that allowed mountain climbing to become a broad-based youth movement. Because the mountain climbing youth movement did not associate itself with social change-oriented politics, nature groups were able to flourish during Suharto’s authoritarian regime. After the implementation of

¹⁹³ “Mapala” is an abbreviation of “Mahasiswa Pencinta Alam,” literally “University Student Nature Lovers.”

¹⁹⁴ “Sejarah Organisasi” Mapala UI, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.mapalau.org/profil.html>.

¹⁹⁵ “Sejarah Mapala” Mapala UI, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.mapalau.org/profil.html>.

the 1978 Campus Normalization Law and the subsequent prohibition of student organizations, mountaineering clubs were one of the few societies allowed to organize on university campuses.¹⁹⁶ Deprived of other outlets, the energy of the middle-class youth was funneled into mountain climbing as an expression of their identity. Much as music in the 1960s became a galvanizing force for the youth of the West, mountain climbing quickly became a defining feature of the Indonesian youth movement.

There was a self-conscious national consistency about these “nature loving” groups: Indonesian youth came together around Indonesian nature, and through the networks of university groups, student nature lovers across the country learned similar ways of talking about and being in nature. These student groups participated in a nationwide network—they organized, travelled, and climbed mountains together. Moreover, they learned to love a national nature, one that was made accessible through their national citizenship and schooling. Through the student nature clubs all of these impulses were brought together into a national movement.¹⁹⁷

An important feature of these university mountaineering groups was the active participation of women, who were prominent members from the very first expedition organized by Soe Hok Gie. Hiking expeditions, often lasting for several days, were one of the few acceptable activities in which young women in Indonesia could function outside of adult supervision for extended periods of time. And hiking groups provided a rare opportunity for young men and women to travel together and socialize.

¹⁹⁶ Aspinall, “Indonesia,” 160.

¹⁹⁷ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 129-30.

Mountain climbing also allowed for a close association between the students and the military. In the 1980s, mountain climbing became an important component of the military culture of the New Order regime. Starting in 1980, Kopassus (the Indonesian military's special forces) began to employ mountaineering as part of their training. For technical assistance, Kopassus turned to the Mapala groups, and from 1983 they trained together. Thus, mountaineering became a nationalist activity capable of combining and organizing the energies of the educated middle-class and the military.¹⁹⁸

The 1990 expedition to climb Puncak Jaya (no longer named Puntjak Soekarno), intended to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first Indonesian ascent of the mountain in 1964, was a culmination of the Indonesian mountaineering movement in this era. Organized in conjunction with the military and Mapala groups, the 1990 expedition was a much more sophisticated affair than the 1964 mission, facilitated by modern transport: buses, cable cars, and the dropping of food and supplies by helicopter. The expedition was considered to be simultaneously a military training exercise, and logistic supplies and equipment were carried out with “military procedure.” Unlike the previous ascent which was plagued by problems, the 1990 expedition was completed without a flaw, and the Kopassus and Mapala mountaineers reached the peak on 17 April 1990. According to the report in the national newspaper *Kompas*, the climbers “helped to bring about our nation’s national ideal.” And their next goal—to go abroad to conquer foreign mountains. “Continue to advance, no retreat!” writes the reporter, echoing the earlier message of Soekarno.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Norman Edwin, “Dua Puluh Enam Tahun, antara Perintis dan Penurus,” *Kompas* (29 April 1990): 1, 13.

Under the protective shadow of the nation, mountain climbing offered an opportunity for middle-class identity, army spectacles, and for the individual, self-development of technical prowess, athletic strength, personal discipline, and the admiration of beauty. Together the student nature lovers and the military made scaling of mountains an important nationalist enterprise—to conquer a peak was to conquer it for the nation.²⁰⁰

Norman Edwin was the reporter assigned by *Kompas* to cover the scaling of the peak in 1990. Edwin was Indonesia's most celebrated mountain climber and adventurer in the 1980s and 1990s. Through his journalism, Norman was the great advocate and spokesperson for Indonesian alpinism. As leader of Mapala at the University of Indonesia during the 1980s, Edwin was admired as the spiritual successor of Soe Hok Gie. Edwin differed from Gie in that he elevated mountaineering to a new level of seriousness. Whereas Gie had been first and foremost a student activist and intellectual, Edwin was solely dedicated to mountain climbing; one of his great achievements was his contribution to elevating Indonesian alpinism from its amateur beginnings to its technical professionalization.²⁰¹

Edwin also expanded the seriousness of Gie's ambitions by promoting Indonesian alpinism in the international arena. In 1987, Edwin devised the plan to conquer the "seven summits," proposing that an Indonesian team from Mapala UI climb the highest peaks of the world's seven continents.²⁰² Edwin started by climbing Mount McKinley

²⁰⁰ Tsing, *Friction*, 130-31.

²⁰¹ Rudy Badil, "Norman Bangga Sama Melati," *Kompas*, April 4, 1992.

²⁰² Norman Edwin, "Tujuh Puncak Dunia," *Kompas*, October 27, 1990; Rudy Badil, "Ujung Pangkal Rintisan ke 'Tujuh Puncak Dunia,'" in Rudy Badil, ed., *Norman Edwin: Catatan Sahabat Sang Alam*

(highest peak in North America) in 1989, reporting the pride he felt planting an Indonesian flag amid the other nation's banners.²⁰³ He next organized an expedition in conjunction with the Indonesian military to hike Mount Elbrus (highest peak in Europe) in 1990, where Edwin almost succumbed to altitude sickness.²⁰⁴ Two years later he was not so fortunate, dying one hundred meters from the peak of Aconcagua (highest peak in South America) in 1992.²⁰⁵

Edwin, like Gie before him, became a martyr and a national hero for the middle class youth of modern Indonesia, featured as an advertising icon (for cigarettes!) on billboards across Java.²⁰⁶ His popularity was so great that on 17 April 2002, the ten-year anniversary of Edwin's death, student groups across Indonesia held a nation-wide memorial commemorating his career.²⁰⁷ In 2011, a Mapala group completed Norman's project and climbed the seven summits, signaling perhaps the fruition of the nationalist project for Indonesian alpinism that started with Soekarno's mission forty years earlier.²⁰⁸

(Jakarta: KPG, 2010), 1-2.

²⁰³ Norman Edwin, "Sepuluh Hari Merayap Bagai Kura-kura," *Kompas*, July 27, 1989; Norman Edwin, "Tantangan Denali di Alaska," *Kompas*, August 16, 1989.

²⁰⁴ Norman Edwin, "Elbrus, Gunung Kebahagiaan," *Kompas*, October 27, 1990; Norman Edwin, "Mapala UI Taklukkan Elbrus," *Kompas*, October 8, 1990.

²⁰⁵ Rudy Badil, "Sapaan Buat 'Sahabat Sang Alam,'" in Rudy Badil, ed., *Norman Edwin: Catatan Sahabat Sang Alam* (Jakarta: KPG, 2010), xi-xvi.

²⁰⁶ Tsing, *Friction*, 131.

²⁰⁷ Badil, *Norman*, x-xii; For discussion and praise of Norman Edwin and Soe Hok Gie, see the chatrooms of the following Mapala websites: "Data Mapala" Mapala Forum, last modified November 23rd, 2009, <http://mapala.info/data-mapala/>; "Idealisme MAPALA?" Aceh Forum, accessed October 10, 2012, <http://www.acehforum.or.id/showthread.php?12891-Idealisme-MAPALA>; "Profil Mapala," Mapala Unand, accessed October 10, 2012, <http://mapalaunand.com/category/profil-mu/>; "Sejarah Mapala UI," Mapala UI, accessed October 10, 2012, <http://www.mapalaui.info/about/sejarah-mapala-ui/>; "Tentang Kami" Mahasiswa Pecinta Alam, <http://www.mapala-wd.org/articles.php>. "50 Taman Nasional di Indonesia," Departemen Kehutanan, accessed October 10, 2012, http://www.dephut.go.id/INFORMASI/TN%20INDO-ENGLISH/tn_index.htm; "About," Merbabu, accessed October 10, 2012, <http://eng.merbabu.com/?cat=5>.

In 2003, the Indonesian department of nature conservation proposed to designate Mount Merapi as Indonesia's thirty-ninth national park.²⁰⁹ Considering the close association with mountains, mountain climbing, and the nation that was blossoming at this time, Merapi would seem to have been an ideal choice for a national park. However, the move to designate the area a national park was instead met by protests from the villagers and farmers in and around Merapi who felt that they had been excluded from the decision-making process and that their right to the national park area would be lost, along with the source of their livelihood. Surprisingly, the protest against the park was led by WALHI, the most prominent Indonesian conservation organization.²¹⁰ The park was eventually declared in 2004, although there have been continuing protests at the national and international level.

By the end of the 1990s, many Indonesians had developed a negative opinion of national parks. National parks had been associated with the Suharto regime, toppled through popular protest in 1998. Suharto had been an avid promoter of national parks, and they were viewed as another example of the corruption and monopolizing of resources that characterized his authoritarian New Order regime. In the wake of the collapse of Suharto's government in 1998, decentralization of government control of

²⁰⁸ "Indonesians Climb into History with Seven Summits," *Jakarta Globe*, July 9, 2011, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/indonesians-climb-into-history-with-seven-summits/451782>; "Indonesia Seven Summits Expedition Mahitala Unpar," YouTube, accessed March 2, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ioj__8bx_28.

²⁰⁹ Lucas Sasongko Triyoga, *Manusia Jawa dan Gunung Merapi: Persepsi dan Kepercayaannya* (Yogyakarta: Gadjra Mada University Press, 1991), 1-15.

²¹⁰ "Petani Menentang Taman Nasional Gunung Merapi," *Tempo Interaktif*, June 4, 2004; "Masyarakat Merapi Minta Taman Nasional Ditinjau Ulang," *Tempo Interaktif*, December 20, 2004; Cochrane "National Parks in Indonesia" 223.

natural resources was among the first acts initiated by the post-Suharto *Reformasi* (Reformation) government. Forests and forest revenue—including national parks—were subsequently placed under the jurisdiction of the local regents. The result of the loosening of restrictions was a “tragedy of the commons” scenario—a massive acceleration of illegal logging as hundreds of local, small-time operators sought to take advantage of the situation and reap maximum profit as soon as possible. Their status as national parks provided little protection for these areas. Indeed, the association of national parks with Suharto and his oppressive regime made these forest locations among the first to be exploited. Moreover, the legacy of Suharto’s past corruption tainted the image of national parks programs and made residents extremely wary of any new national parks programs, widely perceived as a scheme by the government to reassert control over natural resources.²¹¹

The deterioration of Indonesia’s national parks program at the end of the twentieth century was a startling reversal of fortune for global flora and fauna conservation. During the 1980s and 1990s, conservation and protected area development—in particular national parks—became significant features of Indonesian domestic policy. In 1980, the Indonesian government declared its first five national parks, and by 1998—the year the Suharto regime collapsed—Indonesia had developed a system of thirty-six national parks.²¹²

²¹¹ Christopher Barr et al., “Decentralization’s Effects on Forest Concessions and Timber Production,” in Christopher Barr et al., eds., *Decentralization of Forest Administration in Indonesia: Implications for Forest Sustainability, Economic Development and Community Livelihoods* (Bogor, Indonesia: Center for International Forestry Research, 2006), 87-93.

²¹² “Indonesia,” protectedplanet.org.

Indonesia was regarded by the international conservation community as a important model for the virtues of national parks in the developing world. An indication of the status of Indonesia in the international conservation community was the decision by representatives of the IUCN, FAO, UNESCO and UNEP to choose Indonesia as the location for the third World Congress of National Parks in 1982.

Although Indonesia's first national parks were not officially declared until the 1980s, the location and boundaries of these parks were based on an earlier system of "reserves," "nature monuments," and "wildlife sanctuaries" that had been established by the Dutch during the colonial era. Nature conservation was an important part of Dutch colonial policy, cultivated through the unique conjunction of colonial and metropolitan interests which both promoted conservation.²¹³

Dutch conservation centered on the development and implementation of a system of "reserves," "nature monuments," and "wildlife sanctuaries." "Reserves" were designed for the preservation of biologically rich areas for scientific research.²¹⁴ "Natural monuments" were smaller areas—sometimes consisting of a single tree—managed for the protection of tourist sites such as volcanic craters, mountain lakes, boiling mud pools, and spectacular views. "Wildlife sanctuaries" were the largest protected areas, established to protect large animals and their habitats.²¹⁵

²¹³ Peter Boomgaard, "Sacred Trees and Haunted Forests in Indonesia: Particularly Java, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in O. Bruun and A. Kalland, eds., *Asian Perceptions of Nature. A Critical Approach* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1995), 52-53.

²¹⁴ "The Tjibodas Biological Station and Forest Reserve" in Pieter Honig and Frans Verdoorn, eds., *Science and Scientists in the Netherland Indies* (New York: Board for the Netherlands Indies, Surinam and Curcao, 1945), 403-16.

²¹⁵ Cribb, *Politics of Environmental*, 3-6. J.H. Westermann, "Wild Life Conservation in the Netherlands Empire, Its National and International Aspects" in Pieter Honig and Frans Verdoorn, eds., *Science and Scientists in the Netherland Indies* (New York: Board for the Netherlands Indies, Surinam and Curcao,

Although the Dutch colonial network of protected areas supplied the basis for Indonesia's new system of national parks, the Dutch never formally designated areas "national parks," nor did they provide any legal definition for such a category. They claimed that their nature reserves should be considered national parks, but in fact they were managed strictly for wildlife conservation, not tourism. One might speculate that in the 1930s, at a time when Indonesian independence movements were stirring, the Dutch did not want to promote "national" parks.

However, if the Dutch did not promote national parks, neither did the early Indonesian nationalists. Conservation was never a significant issue for the nationalist movement, and during the tumultuous political and economic disturbances of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, extensive areas of forest were cleared for agriculture and for use as fuel.²¹⁶ By the late-1960s, these pressures on the environment were overtaken by the dramatic expansion of logging operations across the country. The New Order government of President Suharto sought a massive infusion of capital by means of foreign investment, and it proceeded to grant logging concessions over large tracts of forests. Timber became the country's second largest export earner after oil. The lack of government regulation of the logging practices in the industry in conjunction with corruption, incompetence, and greed resulted in rapid and extensive deforestation. While a nature conservation section had been created within the Forestry Department in 1964 (*Perlindungan dan Pengawetan*

1945), 418-20.

²¹⁶ Robert Cribb, "Conservation Policy and Politics in Indonesia, 1945-1988," in John Dargavel, Kay Dixon and Noel Semple, eds., *Changing Tropical Forests: Historical Perspectives on Today's Challenges in Asia, Australasia and Oceania* (Canberra: Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, 1988), 341-355; idem., "Birds of Paradise and Environmental Politics in Colonial Indonesia, 1890-1931," in Peter Boomgaard, Freek Colombijn, and David Henley, eds., *Paper Landscapes: Explorations in the Environmental History of Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997), 379-408; idem., "International Tourism in Java, 1900-1930," *South East Asian Research* 3 (1995): 193-204.

Alam [PPA] “Protection and Preservation of Nature”), this agency received little or no budgetary allocation. The enforcement of conservation regulations remained in the hands of local military and civil authorities who saw little or no value in the conservation of wild animals or forest areas.²¹⁷

However, in the mid-1970s a change in attitudes and policy towards conservation and national parks became apparent. In 1977, the PPA, previously a paper bureaucracy, had been reconstituted with a new leader, and a school for nature conservation was created at Ciawi. Moreover, a conservation bureaucracy was established at the Ministry level—the highest level of government—and this new Ministry of Population and the Environment (*Menteri Kependudukan dan Lingkungan Hidup*) was placed under the control of the economist Emil Salim, one of Suharto’s most competent advisors. The Indonesian government introduced a series of environmental laws related to the national parks and the management of the living environment, in particular the Basic Environmental Law of 1982 and the Conservation of Living Natural Resources and their Ecosystems Act of 1990. Starting in 1982, the Indonesian government committed US\$ 12 million a year to enhancing its national park programs, and in the 1990s the annual investment for protected areas reached US\$ 22-33 million a year. In this era, Indonesia also became a party to many global conservation initiatives, including CITES, the World Heritage Convention, and the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Cribb, *Politics of Environmental*, 12-14.

²¹⁸ Herman Haeruman, “Conservation in Indonesia,” *Ambio* 17 (1988): 218-22; IUCN, *Protected Areas of the World: A Review of National Systems. Volume 1: Indomalaya, Oceania, Australia and Antarctic* (Cambridge: IUCN, 1992), 49.

In 1977 the Indonesian government, in conjunction with FAO and UNDP, prepared a conservation master plan for Indonesia to identify priority areas for environmental conservation and national parks.²¹⁹ In the initial management plans, the stated function for Indonesia's system of national parks was to "preserve representative viable samples of all major ecosystem types and living-communities within Indonesia."²²⁰ National parks were conceived as a part of a larger network of 196 protected areas designed to conserve the entire range of Indonesia's flora and fauna.²²¹

It was not until the Conservation of Living Natural Resources and their Ecosystems Act of 1990 that the Indonesian government established a formal definition for a "*taman nasional*" ("national park"). According to the 1990 Act, "National Park" was defined as "A nature conservation area which possesses natural ecosystems, and which is managed through a zoning system for research, science, education, supporting cultivation, recreation and tourism purposes."²²²

In addition to flora and fauna conservation, the promoters of Indonesia's national parks also focused on the contribution of these areas to "sustainable development." According to Effendi Sumardja, Harsono, and John Mackinnon, three of the conservationists who contributed to formulating Indonesia's national parks program:

National Parks must be clearly seen to be in the regional interest so that their establishment will constitute a benefit, rather than an added hardship, to the rural people living around them. Such benefits can include: preservation of

²¹⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

²²⁰ Effendy A. Sumardja, "First Five National Parks in Indonesia," *Parks* 6 (1981): 1-2.

²²¹ FAO/UNDP, "A Second Five-Year Conservation Program for Indonesia," *Unasylva* 35 (1983): 29.

²²² IUCN, *Protected Areas*, 54.

high quality living environment; protection of water sources; establishment, where necessary, of buffer zones; job opportunities (working the park or created by local tourism industry); special developments around parks, e.g. schools, road improvements, irrigation improvements...²²³

Their stress on what would increasingly be referred to as “sustainable development” reflected the dominant agenda for international conservation in the 1980s. Designed to replace earlier “fortress conservation” models that encouraged setting apart and locking-up resources, the new *modus operandi* for national parks emphasized that these areas must contribute to local and national economic development processes (see Chapter One). Thus envisioned, Indonesia’s national parks program would be a flagship example of how national parks could be advantageously integrated into the development programs of the emerging nations of the global South.

There was a striking incongruity between Suharto’s record for environmental destruction and his promotion of national parks. Suharto was infamously corrupt, and during his reign the Indonesian government had been notorious for its policies of reckless deforestation. In the 1970s, Indonesia became the world’s biggest exporter of tropical timber—gross foreign exchange earnings from timber rose from US\$ 6 million in 1966 to US\$ 2.1 billion in 1979. Suharto’s military dictatorship survived on the exploitation of the forests, and these resources were carefully controlled by a cartel that included Suharto and his personal allies.²²⁴

²²³ Effendi A. Sumardja, Harsono, and John MacKinnon, “Indonesia’s Network of Protected Areas” in Jeffrey McNeely and Kenton R. Miller. *National Parks, Conservation, and Development: The Role of Protected Areas in Sustaining Society* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984), 215.

²²⁴ Malcolm Gillis, “Indonesia: Public Policies, Resource Management, and the Tropical Forest,” in Robert C. Repetto and Malcolm Gillis, eds., *Public Policies and the Misuse of Forest Resources* (Cambridge: World Resources Institute, 1988), 55-59; Christopher Barr, “Bob Hasan, the Rise of Apkindo, and the

Consequently, many scholars dismissed Indonesia's national parks programs as merely another scheme that enabled Suharto to monopolize control over the timber industry. National parks were created in all regions of Indonesia not because of environmental concerns, but because this justified the creation of a compliant national bureaucracy. Placing all of the provinces' parks under the national government facilitated Suharto's command of the nation's forests, and prevented governors and local elites from exploiting these resources. National parks also legitimized the central government's use of force to protect forests "for the nation." Far from a method for helping local people with sustainable development, national parks were intended to control their access to forest products and to justify removing people entirely from an area.²²⁵

Scholars also pointed out that Suharto coveted the financial and technological support provided by the international conservation and development organizations that supported Indonesia's national parks program. In the 1980s and 1990s, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Bank, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Smithsonian Institution, The Nature Conservancy (US), and a range of other international and foreign-national organizations funded Indonesia's national parks programs.²²⁶ These organizations contributed to the establishment of research stations, provided training for Indonesian

Shifting Dynamics of Control in Indonesia's Timber Sector," *Indonesia* 65 (1998): 1-36.

²²⁵ Robert Cribb, *The Politics of Environmental Protection in Indonesia* (Melbourne: Monash University, 1988); Nancy Peluso, *Rich Forests, Poor People: Resource Control and Resistance in Java* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Malcolm Gillis and Jeffrey R. Vincent, "National Self-Interest in the Pursuit of Sustainable Development" in Jurgen Schmandt and C.H. Ward, eds., *Sustainable Development: The Challenge of Transition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 11-62.

²²⁶ Haeruman, "Conservation," 219-20; Raisa Scriabine, "IUCN and Indonesia: Over 20 Years of Cooperation," *Ambio* 11 (1982): 318-20; IUCN, *Protected Areas*, 49-50.

scientists, and supplied valuable maps, geological surveys, and biological assessments to Indonesian scientific and military organizations. The international conservation organizations contributed to creating an infrastructure for the maintenance of Indonesia's conservation bureaucracy and thus helped to extend the reach of the central government.²²⁷

Participating in the global national parks movement also provided important prestige and propaganda benefits for the dictator. In the 1980s, Indonesian elites aspired to become leaders of the developing world, and Suharto pressed for Indonesia to acquire all of the trappings of modern nations, from national airlines to national parks. The international advisors' simple argument that national parks were part of the structure of a developed nation state was one used with Suharto, and he believed it. A senior conservation officer at the time put it bluntly:

It's wanting to show off, it's wanting to display how wonderful you are. I am sure it was keeping up with other countries. I mean Indonesia was a joke you know, it was poor, it was chaotic, it was unfair and corrupt. And there were smart countries starting to get their act together like Singapore and Malaysia, and Indonesia wanted to show "we're bigger." It was all a sort of a national display. Building those huge skyscrapers all over Jakarta [the capital of Indonesia] was all part of the same thing.²²⁸

Indonesia did receive accolades and international recognition for its national parks program. By 1992, two of Indonesia's national parks had been elevated to the status of

²²⁷ The small Ministry of Population and the Environment (*Kependudukan dan Lingkungan Hidup*) was not one of Indonesia's more powerful departments, and the bureaucracy survived by using the offices and employees of the NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) centered in Jakarta and Bogor, according to Emil Salim, "Recollections of My Career," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 33 (1997): 61-62.

²²⁸ Cited in Paul Jepson, "Biodiversity and Protected Area Policy: Why Is it Failing in Indonesia?" Ph.D. diss., Oxford: University of Oxford, 2001, 45.

World Heritage Sites. The decision to hold the prestigious World Congress on National Parks in Bali in 1982 was an indication of the importance of Indonesia as a global leader in the development of national parks. As a technical advisor later recalled, the experts at UNDP, FAO, and IUCN decided that Indonesia should be the venue because, “This is where it was all happening. New reserves being made, new management planning techniques were being developed. They [the Indonesian government] were very happy to do it. They are never short of money for conferences.”²²⁹

This international recognition and positive propaganda lavished on Indonesia as a result of its national parks program helped to shelter Suharto from criticism for his otherwise environmentally destructive policies. From the 1970s, widespread corruption and incompetence in the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry had resulted in the wasteful ruin of the forests of Sumatra and Kalimantan. Suharto used national parks as a method for placating international critics as well as the growing domestic environmental movement that was emerging among middle-class Indonesians.²³⁰

Despite Suharto’s various ulterior motives for creating national parks, to dismiss his program as merely a scheme to centralize control of natural resources, a method for gaining prestige benefits and cash from conservation organizations, or a fig-leaf covering

²²⁹ Cited in Jepson, “Biodiversity,” 28. According to Kathy MacKinnon, head of the UNEP project, “Indonesia was one of the first countries in Southeast Asia, and indeed the world, to use the best principles of conservation biology to plan a national protected-area system representing all habitats in seven biogeographic regions; many of these areas became national parks.” Kathy MacKinnon, “Megadiversity in Crisis: Politics, Policies, and Governance in Indonesia’s Forests,” in William Laurance and Carlos Peres, eds., *Emerging Threats to Tropical Forests* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 292-93. A 1994 World Bank report stated, “Indonesian has been a leader, particularly among developing countries, in articulating a sustainable development strategy and in putting in place the essential elements of the framework needed to support that strategy.” World Bank, *Indonesia: Environment and Development* (Washington, D.C: World Bank, 1994), xxiii.

²³⁰ Philip Eldridge, *NGOs in Indonesia: Popular Movement or Arm of Government?* (Melbourne: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1989); Joshua Gordon “NGOs, the Environment, and Political Pluralism in New Order Indonesia,” *Explorations in Southeast Asian Studies* 2 (1998): 14-32.

environmental destruction would be inaccurate. In particular, tourism was promoted alongside conservation as an important motivation for the development of national parks. According to one of the architects of Indonesia's park system, these areas would "attract tourists and foreign revenue and increase the opportunities for education and development of national pride in Indonesia's natural heritage."²³¹ Moreover, these stated tourism benefits from national parks were not merely for propaganda, but advantages of national parks sincerely sought by Suharto.²³²

Tourism became an important feature of Indonesian economic development in the 1970s, and by the 1980s, it was a booming industry. Export earnings from tourism increased from 2.8 percent in 1985 to 5.8 percent in 1989. By 1987 inbound visitation hit the 1 million mark, and continued to rise. During the period 1984-88, US\$ 918.6 million in foreign money and 2.15 billion rupiahs from local interests funded a total of 264 investments including 183 hotels and 40 recreation facilities.²³³

Nature tourism was a major component of Indonesia's tourism portfolio, and the government was keen to cultivate national parks for this purpose. As a representative of the Ministry of Education and Culture pointed out at the time: "The capacity of the tropical forests in Southeast Asia in fulfilling the growing needs of recreation and tourism

²³¹ Sumardja, "First Five," 1.

²³² A survey of 105 conservation practitioners conducted in 2000 found that 95 percent of the conservationists attributed the main motivation for national parks to prestige and tourism benefits. Of the twelve reasons provided for why Indonesia wanted national parks, the highest ranking went to the following: (1) "national pride & nation-building," (2) "tourism development," (3) "economic & political pragmatism," and (4) "sourcing external funds." "Support for the conservation ethic" received the lowest ranking. Jepson, "Biodiversity," 40-52.

²³³ Haruya Kagami, "Tourism and National Culture: Indonesian Policies on Cultural Heritage and its Utilisation in Tourism," in Shinji Yamashita, et al., eds., *Tourism and Cultural Development in Asia and Oceania* (Bangi, Malaysia: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan, 1997), 64-65. In addition to increasing foreign exchange, tourism also was useful for promoting Indonesia's image as a "safe and peaceful" country. See Linda K. Richter, *The Politics of Tourism in Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989).

is largely undeveloped, partly because of the failure to recognize their scenic attributes and the potential interest in wildlife they contain.”²³⁴ The NGOs that pressed for the creation of national parks also promoted the tourism benefits of national parks. Conservationists and NGOs did a very good practical public relations job, and led the Indonesian elite to believe they could make money from national parks through tourism.²³⁵

However, Suharto’s efforts to develop national parks as a source of tourism revenue were not particularly successful—throughout the 1980s and 1990s, most of Indonesia’s national parks received fewer than 5,000 tourists a year. Domestic tourism was particularly meager, with only a handful of Indonesian parks achieving more than 2,000 Indonesian visitors a year. Komodo and Ujung Kulon, two of Indonesia’s most prestigious national parks and both World Heritage Sites, provide striking examples of the failures of national park tourism in this era. In the 1990s, Komodo National Park, home of the legendary Komodo “dragon,” received approximately 30,000 tourists a year, but fewer than 10 percent of these tourists were Indonesian.²³⁶ Ujung Kulon National Park in western Java, the sanctuary for the precariously-surviving endangered Javan rhino, had very few visitors overall. In the 1990s, a meager 4,000 people a year visited this park, and only an estimated 2,000 were Indonesian.²³⁷

²³⁴ Cited in Cribb, *Politics of Environmental*, 12.

²³⁵ Jepson, “Biodiversity,” 57.

²³⁶ Henning Borchers, *Jurassic Wilderness: Ecotourism as a Conservation Strategy in Komodo National Park, Indonesia* (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2004), 56-57

²³⁷ Donald E. Hawkins, “Sustainable Tourism Competitiveness Clusters: Application to World Heritage Sites Network Development in Indonesia,” in Bruce Prideaux, ed., *Cultural and Heritage Tourism in Asia and the Pacific* (London: Routledge, 2008), 69-70; “World Heritage Information Sheets: Ujung Kulon,” UNEP/WCMC, last updated May 2011, <http://www.unep-wcmc.org/world-heritage-information->

Indonesian indifference towards their national parks was often attributed to socio-economic and cultural factors. The notion of a transcendent nature, separated from culture, was considered a unique feature of the West, while the anxieties over species extinction and the nostalgia for “wilderness” were concerns suited to a modern, Darwinian, secular culture. Indonesian economic and cultural factors prevented them from possessing the aesthetic appreciation of nature necessary for a national parks project to succeed in either its environmental or domestic tourism objectives.²³⁸

However, it is unclear whether the framers of Indonesia’s national parks policies ever actually investigated Indonesian attitudes towards nature tourism. Often conservation reports attributed to Indonesians the same wilderness values popular amongst North American and European audiences. One glaring example occurred in the 1982 FAO report, *National Conservation Strategy for Indonesia*, where the desire to “walk in wild unpeopled places” was foreseen by the report’s Western authors as a general feature of Indonesian society.²³⁹ In fact, many Indonesians—irrespective of ethnicity or religion—are extremely wary of the forests. Throughout Indonesia, the forest is widely considered to be *hantu* (“haunted”)—a frightening and dangerous place where a person would certainly never wander alone.²⁴⁰

sheets_271.html.

²³⁸ Hawkins, “Sustainable Tourism,” 70-72. In 1996 a conference was held at Ujung Kulon National Park specifically concerned with increasing tourism in the region. The reports from the conference and editorials from newspapers focusing on the conference often disparaged the Indonesian public for their lack of interest in the park. Ir. R. Sumarsono, “Pelestarian Keanekaragaman Hayati dan Fungsi Taman Nasional,” in *Pelestarian keragaman hayati dan fungsi taman nasional, Jakarta dan Ujung Kulon, 9-12 Oktober 1996* (Jakarta: Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Perwakilan Jakarta, 1996), 45-52; “Is Ecotourism the Right Approach for Ujung Kulon?,” *The Jakarta Post*, 27 October 1996, 4.

²³⁹ FAO, *National Conservation Plan for Indonesia, Introduction* (Bogor: UNDP/FAO National Park Development Project, 1982), 3

²⁴⁰ Peter Boomgaard, “Sacred Trees and Haunted Forests in Indonesia: Particularly Java, Nineteenth and

The employment of the phrase “*taman nasional*” also reveals the problems that develop when experts transplant conservation concepts. The formulators of Indonesia’s national parks policy translated “national park” as “*taman nasional*,” a literal translation of “national park,” but a phrase that does not coincide with the connotations of “national park” within the international conservation community. The Indonesian term *taman* “park” is generally employed in the sense of “amusement park” or “public park” for recreation. Hence, the formulation “*taman nasional*” conjured up the idea of playgrounds and rides, and generally gave associations of artificiality rather than wildness, while the majority of Indonesia’s national parks were developed in remote locations, difficult to get to, and undeveloped.²⁴¹

The failure of most national parks to provide popular locations for public recreation did not necessarily reflect an Indonesian inability to appreciate nature, but rather that the national parks implemented in Indonesia were not suitable to the tastes of the citizens of that nation. What required greater examination was how Indonesians experienced pleasure in nature, and the type of nature areas that they would be interested in visiting. For example, considering the surging popularity of Indonesian alpinism during this era, it is striking that conservationists did not place greater emphasis on the development of an Indonesian system of national parks that satisfied the nation-wide aesthetic yearning for mountains.

Twentieth Centuries,” in O. Bruun and A. Kalland, eds., *Asian Perceptions of Nature. A Critical Approach* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1995), 48-62.

²⁴¹ Janet Cochrane, “Indonesian National Parks: Understanding Leisure Users” *Annals of Tourism Research* 33 (2006): 979–97. For example, a *taman hiburan rakyat* is an “amusement park” and a *taman wisata* is a park for public recreation.

Indeed, considering the popularity of mountaineering, it is unsurprising that the one Indonesian national park that has enjoyed widespread popularity for domestic tourism has been Mount Bromo-Tengger-Semeru National Park designed specifically to protect a magnificent mountain landscape. It is not difficult to understand why the area has been popular. The region covers outstanding and monumental geological features of eastern Java. It includes Mount Semeru, one of Java's most active volcanoes and at 3,676 meters the island's highest mountain, and the Tengger Caldera, which is 6–8 km in diameter, with almost sheer walls rising to 130 meters. Within the Caldera is Mount Bromo, on whose active crater the tourism industry is focused, while next to it stands the deeply ridged Mount Batok. At the foot of Mt. Batok is an important Hindu temple, set slightly away from Mt. Bromo because of its frequent eruptions; these keep an area north of the volcano largely free of vegetation and have created a field of ash and lava known as the Tengger Sand Sea.²⁴²

The tourism potential of the Bromo-Tengger-Semeru region was recognized by the Dutch who during the 1920s and 1930s promoted the area as one of the main attractions in Java. The image on the cover of the colonial government's official tourism guide, *Come to Java*, was a photo of the magnificent Bromo-Tengger-Semeru landscape. The book noted that Mt. Bromo was an excellent region for scenery, hiking, and recreation; and that it was also conveniently located close to the major transportation hubs and easily accessible.²⁴³

²⁴² Janet Cochrane, "Ecotourism, Conservation and Sustainability: A Case Study of Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, Indonesia," (Ph.D. diss., Hull, U.K.: University of Hull, 2003), 169-172.

²⁴³ Official Tourist Bureau Weltevreden, *Come to Java* (Batavia: G. Kolff & Co., 1923), 77-80.

During the rise of the Indonesian tourism industry in the 1980s and 1990s, this region became a popular destination for both Indonesians and international tourists; notably, Bromo-Tengger-Semeru National Park was perhaps the only Indonesian national park where over 70 percent of the tourists were Indonesian. In the 1990s, approximately 100,000 Indonesians a year journeyed to the location—a domestic visitation rate that probably exceeded all the other Indonesian national parks combined.²⁴⁴

Interviews with the Indonesian tourists at Bromo-Tengger-Semeru National Park revealed a range of motivations for their visit. Many of the Indonesians interviewed visited the location seeking solitude and a transformational experience of nature, and complained about the litter, commercialization, and crowding which they felt detracted from the experience. Some traveled with their families and complained about the lack of refreshments, air-conditioned restaurants, and other luxuries. Some were disappointed that there was not more information on the park or more trails, others complained about the manure from the horses that tourists can ride around the volcanic region. Some groups were concerned with hiking, others with conservation, and some just “liked the view.”²⁴⁵

Interviews conducted with members of Mapala groups in the 1990s also revealed a range of motivations for their hiking expeditions. Some of these students desired a transformative experience through contact with nature, and others sought wisdom and healing through an intense and spiritual experience. Many were hedonists, and wanted to

²⁴⁴ Cochrane, “Ecotourism,” 184.

²⁴⁵ Janet Cochrane, “Indonesian National Parks: Understanding Leisure Users” *Annals of Tourism Research* 33 (2006): 985–990.

be rebellious, or were seeking freedom and mobility. For many students mountain climbing was a serious, intellectual mission—an exercise in organizational leadership skills and personal discipline, while a large number felt responsible as personal guardians of nature, and they participated in the Mapala groups as a feature of their commitment to environmentalism.²⁴⁶

What the responses by the tourists at Bromo-Tengger-Semuru and the Mapala students reveal is that Indonesians have emotional responses to nature often considered uniquely “Western.” Moreover, the failure of parks to achieve one of their principal objectives, recreation and tourism, cannot be attributed to an innate Indonesian insensitivity to nature tourism in general, but rather a consequence of the privileging a particular type of nature tourism based on the experience of wilderness and the observation of wildlife, instead of the sublime experience of monumental landscapes.

The question then is why didn't Suharto implement a national parks program that focused on the conservation of mountain landscapes and other regions of monumental scenery? As I have indicated above, implementing a national park system that privileged biodiversity conservation provided a range of benefits to the Indonesian government. It is also not impossible that the effects of environmental damage may have actually concerned Suharto, and that he was swayed by the opinions of international conservation experts and their arguments for protecting biodiversity.

²⁴⁶ Tsing, *Friction*, 152-53. Many Mapala websites have chatrooms or blogs containing reflections from the participants in mountain climbing: “Data Mapala” Mapala Forum, accessed 10 May 2012, <http://mapala.info/data-mapala/>; “Idealisme MAPALA?” Aceh Forum, accessed 10 May 2012, <http://www.acehforum.or.id/showthread.php?12891-Idealisme-MAPALA>; “Profil Mapala,” Mapala Unand, accessed 10 May 2012, <http://mapalaunand.com/category/profil-mu/>; “Sejarah Mapala UI,” Mapala UI, accessed 10 October 2012, <http://www.mapalaui.info/about/sejarah-mapala-ui/>; “Tentang Kami” Mahasiswa Pecinta Alam, <http://www.mapala-wd.org/articles.php>; “50 Taman Nasional di Indonesia,” Departemen Kehutanan, accessed 10 October 2012, http://www.dephut.go.id/INFORMASI/TN%20INDO-ENGLISH/tn_index.htm; “About,” Merbabu, accessed 10 October 2012, <http://eng.merbabu.com/?cat=5>.

Whatever his motivations, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that if Suharto had focused more attention on developing a system of national parks that protected and promoted the magnificent mountain landscapes of Indonesia, he might have created parks of more enduring national significance. National parks that attracted Indonesians might have generated more substantial tourism benefits and also may have enhanced national pride and prestige, contributing to the patriotic sentiments that the state hoped to obtain from national parks. National parks founded on sublime landscapes may also have provided locations for satisfying the important aesthetic yearnings for nature that conservationists have so often argued is so crucial for the human spirit. Most important, if Indonesia's national parks actually provided these multiple benefits it might have allowed them to weather the changes in administration and economy, and prevented the dissolution of Indonesian national parks after the fall of Suharto. Indeed, if the parks were a source of tourism, recreation, and nation-building benefits, local elites and the nation would have had a much stronger stake in protecting and preserving the areas.

Admittedly, the cultivation of national parks for the protection of celebrated mountains and volcanic landscapes would not have immediately addressed the biodiversity concerns of the international conservation organizations. However, a system of national parks based on outstanding geological features, on old-fashioned scenery, as national parks began in the United States, might have contributed to the creation of a widespread Indonesian sentiment towards nature in which biodiversity conservation became an important idea. As a middle-class youth movement, as a display of military power, and as a shared cultural experience, mountains were a part of the emerging fabric of the Indonesian nation. These were diverse paths, but each contributed to

understandings of nature that led to its consideration as an object of reflection, discussion, or advocacy. Through the conservation of mountain environments, the Indonesian public might have developed the foundation for a broader sensitivity towards ecosystems and biodiversity conservation that the international organizations hoped to achieve.

Chapter Four. Regional Politics, Political Decentralization, and International Conservation Initiatives in Komodo National Park, c. 1995-2010

In 1911, an officer of the Netherlands Indies Army, J.K.H. van Steyn van Hensbroek, discovered gigantic monitor lizards on the small island of Komodo, one of the many hundreds of islands located in the region of Nusa Tenggara in eastern Indonesia. Having discovered this fantastic creature, he reported it to P.A. Ouwens, then Curator of the Zoological Museum in Bogor. Based on collected specimens, Ouwens subsequently described the remarkable lizard in an obscure journal, *Bulletin du Jardin Botanique de Buitenzorg* in an article entitled “On a large *Varanus* species from the Island of Komodo.” Ouwens applied the name *Varanus Komodoensis* to the creature; however, it would soon become more popularly referred to as the “Komodo dragon.”²⁴⁷

The Komodo monitor is the world’s largest living lizard, with males often weighing over 90 kg and exceeding 3 m in length. It is a carnivorous animal, with a poisonous bite, and it can smell carrion up to 11 km away. While the total population at the turn of the century is unknown, estimates in the 1980s and 1990s ranged from 3,000 to 5,000 individuals, found primarily on the small islands of Komodo and Rinca with approximately a hundred more lizards found in western and northern coastal regions of the large island of Flores, 40 km east of Komodo.²⁴⁸

The discovery of the lizard and the realization of its limited range led to early demands for its protection by the Dutch colonial conservation lobby. Several enactments

²⁴⁷ P.A. Ouwens, “On a large *Varanus* species from the island of Komodo,” *Bulletin du Jardin Botanique de Buitenzorg* 2 (1912): 1-3.

²⁴⁸ Harold J. Goodwin, et al., *Tourism, Conservation & Sustainable Development: Volume III, Komodo National Park, Indonesia* (London, Department for International Development, 1997), 9-10; “Komodo Dragon,” San Diego Zoo, accessed March 2, 2013, http://library.sandiegozoo.org/factsheets/komodo_dragon/komodo.htm.

followed in the 1920s and 1930s protecting the lizard, and later its habitat, but it was not until the 1970s that a coalition of international conservation organizations in conjunction with the Indonesian federal government were able to develop the dragon's habitat into a national park. Komodo National Park was declared Indonesia's first national park in 1978 and was formally established by a ministerial decree two years later in 1980.

Although there are several tiny islands within the park's boundaries, Komodo and Rinca are the principal islands, the former measuring 35 km from north to south with a width varying from 4 km to 15 km, while Rinca is roughly 25 km in length and 2-12 km wide. Like much of the topography of this entire region of Indonesia, the islands are covered by rolling hills and their coastlines have many small bays with cobble or white sand beaches fringed by coral reefs.²⁴⁹ The high degree of oxygenation and nutrient richness of the Flores and Savu seas that surround the islands has produced one of the world's extraordinary marine environments, containing hundreds of species of reef-building coral and sponges, and an extraordinary array of fish species, as well as sea turtles, mantas, whales, dolphins, and sharks.²⁵⁰

When the park was first created in 1980, it was inhabited by approximately 1,000 people clustered into a few villages on the islands of Komodo and Rinca. Archaeological evidence suggests that the region itself has been occupied for thousands of years. Located in a strategically important position lying in the straits between the large islands of Sumbawa and Flores, Sulawesi and Sumba, combined with the presence of good harbors and access to fresh water, the small islands of Komodo and Rinca have historically

²⁴⁹ Goodwin et al., *Tourism*, 7-9.

²⁵⁰ Borchers, *Jurassic Wilderness: Ecotourism as a Conservation Strategy in Komodo National Park, Indonesia* (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2004), 41-42.

served as a haven for sailors, and after the seventeenth century, for slave-traders and pirates.²⁵¹ Economically, East Nusa Tenggara, the Indonesian province in which Komodo is located, has historically been among the poorest provinces in Indonesia, and the residents on Komodo are among the poorest in this province, eking out their living mainly through subsistence fishing and gathering sea products.²⁵²

Located in a very remote region of Indonesia, until the late-1980s Komodo received few visitors. However, in the 1990s both tourism and the exploitation of the park's marine resources increased, and Komodo became a vital source of revenue in the region, leading to conflict between the residents of the park, local leaders, and international conservation organizations regarding the management of Komodo National Park.

From the 1980s, The World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank, and many other international governmental and non-governmental agencies invested in conservation programs to manage the national park. Cognizant of criticisms of exclusionary park programs, in the 1990s conservationists increasingly promoted new management models for national parks that would reconcile local economic development and conservation; “ecotourism” and “collaborative” management” in particular became popular policies for ensuring the equitable management of national parks. Komodo National Park became a testing-ground for the implementation of initiatives that adhered to these new conservation guidelines. The most

²⁵¹ Rodney Needham, *Sumba and the Slave Trade* (Melbourne: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1983); Rodney Needham, “Principles and Variations in the Social Classification of Komodo,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Deel 142 1ste Afl.*, *ANTHROPOLIGICA* 28 (1986): 53-54

²⁵² Borchers, *Jurassic*, 32-34.

ambitious of these programs was the Komodo Collaborative Management Initiative (KCMI), a long-term conservation plan developed by the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry and The Nature Conservancy in 1999.

Because of the attention garnered by this park after the 1990s, Komodo has not only been a test-site for new management policies in national parks but also a popular research site for social scientists and environmental historians who have evaluated the success of conservation policies in achieving their purported conservation and development objectives. Many of these scholars analyzed the conservation initiatives in Komodo as part of a broader critique of programs by conservation organizations to implement sustainable management models for national parks in the developing nations of the global South, revealing how the implementation of these conservation initiatives have negatively impacted the residents within the park.²⁵³

Focusing on The Nature Conservancy's role in the management of Komodo from 1995 to 2005, and in particular the Conservancy's development of the Komodo Collaborative Management Initiative (KCMI), Henning Borchers has argued that despite the rhetoric of sustainable development, collaborative management, and ecotourism, the recent history of conservation programs in Komodo National Park has revealed the resilience of fortress conservation management principles that have resulted in the increased marginalization and impoverishment of the local populations. According to Borchers, conservation policies, including control over immigration to the region, had a damaging effect on the traditional patterns of the community in the park, and conservation organizations have contributed to dispossessing the people from the region by ignoring

²⁵³ Michael Hitchcock "Dragon Tourism in Komodo, Eastern Indonesia," in Michael Hitchcock, Victor T. King, and Michael J. G. Parnwell, eds., *Tourism in Southeast Asia* (London, Routledge, 1993), 303-16.

the evidence for a long history of occupation by an indigenous people, claiming that humans are an alien intruder into Komodo and should be removed. The failure to account for the long history of human occupation and local land use practices in the park has ultimately resulted in extreme resentment and animosity among the local population towards the national park and international conservation organizations.²⁵⁴

Sandra Pannell, focusing on Komodo's status as a national park and World Heritage Site, has accused international conservation NGOs of reinstating many of the values and relationships identified with the far-flung projects of colonialism. Pannell has interpreted the kind of environmentalism practiced by The Nature Conservancy as a modern-day form of mercantile colonialism, with the self-interests and motivations of those involved concealed by a pretense to conservation. According to Pannell, the recent NGO involvement in Komodo can also be viewed as part of a longer history of "green imperialism," whereby scientists, foresters, and naturalists were able to implement conservation projects in Indonesia, generally at the expense of the indigenous people. She argues that from the initial scientific "discovery" of the Komodo dragon in 1912, scientists led the efforts for regional regulation, national legislation, and international conservation measures aimed at protecting the dragon and its habitat. Many of these early scientists were contemptuous of the people then living on Komodo who they considered a flaw in an otherwise pristine nature area. Scientists, and their disparaging attitudes towards people in parks, continue to influence park initiatives in Indonesia where, unlike

²⁵⁴ Henning Borchers, *Jurassic Wilderness: Ecotourism as a Conservation Strategy in Komodo National Park, Indonesia* (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2004); Henning Borchers, "Dragon Tourism Revisited: The Sustainability of Tourism Development in Komodo National Park," in Michael Hitchcock, Victor T. King, and Michael Parnwell, eds., *Tourism in Southeast Asia: Challenges and New Directions* (Copenhagen: NIAS, 2008).

in Western nations, scientists wield greater influence and the local residents lack the rights, resources, and education to defend against encroachments on their traditional land.²⁵⁵

While scholars have emphasized the interactions between the international conservation organizations, the central government of Indonesia, and the villagers who reside inside Komodo national park, in this chapter I will explore the development of the park in the context of the changing regional and local politics in the 1990 and 2000s. In particular, I will draw attention to the political decentralization that occurred in the wake of the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998, resulting in a proliferation of corruption and the accelerated exploitation of Indonesia's resources. Especially relevant in the case of Komodo has been the role of the local government of the regency of Manggarai, and later West Manggarai, and the business and political interests centered in the gateway town of Labuan Bajo, which have guided the development of the park since the implementation of political decentralization in Indonesia after 1999.

The recurrent problem with the implementation of conservation initiatives in Komodo is not only a question of the misguided aims of outsiders, it is more substantially a consequence of the history of internal divisions in Indonesia, the power of the local interests to resist outside control, and the decentralization, local politics, and corruption that have affected the park since the decline of the Suharto regime in 1998. Outside influence was not imposed—it was negotiated. Once the importance of regional politics is restored, it will reveal a more nuanced picture of why the park became a source of

²⁵⁵ Sandra Pannell, *Reconciling Nature and Culture in a Global Context? Lessons from the World Heritage List* (Cairns: Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management. Rainforest CRC, 2006), 33-58.

controversy, and why the KCMI and other similar initiatives have failed to achieve their conservation, ecotourism, and collaborative management objectives.

In 1997 Indonesia suffered calamitous economic and social upheaval as a consequence of the Asian financial crisis and the subsequent collapse of the Suharto regime. In the aftermath of the downfall of Suharto in 1998, Indonesia underwent a process of radical political decentralization resulting from the backlash against Suharto's policies, which had centralized power and curbed opportunities for regional control.²⁵⁶ Under the New Order, local governments were classified into the three levels: (1) "provinces" (*propinsi*); (2) "regencies" and "cities" (*kabupaten/kota*); and (3) "counties" (*kecamatan*). Fearful of the experiences of regional rebellions in the 1950s, the New Order regime sought to remove the provinces from the focus of local autonomy by enacting in 1974 the Basic Law on Local Administration (Law No. 5/1974), which increased the power of the second-level regencies and cities. By this method the government wanted to uphold the unified state and forestall the possibility of independent-minded provincial governors trying to breakaway. However, while the regencies took over the implementation of various services, the power remained firmly in the control of the central government.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ For decentralization in Indonesia see the following: Minako Sakai, ed., *Beyond Jakarta: Regional Autonomy and Local Societies in Indonesia* (Adelaide: Crawford House, 2002); Edward Aspinall and Greg Fealy, eds., *Local Power and Politics in Indonesia: Decentralisation and Democratization* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003); Damien Kingsbury and Harry Aveling, eds., *Autonomy and Disintegration in Indonesia* (London: Routledge, 2003); Kazuhisa Matsui, "Decentralization in Nation State Building of Indonesia," *IDE Research Paper No. 2* (2003); Maribeth Erb, Carol Faucher, and Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, eds., *Regionalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia* (London: Routledge, 2005); Henk Schulte Nordholt and Gerry van Klinken, eds., *Renegotiating Boundaries: Local Politics in Post Soeharto Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2007).

²⁵⁷ Matsui, "Decentralization," 11-13.

In the aftermath of the fall of Suharto in 1998, there was a push to wipe clean his administrative practices, and new laws were implemented that granted greater autonomy to the regencies and also provided for the creation of new regencies.²⁵⁸ Underpinning arguments for this process of regional division was a desire to counter the destabilizing force of separatist pressures, which were growing in many parts of Indonesia at the time. Others argued that once local governments gained autonomy, they would be more accountable, and synchronize policies and actions with locally expressed notions of public welfare.

Local leaders all over Indonesia very quickly noticed the potential benefits of increased regional autonomy and there was a rising demand for the creation of more and more new regencies. The regents became rulers of their own “fiefdom,” with an opportunity to benefit by opening up areas for investment or exploitation by outsiders. Among the new powers, regencies gained control over the exploitation of their natural resources, including forests and national parks. In 1999, Komodo National Park came under the direct control of the regency in which it was located—the regency of Manggarai in western Flores.²⁵⁹

Komodo National Park was created in 1980, but the creation of the park did not at first have a substantial impact on the regency. Located in a remote region of Indonesia, with little transportation infrastructure, in the 1980s the fastest trip from Bali to Komodo would be *at least* a four-day journey by plane, bus, and boat. Tourism to the park was

²⁵⁸ The 1999 Law on Regional Government (UU NO. 22/1999) was the first major piece of legislation.

²⁵⁹ Maribeth Erb and Wilhelmus Anggal, “Conflict and the Growth of Democracy in Manggarai District,” in Maribeth Erb and Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, eds., *Deepening Democracy in Indonesia? Direct Elections for Local Leaders (Pilkada)* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009), 285-86.

slight—approximately 350 tourists a year—and the meager visitation rate hardly provided much opportunity for deriving alternative income for the local residents in and around the park.²⁶⁰ However, by the end of the 1980s tourism to Komodo had expanded into an increasingly stable and successful generator of revenue and foreign exchange for the local economy. In 1990, the number of annual tourists had reached 7,000 and by the 1996-97 financial year, more than 30,000 tourist arrivals were recorded.²⁶¹

The surge in tourism had a decisive impact not only on Komodo, but on the gateway city of Labuan Bajo, located on the west coast of Flores, and the administrative center for the park. Prior to the expansion of tourism into Komodo in the 1990s, Labuan Bajo had been a small fishing village of a few thousand residents, but the rise in tourism at Komodo converted Labuan Bajo into a destination. As Komodo had virtually no facilities for tourists, Labuan Bajo became the hub for providing these services. In the 1990s, as tourism to Komodo expanded, private hotels and homestays in Labuan Bajo opened up and travel agents started to arrange private tours and independent chartered boats that arrived directly from Lombok (next to Bali), which became a more popular alternative for wealthier tourists who could afford these services. In the 1990s, access to the region increased when an airstrip at Labuan Bajo was expanded and received direct flights from Bali. By the mid-1990s, the airport was receiving one flight three times a week.²⁶²

²⁶⁰ John Blower, *Proposed National Park Komodo: Management Plan 1977/78-1981/82* (Bogor: UNDP and FAO, 1977)

²⁶¹ Environment North and Associated Consultants, *Komodo National Park Tourism Strategy* (North Cairns: Environment North, 2001), 11-12.

²⁶² Joshua Eliot, Jane Bickersteth, and Liz Capaldi, *Indonesia Handbook* (Footprint Handbooks, 1996), 737.

Throughout the 1990s, ninety percent of the visitors to Komodo were young backpacking tourists, mostly Australians, travelling across Indonesia. A popular route at the time involved travelling overland and island hopping from Bali back to Australia.²⁶³ The journey was long, arduous, and dangerous, but it was cheap, and hence ideal for young, adventurous drifters. Increasingly however, these budget backpackers and adventure travelers were joined by the wealthier cruise ship sector, as well as diving enthusiasts and others on live-aboard vessels with an interest in marine-based activities in the park.²⁶⁴

“Ecofriendly” guidebooks, such as Lonely Planet and The Footprint Guide, described Labuan Bajo as a pleasant “overgrown fishing village,” where tourists could find good accommodations, some excellent restaurants, and reasonable beaches, with offshore snorkeling.²⁶⁵ The tourism industry in Labuan Bajo, based on the rising popularity of Komodo National Park, was increasingly viewed as the most valuable commodity in the region and a vital source of revenue for the otherwise poor regency of Manggarai.²⁶⁶

In addition to expanding tourism, the region also became increasingly important for fishing and the collection of other ocean products. In the 1990s, market prices for abalone, coral, other ocean products increased, resulting in accelerated exploitation of coral and other valuable sea products in the areas in and around Komodo National Park.

²⁶³ Erb, “Limiting Tourism,” 165-67.

²⁶⁴ Goodwin et al., *Tourism*, 18.

²⁶⁵ Eliot, Bickersteth, and Capaldi, *Indonesia Handbook*, 737-39.

²⁶⁶ Goodwin et al., *Tourism*, 122.

The rise in prices and the increased availability of diving gear resulted in a sharp increase in fishing and the harvesting of other ocean products throughout the park by fisherman from all around the region. The combination of high market prices and better equipment led to the alarming destruction of large areas of coral reefs around the park during the 1990s.²⁶⁷

With the onset of decentralization and regional autonomy in 1999, controlling Komodo National Park became a lucrative prospect. The first local leader to take advantage of the new opportunities available in the new era of decentralization was Anton Bagul Dagur, who in 1999 became the first regent of Manggarai under the new laws of increased regional autonomy. Dagur came to power promising administrative reform, but was soon implicated in a series of corruption scandals and accused of human-rights abuses. The most famous of these events was the protest in March 2004 during which the police opened fire into a crowd killing five villagers. The protest by the villagers was in response to the destruction of their plantations by the police, which Dagur had ordered claiming that these plantations were on protected government property. In fact, Dagur had allocated logging concessions in the region and needed to clear out the residents. The killing of the residents by the police resulted in an enormous backlash, and international investigations into Dagur's human rights abuses.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Borchers, *Jurassic*, 84-87; Goodwin et al., 92-93; Pet and Yeager, *Master Plan Book 1*, 20; Pet and Djohani, "Combatting," 18, 23.

²⁶⁸ "Darah Mengalir di Manggarai," *Politik Indonesia*, March 16, 2004, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.politikindonesia.com/index.php?k=hukum&i=815>. Maribeth Erb, Romanus Beni, and Wilhelmus Anggal, "Creating Cultural Identity in an Era of Regional Autonomy: Reinventing Manggarai?" in Maribeth Erb, Carol Faucher, and Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, eds., *Regionalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia* (London: Routledge, 2005), 165.

In respect to Komodo the most significant consequence of these first years of local autonomy was the cessation of the government ferry service from Sumbawa to Flores. By the late-1990s, there were three methods of transport to the remote area of Komodo. A first option was to fly directly to Labuan Bajo and then hire a boat for the transfer. A second option would be to travel on a tour or a cruise from Bali in which case all accommodations and transport were on the boat. The third option was to island-hop from Bali to the east coast of Sumbawa—one week by bus and boat—and then take the ten-hour ferry from Sape (on the east coast of Sumbawa) to Labuan Bajo. On the way to Labuan Bajo, the ferry stopped close to Komodo and villagers would transfer tourists from the boat to the island. This third option was the cheapest and by far the most popular among the backpackers, who accounted for the vast majority of the tourists to Komodo in the 1990s. At approximately US\$ 2 a passenger, transporting these passengers from the ferry to the park yielded hundreds of dollars a day for villagers during the busy season and accounted for a substantial source of income.²⁶⁹ Moreover, the ferry provided a valuable and regular mail and transportation service for the Komodo residents.

In 1999, the year that the regency of Manggarai acquired its new powers, the ferry service between Sape and Labuan Bajo was inexplicably ceased, resulting in widespread bitterness on the part of tourists and the boat owners on Komodo who no longer had this source of income. Ending the ferry service forced tourists to enter through Labuan Bajo, requiring them use only the higher-end transportation options: flights from Bali, cruise ships, or chartered tours. Moreover, transportation to Komodo became the monopoly of the chartered boats originating in Labuan Bajo. Finally, the move would force tourists to

²⁶⁹ Borchers, *Jurassic*, 52-53.

spend at least one night in Labuan Bajo. The principal groups who lost were the backpacking tourists, who the government was less interested in encouraging, and the villagers on Komodo who lost a source of income and a vital communication and transportation link to the main islands.

It remains unclear who exactly was responsible for the termination of the ferry service. Most local reports blamed the Labuan Bajo “mafia” of boat owners, who were accused of attempting to monopolize the transport of tourists to the island. Others have blamed the regency government which would want to maximize tourism through Labuan Bajo and which would have the most to gain from the change in service.²⁷⁰ The regent certainly had influence over this decision. Whoever was responsible for the change in policy, after 1999 Labuan Bajo became the only viable gateway into Komodo National Park.

However, the transportation problem in Komodo was soon superseded by the controversy regarding the growing influence of The Nature Conservancy in the management of the park and its resources. In the 1990s, as the exploitation of Komodo’s resources and tourism expanded, the Indonesian government did not have the capacity to adequately control and protect the resources of Komodo. Citing a “lack of government funds” and the resulting “no or poor park management,” the national government in 1995 engaged the assistance of The Nature Conservancy to help manage the park.²⁷¹ The Nature Conservancy is widely considered the wealthiest organization in the conservation

²⁷⁰ “The Only Safe Ferry Service to Komodo National Park Stopped,” *The Jakarta Post*, October 10, 2000, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2000/10/10/the-only-safe-ferry-service-komodo-national-park-stopped.html>.

²⁷¹ Cited in Cindi Katz, “Whose Nature, Whose Culture? Private Productions of Space and the ‘Preservation’ of Nature,” in Bruce Braun and Noel Castree, eds., *Remaking Reality: Nature at the Millennium* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 59.

movement, operating the largest private system of nature sanctuaries in the world. In 2004, it possessed 5 million acres—one of the largest non-governmental landowners in the U.S.²⁷²

Officials from the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry viewed that the financial support of The Nature Conservancy offered the Government of Indonesia a way out of their financial dilemma, while at the same time assisting it with its conservation commitments. It is also probable that the central government wanted to maximize profit of the area by replacing the haphazard tourism development based on local initiative with a more professional and comprehensive management program.

After the collapse of the Suharto regime and subsequent decentralization, the new political climate of 1999 required a new approach to protecting Indonesia's national parks. Collaborative conservation programs became an increasingly popular solution promoted by both the national government and international conservation organizations.²⁷³ As authority to manage protected areas shifted to regency governments, from the late-1990s, aid agencies began to provide support directly to the regencies. The Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 had increased the dependence of the central government on foreign aid, and the government sought international assistance for a number of collaborate management initiatives in national parks, including projects with USAID in Bunaken Marine National Parks and the WWF in Kayan Mentaran National Park.

²⁷² Timothy W. Luke, "The Nature Conservancy or the Nature Cemetery: Buying and Selling 'Perpetual Care' as Environmental Resistance," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 6 (1995): 14.

²⁷³ Robert Cribb and Michelle Ford, eds. *Indonesia Beyond the Water's Edge: Managing an Archipelagic State* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009), 160-62.

Responding to the new political climate, together with the Indonesian Directorate of Nature Protection and Conservation (*Direktorat Jenderal Perlindungan dan Konservasi Alam* [PKA]), The Nature Conservancy designed a “25 Year Master Plan for Management, 2000-2025” that was endorsed by the Government of Indonesia in 2000.²⁷⁴ The plan was to serve as a guideline for the Komodo Collaborative Management Initiative (KCMi), regarded as a groundbreaking policy experiment for the Government of Indonesia and for management of national parks in general.²⁷⁵ The KCMi was designed to produce long-term stability for the continued management of the park in the face of the political and economic uncertainties of the new era of decentralization. The goal of the KCMi was to protect the fauna, flora, and ecosystems found in the area, and support sustainable development within the region through the use of the park’s resources in a sustainable way for tourism, education, and research.²⁷⁶

A key element of the KCMi was the development of self-financing mechanisms for the park through nature-based tourism development. A Joint Venture company, PT Putri Naga Komodo, would be established between The Nature Conservancy and an Indonesian tourist entrepreneur, Feishol Hashim, which would implement a thirty-year Indonesian Ministry of Forestry concession to manage tourism in Komodo National Park.

This venture between the Nature Conservancy and Hashim was intended to create the

²⁷⁴ Jos S. Pet and Carey Yeager, eds., *25 Year Master Plan for Management Komodo National Park, Book 1: Management Plan* (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Perlindungan dan Konservasi Alam (PKA) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), 2000); Jos S. Pet and Carey Yeager, eds., *25 Year Master Plan for Management Komodo National Park, Book 2: Data* (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Perlindungan dan Konservasi Alam (PKA) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), 2000).

²⁷⁵ The Nature Conservancy (TNC), *Komodo Collaborative Management Initiative: Transforming the Komodo Project into a Responsible and Sustainable Business* (Bali, Indonesia: The Nature Conservancy Coral Triangle Centre, 2005); The Nature Conservancy “Frequently-Asked Questions about The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Komodo,” The Nature Conservancy-Indonesia Program, Coastal and Marine Conservation Centre, Bali, Indonesia (August 1, 2002): 1.

²⁷⁶ Pet and Yeager, *Master Plan Book 1*, 11.

establishment of a compatible, high-quality ecotourism industry in and around the park. Hashim had been chosen at the time as a business partner as he was the most suitable partner around, with the necessary connections on a national and international level to elevate Komodo National Park into a major global attraction.²⁷⁷ The Nature Conservancy promoted this innovative approach to conservation-private sector partnerships as a potential model for a network of marine protected areas in Southeast Asia that would be designed to survive and managed to last.²⁷⁸

The new tourism concession planned to immediately increase revenue through raising the then low entrance fees to the park (around US\$ 2,00) up to US\$ 30,00, with additional fees charged for activities such as diving and snorkeling. According to the charter of the company, all profits and revenue earned from the park would be invested back into conservation and park management.²⁷⁹ To start the new ecotourism development enterprise, PT Putri Naga obtained funding from many international sources, including a US\$ 5 million grant from the World Bank, but according to the plan the park was to be generating sufficient ecotourism revenues to sustain ongoing

²⁷⁷ As the nephew of Mohammad Mahathir, the Prime Minister of Malaysia (1981-2003), Feishol Hashim indeed was a well-connected businessman. He had tourism developments in different regions of Indonesia, and he was a major landowner in Labuan Bajo. Hashim claimed that he was attracted to the program because he realized that if Komodo were not properly run, it would damage his other tourism-related businesses in Labuan Bajo.

²⁷⁸ TNC, PHKA, and Putri Naga Komodo, *Komodo National Park Collaborative Management Initiative: Smart Partnership for Conservation*, 5; TNC, *Collaborative Park Management: Partnerships, Financing and Ecotourism at Komodo National Park. Information Sheet* (Bali, Indonesia: The Nature Conservancy-Indonesia Program, Coastal and Marine Conservation Centre, n.d.), 1; TNC, "Frequently-Asked Questions," 1; Iverigh "Komodo and Galapagos: Uniting Two Different Worlds," *Island Life*, October 27, 2002: 29; Borchers, *Jurassic*, 72-74.

²⁷⁹ Environment North and Associated Consultants, *Komodo*, 105; TNC, PHKA and Putri Naga Komodo, *Komodo*, 3; Pet and Yeager, *Master Plan Book 1*, 78.

management and conservation work within seven years.²⁸⁰ By handing over the concession for park management and tourism development to the Joint Venture company, Komodo National Park was to be in effect privatized.²⁸¹

Despite the support for the initiative by the Government of Indonesia, Hostility towards the existing management policies of The Nature Conservancy and the fear of increased restrictions proposed by the new twenty-five year plan led the people in the gateway city of Labuan Bajo and the villagers within the park to protest the new park initiative.²⁸²

Subsequent to their involvement in the park in 1995, the Nature Conservancy implemented a more efficient enforcement program to counter the threats to the marine environment—routine patrolling started in May 1996, enforcing stricter control on the fishing and the collecting of ocean products in and around the park.²⁸³ While increased policing was effective in halting practices destructive to the park’s resources (e.g. fishing with explosives), villagers argued that their survival was being threatened by the prohibitions, and The Nature Conservancy was accused of terrorizing the people in the park.²⁸⁴

²⁸⁰ Global Environmental Facility (GEF) *Proposal for Project Development Funds (PDF). Block B Grant* (Washington, D.C: Global Environmental Facility, 2000), 2; Global Environmental Facility (GEF), *Republic of Indonesia Komodo Collaborative Management Initiative* (Washington, D.C: Global Environmental Facility, 2001), 3-4; Ivereigh, “Protecting,” 10; Pet and Yeager, *Master Plan Book 1*, 24; TNC et al., *Komodo*, 2; Jim Singleton, Rini Sulaiman and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), *Environmental Assessment Study—Komodo National Park*, October 2002, accessed August 2, 2012, http://www.komodonationalpark.org/Download_our_reports.htm; Ivereigh, “Protecting,” 11; GEF, *Komodo*, 1.

²⁸¹ Borchers, *Jurassic*, 73.

²⁸² Fox et al., “Komodo,” 2; TNC, *Komodo Collaborative Management Initiative*, 2.

²⁸³ Pet and Yeager, *Master Plan Book 1*, 32-33.

Residents argued that The Nature Conservancy and the park management robbed them of their ancestral rights to fish much of the park's waters and that the twenty-five year concession proposed by the Conservancy could lead to permanent, exclusive rights, akin to forest concession rights responsible for the destruction of so much of Indonesia's forests.²⁸⁵ The proposed involvement of a private company also met strong objection from tour operators worried that PT Putri Komodo, whose director was already a major landowner in Labuan Bajo, would eventually monopolize the leisure business in Komodo and Labuan Bajo. The protests intensified, achieving widespread notoriety in 2002 when two men were shot and killed while illegally fishing in the park—allegedly by guards paid for by The Nature Conservancy. Komodo soon became a focus of attention for journalists and researchers examining issues of conservation and indigenous rights in national parks.²⁸⁶

Concerns regarding resource restrictions were exacerbated by the failure of The Nature Conservancy or other conservation organizations, to provide adequate alternative livelihoods for the residents in and around the park to compensate them for the increased prohibitions on their traditional livelihood as fishermen. Despite the surge of tourism in the 1990s, tourism development was not a successful source of alternative livelihood for the park's residents. The villagers were poor and illiterate. Lacking necessary skills and resources, they were unable to enjoy the benefits of Komodo's rising visitation rate.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ Shurcliff, *Final Report*, 17.

²⁸⁵ "Weighing up Privatization of Komodo National Park," *The Jakarta Post*, May 6, 2003, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2003/05/06/weighing-privatization-komodo-national-park.html>.

²⁸⁶ Bernard B. Daya, "Seeds of Conflict Sowed in Komodo," *The Jakarta Post*, May 6, 2003, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2003/05/06/seeds-conflict-sowed-komodo.html>.

The development of craft traditions promoted by conservation organizations as an alternative occupation for the islanders proved untenable. The Komodo islanders were fishermen and lacked a strong craft tradition and specialist artisans. While in the 1990s a few dozen villagers were trained in woodcarving techniques, the income they received from selling the masks and dragon miniatures to tourists was slight—craft-making merely supplemented their traditional hunting and gathering activities.²⁸⁸

The hostility towards the Komodo Collaborative Management Initiative among communities both in and around the parks called into question the credibility of the “collaborative management” aspect of the initiative. In the midst of the controversy, which reached the boiling point in 2003, many local residents complained that The Nature Conservancy did not consult them on the plan as it has claimed.²⁸⁹ Asked about the proposed concession, one man in Labuan Bajo claimed that The Nature Conservancy’s approach was “not from the grassroots, but from the top, lobbying with the Directorate Jenderal [PHKA], lobbying with the ministry, then implementing in the field; the community [thinks] ‘what’s that?’ That’s the basic problem.”²⁹⁰ Another resident in Labuan Bajo emphasized that The Nature Conservancy “just work with the powermen in Jakarta; they think that’s most important.”²⁹¹

²⁸⁷ Matthew J. Walpole and Harold J. Goodwin, “Local Economic Impacts of Dragon Tourism in Indonesia,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 27: 560-62.

²⁸⁸ Walpole and Goodwin, “Local Economic,” 565; Hitchcock, “Dragon,” 312-14; Goodwin et al., *Tourism*, 15.

²⁸⁹ Bernard B. Daya, “Seeds of Conflict Sowed in Komodo,” *The Jakarta Post*, May 6, 2003. Pandaya, “Conservation Awareness Takes Root in Komodo,” *The Jakarta Post*, May 6, 2003, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2003/05/06/conservation-awareness-takes-root-komodo.html>; Ho Shu Ping, “Partners in Conservation? Communities, Contestation and Conflict in Komodo National Park, Indonesia” (B.Soc diss., National University Singapore, 2006), 42-44.

²⁹⁰ Borchers, *Jurassic*, 76-77.

The controversy over The Nature Conservancy and the “master plan” for Komodo in 2003 was further complicated by changes in local politics. The ongoing process of decentralization would continue to impact the control over the management of Komodo National Park. In 1999, the regency of Manggarai itself split due to the demands of groups in western regions of Manggarai who sought to create their own independent regency of West Manggarai, with its capital at Labuan Bajo. The proposal had in fact been agreed upon in 1999, but action was delayed due to the resistance from Regent Dagur, who was reluctant to lose control over Komodo National Park—the most lucrative part of the Regency—and tried to prevent the legislation. Despite his protests, final legislation for the division was passed in January 2003, and the new regency of West Manggarai, including Komodo National Park, received autonomous status on 17 July 2003. Wilfridus Fidelis Pranda, who became acting regent of West Manggarai in 2003, was subsequently elected in 2005 for his first five-year term.²⁹²

Despite the animosity towards the KCMI among the residents in Komodo and West Manggarai, Pranda approved The Nature Conservancy’s plan. His consent undoubtedly had less to do with his approval of the scheme or interest in conservation than the severe financial problems he faced once becoming regent. From 1998 to 2005, the tourism industry in Indonesia collapsed due to a series of calamities. The economic crisis and the escalation of violence in East Timor, the Moluccas, and elsewhere in Indonesia initiated the fall of tourism in the late-1990s. The events of 9/11 in 2001 and

²⁹¹ Ibid., 77.

²⁹² “Masa Jabatan Enam Bupati de NTT Segera Berakhir,” Yayasan Inovasi Pemerintahan Daerah, June 9, 2004, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.yipd.or.id/main/readnews/36>; Maribeth Erb and Wilhelmus Anggal, “Conflict and the Growth of Democracy in Manggarai District,” in Maribeth Erb and Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, eds., *Deepening Democracy in Indonesia? Direct Elections for Local Leaders (Pilkada)* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009), 286-88.

the subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan precipitated acts of terrorism and violence against Western tourists in Indonesia—the most serious of these acts being the bombing at a Bali nightclub in 2002 that killed over 200 people, followed by the bombing of the Marriot hotel in Jakarta in 2003, and the bombing of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in 2004. Tourism declined even further due to the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) scare, which began in 2003. Tourist arrivals to Komodo plummeted during this period, declining from 32,174 in 1996 to 988 in 2002.²⁹³

The decline in tourism was not only an acute economic catastrophe; it was an issue for the survival of the regency. Part of the regulations for the decentralization was that local regencies must have the capacity to pay operational costs that had previously been paid by the central government. If the newly created regencies did not raise sufficient revenue they would lose their independent status and would be rejoined to their previous regencies. West Manggarai was in danger of losing its independent status and subsequently be recombined with the regency of Manggarai.²⁹⁴

While The Nature Conservancy's involvement in Komodo brought unwelcome outside influence and control, it also brought funding. Under the KCMI, The Nature Conservancy would contribute US\$ 1 million a year to the park's management, in addition to the administrative resources of a sophisticated international organization. Once the new fee schedule was introduced, raising entrance fees to \$30, and once tourism recovered to the levels of the 1990s—30,000 annual visitors—the park could expect to enjoy a revenue of US\$ 1 million a year from entrance fees alone.

²⁹³ Michael Hitchcock and I Nyoman Darma Putra, *Tourism, Development and Terrorism in Bali* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 1-10.

²⁹⁴ Matsui, "Decentralization," 15.

However, Regent Pranda's subsequent actions soon dismissed any notion that his approval of the collaborative management initiative indicated his agreement with The Nature Conservancy's conservation efforts or his concern for the environment. The corruption that had characterized the earlier rule of Regent Dagur continued. By February 2008, Pranda had already been accused of corrupt practices amounting to total losses of more than US\$ 8 million, including the misappropriation of US\$ 1 million in natural disaster funds and the case of a raw cassava ethanol project in 2007 valued at US\$ 300,000 which was considered fictitious.²⁹⁵ However, especially damaging to the national park was the decision later in 2008 to issue exploration licenses for gold mining in an area directly adjacent to the Komodo National Park. In 2009, a new Indonesian mining law was implemented (Law 4/2009 on Mineral and Coal Mining) that changed the conditions for investment in mining. This law made mining more attractive for provincial and district heads as a means of attracting investment and generating local revenue, but the expansion of mining also generated massive local resistance.²⁹⁶

Among those groups vocal in opposing the mining project were members of the West Flores Tourism Forum and local leaders of the Catholic Church, representing the predominant religious group in Flores. The Flores missionaries, citing the danger posed to the island's natural environment and traditional culture, issued an open statement calling for an immediate cessation to all mining activities in Flores and the restoration of any damage caused by mining activities to date. The West Flores Tourism Forum, which

²⁹⁵ "Bupati Manggarai Barat Dilaporkan ke KPK," *Tribun Batam*, February 14, 2008. <http://infokorupsi.com/id/geo-korupsi.php?ac=273&l=kabupaten-manggarai-barat>; Samuel Oktora, "Kasus Bupati Manggarai Barat Dilimpahkan ke Kejaksaan," *Kompas*, December 15, 2008.

²⁹⁶ Maribeth Erb, "The Dissonance of Conservation: Environmentalities and the Environmentalisms of the Poor in Eastern Indonesia," *The Raffles Bulletin of Zoology*, Supplement No. 25 (2012): 17; Alex Jebadu et al., *Pertambangan di Flores-Lembata: Berkah atau Kutuk* (Maumere: Ledalero, 2009), 63-64.

included local hotels, and tour and dive operators serving Labuan Bajo and the adjacent Komodo National Park, complained that the noise and disturbance from the drilling, and the visible damage to the hillside would impact tourism. Tourism operators in Labuan Bajo were also worried that the blasting and the use of toxic chemicals in the mines would be detrimental to the sea and terrestrial life in Komodo National Park. Although many of the residents of the regency did not approve of The Nature Conservancy, they seemed to have agreed that tourism was the foundation for the regency's economy and that the park needed to be protected.²⁹⁷

The corruption in the regency would soon have a more direct and damaging impact on the management of Komodo National Park. In 2010, The Nature Conservancy's nonprofit joint venture company's permit was yanked, and The Nature Conservancy was forced to leave Komodo, despite the agreement in 2005 giving a thirty-year permit to the organization to run the park. The dispute was over the collection of the entrance fees. After implementing the new entrance fees for the park, The Nature Conservancy collected US\$ 1 million in tourist dollars between May 2006 and November 2010, revenue which its articles of association earmarked for the management of the park. However, the West Manggarai government demanded that the funds go directly into the regency's budget, arguing that The Nature Conservancy had no right to directly collect the entrance fees from the tourists.²⁹⁸ The local government froze the venture's account and refused to turn over the funds, and finally forced The Nature Conservancy to

²⁹⁷ "Flores Rejects Gold Mining," *The Lombok Guide* 42 (2009), accessed March 2, 2013, http://www.thelombokguide.com/issue_42.html; "Usut Tuntas Perusakan Hutan Lindung di NTT," *Kompas*, February, 5, 2013. Erb, "Dissonance," 18.

²⁹⁸ Jacob Herin, "Fishermen Blast Premier Dive Sites off Indonesia" *The Jakarta Post*, April 20, 2012, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/04/20/fishermen-blast-premier-dive-sites-indonesia.html>.

leave. As a spokesperson for The Nature Conservancy pointed out, “Everything was great when the money was tight, but now it has changed and all we meet is hostility. They want us out and they are trying to bleed us to death.”²⁹⁹

Indeed, by 2008 tourism to Komodo had started to recover, and by 2010 it had reached the numbers that it had enjoyed during the peak years of the mid-1990s; the regency no longer needed The Nature Conservancy. Moreover, Regent Pranda had found new opportunities for funding tourism development in the regency. The rising importance of the Swiss NGO “Swisscontact” provided the government with an alternative international partner for tourism development. Swisscontact is the organization of the Swiss private sector for development cooperation. Its aim is to promote sustainable development (socially, ecologically, and economically) through private development in selected developing countries in the global South through advisory services, training, and continuing education. Cooperation with local partners is a priority for Swisscontact, and their leading principle is: “Helping Others to Help Themselves.”³⁰⁰

Swisscontact started operating in Labuan Bajo in 2006, implementing the so-called WISATA project with its main goal to promote Flores as a sustainable tourism destination. Aware of the recent difficulties with The Nature Conservancy, Swiss Contact brought a new strategy for collaborative management and tourism development. The Nature Conservancy was in charge of Komodo, and Swisscontact instead directed their efforts to professionalizing tourism businesses in the town of Labuan Bajo and the broader regency of West Manggarai. Focusing on the small and medium private sector,

²⁹⁹ John McBeth “Dragons Bitten by Corruption, *Straits Times*, Jan. 22, 2011.

³⁰⁰ “About Us,” Swiss Contact, accessed March 2, 2013, http://www.swisscontact.ch/english/pages/UB/UB_Wn.php?navanchor=2110041.

their idea was that as long as the structures were in place to allow people to profit from their relationship with conservation initiatives, people would become involved. This organization also sought to spread benefits in the whole regency of West Manggarai. To this end, they developed a new tourism slogan for the region “West Flores: Komodo and So Much More,” and they created a website which all tourism operators in the region could use to advertise their services.³⁰¹

Swisscontact’s slogan is “Decrease Leakage or Increase Linkage” and the NGO has actively encouraged foreign owned companies in West Manggarai to not limit the employment of locals to the lower level jobs. The NGO has also provided locals with training in order to enable them to compete for the higher jobs as well. According to the organization, the extensive training of the local community is the only way to tackle the problem of leakage, which is a major concern of the NGOs previously mentioned WISATA project. However, it is unclear what the ultimate impact of the involvement of Swisscontact will be on the regency as a whole.³⁰²

Due to the construction of new hotels and restaurants in Labuan Bajo, as well as the growing demand for guided tours to the national park, the opportunity for employment in the region has increased. However, these developments have mostly benefited those in a position to take advantage of them. For example, the rise in tourism has opened enormous opportunities for better-educated people from around Flores, many of whom have moved to Labuan Bajo. In Labuan Bajo, more and more resorts and luxury

³⁰¹ <http://www.floreskomodo.com>, accessed March 2, 2013; “Komodos, Cuisine, Culture and Nature’s Splendor Pictures From the West Flores Night in Bali on April 23, 2008,” *Bali Update #607*, April 28, 2008, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.balidiscovery.com/messages/message.asp?Id=4498>; Erb, “Dissonance,” 16.

³⁰² Catharina Gortz, “Dragon Tourism in Komodo National Park—A Promising Tourism Concept or Rather a Danger to the Species?” (NHTV Brenda University of Applied Sciences, 2011), 56-61.

hotels are in planning, but these will neither be owned nor managed by locals, as they are missing out on the necessary skills and resources.

Meanwhile corruption has increased. A recently completed central government performance review—based on governance reports of Indonesia’s 346 regency and 86 city governments in 2010—has placed West Manggarai Kabupaten as one of the six worst performing local governments in Indonesia. Jakarta will provide assistance to correct the situation but, if it does not improve, West Manggarai could be rejoined with Manggarai.³⁰³ The future of Komodo and the Kabupaten remain uncertain.

Meanwhile, with the removal of The Nature Conservancy the management of Komodo now relies solely on the initiatives of the West Manggarai government. The result has been a rapid acceleration in the exploitation of the marine resources in and around the park. Reports from conservation organizations have expressed alarm at the increase in blast fishing and the rapid destruction of the region’s magnificent coral since the removal of The Nature Conservancy.³⁰⁴ However, the locally appointed park managers disagree. Sustyo Iriyono, the head of the park, has insisted that the destructive practices are being exaggerated. He has denied claims of lax enforcement, pointing out that park rangers have arrested more than sixty fishermen over the past two years, including a group of young men captured after they were seen bombing fish in waters in the western part of the park. One of the suspects was shot and killed after the fishermen tried to escape by throwing fish bombs at the rangers, according to Iriyono. Three others,

³⁰³ “West Manggarai Kabupaten: Good Government or Not?” *Victory News*, April 4, 2012, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.nta.org.au/news/?p=604>.

³⁰⁴ Fransiska Anggraini, “Call for Action to Protect Waters off Komodo Island from Blast Fishing,” *Jakarta Globe*, July 24, 2012.

including a 13-year-old, were slightly injured. “You see?” said Iriyono. “No one can say I’m not acting firmly against those who are destroying the dive spots!”³⁰⁵

In this chapter I have experimented with expanding on previous research on the history of Komodo National Park—research that has focused on conflicts between international conservation organizations and indigenous residents in the parks—by exploring the development of the park in the context of changing dynamics of local politics of western Flores. Undoubtedly, The Nature Conservancy’s inattentiveness to the dynamics of the regional politics, overlooking the long legacy of political fragmentation and immigration in the broader region of Manggarai and the political ramifications of Indonesian decentralization, hindered the agency from implementing a more sustainable management plan for Komodo National Park. The Nature Conservancy’s KCMCI proposal not only would have deprived the local government of control over the most lucrative feature of the regency, it would have imposed precisely the type of external control from which groups in western Flores had recently liberated themselves. Instead of creating benefits for the local leadership in the regency, The Nature Conservancy alienated these groups by seeking outside investors.

Examining the management programs for Komodo developed by The Nature Conservancy and other conservation organizations, one is consistently struck by the complete failure to account for the particular cultural and political contexts of Manggarai. For example, the conservation plans for Komodo promoted increased regulation and accountability in the management of the national park, yet there is no mention of the lack

³⁰⁵ Jacob Herin, “Fishermen Blast Premier Dive Sites off Indonesia,” *The Jakarta Post*, April 20, 2012.

of influence of environmental lobbies nor is there acknowledgement of how in the Indonesian context, large domestic and foreign corporations can simply ignore environmental regulations. The Nature Conservancy's management plans promoted collaborative management, yet there was little recognition that in Manggarai local residents faced harassment and violent intimidation as they attempted to exercise their legally guaranteed right to organize and protest. That such politically marginalized people as the Komodo villagers would substantively participate in national park development was assumed without explaining how this might come about in the context of very unequal power relations.³⁰⁶

Moreover, to presume that initiatives for collaborative management could succeed in Komodo National Park already presupposed an attitude towards participatory government and civil society that may not be meaningful for many groups in Indonesia. Scholars have often pointed out that in Indonesia, the contestation, compromise, and "loyal opposition" that characterize democratic practices in the West are frequently not amenable to many of Indonesia's cultural groups who emphasize consensus in decision-making. From this perspective, the imposition of collaborative management schemes was just as invasive and unrealistic as imposing Western notions of wilderness. The promoters of collaborative management in Komodo failed to appreciate that civil society in the West evolved through a process of hundreds of years of (often bloody) contestation. "Civil society" cannot be simply transplanted or implemented through policy.

³⁰⁶ Vedi R. Hadiz, *Localising Power in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia: A Southeast Asia Perspective* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2010), 31.

If the history of Komodo and Manggarai reveals a long legacy of political and economic influence by outsiders, it also shows that the power of these interlopers from Jakarta, or Washington, D.C. was limited and always subject to local negotiation. The Nature Conservancy, or any of the other conservation organizations working in Komodo, never possessed the power to impose policy; instead, they had to work within the (increasingly) fragmented Indonesian political system. Indeed, the history of the attempt by The Nature Conservancy to implement its Komodo Collaborative Management Initiative demonstrated the impotence of international organizations to impose their conservation initiatives—the enormous resources of The Nature Conservancy and its supporters could not force their conservation program on little West Manggarai—one of the poorest regions on the planet.

The political decentralization after 1999 changed the context for the management of Komodo National Park and will undoubtedly continue to have a decisive impact on future national park programs in Indonesia. Initially, social scientists championed the rise of decentralization in Indonesia as the route to greater accountability and transparency in governance, increased participation by ethnic minorities and social groups excluded under Suharto's authoritarian rule, healthier economic competition and economic efficiency within Indonesia, and a path to corruption eradication. Recently scholars have started to revise this cheery prognosis, finding instead the resilience of predatory systems of power in the face of decentralization and democratic reform.³⁰⁷

The history of Manggarai, West Manggarai, and Komodo regrettably are more evidence for the failures of decentralized Indonesia to deliver reform. In the case of Komodo National Park, it is the relationship between decentralization and the

³⁰⁷ Hadiz, *Localising*, 37.

proliferation of corruption that is the most obvious hindrance to the future of stable management for Komodo. It is hardly surprising that management plans published in conjunction with a government notorious for corruption do not focus on government corruption. But it is also a subject that has received insufficient attention in research that advocates or criticizes national park initiatives. Scholars have generally been reluctant to directly address the issue of corruption and national parks, arguing for example that definitions of “corruption” impose culturally specific notions of good governance, while other fail to see evidence for a direct relationship between government corruption and failed conservation initiatives.³⁰⁸

However, what the Komodo case demonstrates is the importance of recognizing variation in the forms of government corruption. For example, there is an important distinction to be made between predictable corruption and unpredictable corruption. What the recent history of Manggarai and the park reveal is that unlike the Suharto regime, when corruption was centralized and predictable, this new corruption is neither. The lack of centralization and predictability has made the implementation of sustainable conservation initiatives impossible, in so far that the regents, with little concern for long-term consequences or the repercussions of their actions on the broader nation-state, can implement or manipulate or eliminate conservation programs at their discretion. As the case of Komodo National Park demonstrates, until conservationists address these local factors more effectively, there is little hope for the success of conservation initiatives in

³⁰⁸ For a debate on the question of corruption and conservation see Robert J Smith and Matthew J. Walpole, “Should Conservationists Pay More Attention to Corruption?” *Oryx* 39 (2005): 251-56; Paul Ferraro, “Corruption and Conservation: The Need for Empirical Analyses. A Response to Smith & Walpole,” *Oryx* 39 (2005): 1-3; Matthew J. Walpole and Robert J Smith, “Focusing on Corruption: A Reply to Ferraro and Katzner,” *Oryx* 39 (2005): 263-64.

the national parks of Indonesia, or any of the other many decentralizing states in Southeast Asia and the global South.

Chapter Five. Conservation, Local People, and Tourism Development in Vietnam's National Parks, c. 1990-2010

The history of national park development in Vietnam in the 1990s and 2000s makes a fascinating contrast with the history of Indonesian parks that I have examined in the two previous chapters. Like Indonesia, Vietnam was a post-colonial nation that faced the problems of poverty, social injustice, and violence. However, throughout the twentieth century Indonesia actively participated in the expanding global national park movement, and even hosted groundbreaking international conservation congresses related to national parks. Since the 1960s, Indonesia also had a history of expanding international tourism, focused especially on that nation's magnificent natural scenery. In Vietnam, the volatile political situation that lasted until the 1990s prevented the country from actively participating in the international movement for national parks that developed after the 1960s, and also closed the nation off from the international tourism boom in Southeast Asia in the 1970s. The era of economic and political reform in the 1990s during which Vietnam regularized its relationship with the international community, the so-called *doi moi* ("renovation") era, suddenly introduced a new emphasis on tourism as a crucial feature of economic growth. National parks, conservation, and ecotourism were enthusiastically promoted, and from 1985 to 2005 the number of national parks in the country expanded from one to thirty, while tourists began flooding into the country during the same period.

Research on the expansion of Vietnam's national parks has largely focused on questions of social injustice, analyzing how conservation programs in Vietnam's national parks have negatively impacted the lives of the villagers who live in and around the

parks. According to Déry and Tremblay, Vietnam's national parks imposed completely different kinds of management over vast areas where new power relations, new "territorializations," and new "historicizations" emerged. Local livelihoods were often completely transformed by the establishment of national parks, not only changing the way the local people earned their living but how they behaved towards their environment. When new rules were implemented by the government, villagers' livelihoods needed to be adjusted, most of the time by transforming them completely. These transformations were wrought through the integration of local people into larger national and international systems, in which most of them lost power.³⁰⁹

Scholars have also pointed out that resettled villagers were unable to survive without access to the parks' resources. Tourism and other alternative livelihoods did not provide sufficient income, and the park environments were threatened by their continued use by resettled communities in their struggle to survive.³¹⁰ Pamela McElwee has even argued that the removal of local people from protected areas has not only unjustly disenfranchised local residents, but that these resettlement programs have exacerbated the accelerated destruction of the environment—the removal of villagers has facilitated large-scale exploitation of the parks' resources by corrupt government officials and corporate interests.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ Martin Tremblay, "L'implantation des aires protégées au Vietnam: quels impacts pour les population locales?" (MSc diss., Université Laval, 2007); Steve Déry and Martin Tremblay, "L'implantation des aires protégées au Vietnam: quels impact pour les populations locales? Une étude de cas dans la province de Lam Dong," *Vertigo* 8 (2009), <http://vertigo.revues.org/index8059.html>.

³¹⁰ Barbara Rugendyke and Nguyen Thi Son, "Conservation Costs: Nature-based Tourism as Development at Cuc Phuong National Park, Vietnam," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 46 (2005): 185-200.

³¹¹ Pamela McElwee, "Displacement and Relocation Redux: Stories from Southeast Asia," *Conservation and Society* 4 (2006): 396-403.

Social scientists have also examined how Vietnamese state power was expanded through the creation of national parks. The strategic insertion of national parks was part of government moves to improve the state's territorial control over the country.³¹² In particular, parks contributed to the national integration of peripheral, mountainous areas with their large groups of ethnic minorities and indigenous inhabitants. Even when the parks were only loosely controlled by the state apparatus, the delineation and mapping of parks indicated state territorializing intentions and the will to “deterritorialize” contending customary claims.³¹³

Researchers who have examined the explosion of tourism in Vietnam since the mid-1990s have touched upon the role of national parks in government tourism policies; in particular, they have focused on the successes and failure of ecotourism development as a tool for contributing to conservation and poverty alleviation. According to these researchers, the rhetoric of “ecotourism” is frequently employed in policy documents and management plans for Vietnam's national parks, but the Vietnamese government evinces little understanding or interest in “pure” ecotourism. There exists an internal contradiction between conservation and recreation goals for Vietnam's parks, and this reflects a larger disparity between the conservation ambitions of international NGOs and the recreation practices of domestic Vietnamese tourists.³¹⁴

³¹² Romain Vanhooren, “Entre conservation et intégration: les aires protégées en Asie du sud-est continentale, 1962-2005 : une étude des parcs Cat Tien au Viêt Nam, Si Lanna et Doi Suthep-Pui en Thaïlande” (MSc diss., Université Laval, 2006).

³¹³ Steve Déry and Romain Vanhooren, “Protected Areas in Mainland Southeast Asia, 1973-2005: Continuing Trends,” *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 32 (2011): 185-202; Rodolphe De Koninck, “The Peasantry as the Territorial Spearhead of the State in Southeast Asia: The Case of Vietnam,” *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 11 (1996): 231-58; Rodolphe De Koninck, “The Theory and Practice of Frontier Development: Vietnam's Contribution,” *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 41 (2000): 7-22.

Much of the above research features Vietnamese national park development as part of broader discussions of protected area policy, environmental justice, conservation, and ecotourism; however, there has been insufficient attention devoted specifically to an analysis of the history and dynamics of national park development in Vietnam. There is ample material for such a study. During the 1990s and 2000s, conservation organizations and research institutes funded dozens of projects for the development and management of Vietnam's national parks. The promoters of these projects published a wide range of reports on the progress of these park initiatives. The management plans for Vietnam's national parks were created in conjunction with Vietnamese experts (who wrote in both English and Vietnamese), providing an opportunity to access the opinions of both domestic and international conservations regarding the development of these parks. Many of the "flagship parks" such as Cat Tien and Cuc Phuong, were the center of conservation initiatives and achieved great notoriety, and have appeared in reports in the popular press. Many of Vietnam's individual national parks have also provided the subject for a number of recent dissertation projects, often based on extensive field research and interviews, and therefore have provided an invaluable source for local opinions regarding national parks in Vietnam.

Drawing upon these primary and secondary sources, in this chapter I will examine the development and management of national parks in Vietnam during the 1990s and 2000s. Subsequently, I will present detailed case studies of Cuc Phuong National Park and Cat Tien National Park, two of Vietnam's most celebrated national parks, in order to illustrate specific manifestations of the conflicts that emerged in the implementation of

³¹⁴ Wantanee Suntikul, Richard Butler, and David Airey, "Implications of Political Change on National Park Operations: *Doi Moi* and Tourism to Vietnam's National Parks," *Journal of Ecotourism* 9 (2010): 201-18.

national parks. In conclusion, I will suggest how in the current economic, social, and political conditions of Vietnam, national parks might be developed so as to maximize their capacity to achieve their conservation, tourism, and local economic development objectives.

In the mid-1980s, Vietnam was in a state of radical transition and experimentation. The drive undertaken by party ideologues during the 1970s and 1980s to eliminate all vestiges of capitalism in the economy, organize agriculture into collectivized production, and impose a socialist transformation in private industry resulted in decreased production and increased poverty and starvation. By the mid-1980s, a number of party leaders, who had been contemporaries of Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969), were stepping down in favor of a younger generation of pragmatists and technocrats, and the prolonged poor condition of the economy sparked discontent among grass-roots party organizations as well as open criticism of the party's domestic policy.³¹⁵

The Sixth National Party Congress held in December 1986 was a watershed for party policy in the 1980s. At the congress, the party acknowledged existing economic problems and indicated a willingness to change in order to solve them. A new atmosphere of experimentation and reform, apparently reinforced by changes initiated by the Soviet Union's new leadership, was introduced, setting the stage for a period of self-examination, the elimination of corrupt party officials, and new economic policies.³¹⁶

³¹⁵ Ronald J. Cima, ed., *Vietnam: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987), 128.

³¹⁶ Ari Kokko, "Introduction and Overview," in Ari Kokko, ed., *Vietnam: 20 Years of Doi Moi* (Hanoi: The Gioi Publishers, 2008), 1-7.

The congress approved broad economic restructuring (known as “*doi moi*,” or “renovation”) that introduced market reforms, opened up the country for foreign investment, and dramatically improved Vietnam’s business climate. The economic renovations of the congress were confirmed in the new state constitution and approved by the government in April 1992. The constitution reaffirmed the central role of the Communist Party of Vietnam in politics and society, and outlined government reorganization and increased economic freedom. Though Vietnam remained a one-party state, in the 1990s adherence to ideological orthodoxy became less important than economic development as a national priority. The economic policies proved to be enormously successful; Vietnam became one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, enjoying annual GDP growth averaging between 6.5% and 8% from 1990 to 2010.³¹⁷

The 1990s also opened a new era of improved foreign relations and increased participation in global institutions for the Vietnamese government. The international isolation that resulted from Vietnam’s invasion of Cambodia in 1978 ended after Vietnam withdrew its troops in 1989. Within months of the 1991 Paris Agreements, Vietnam reestablished diplomatic and economic relations with the neighboring Southeast Asian nations, as well as with most of the countries of Western Europe and Northeast Asia. China reestablished full diplomatic ties with Vietnam in 1991, and the two countries

³¹⁷ Annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth was as follows: 8% from 1990 to 1997; 6.5% from 1998 to 2003, 8% from 2004 to 2007, 5.3% in 2009, 6.8% in 2010. “The World Factbook: Vietnam,” Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), accessed, May 2, 2012, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vm.html>.

began joint efforts to demarcate their land and sea borders, and strengthen trade and investment ties.³¹⁸

In the new era of economic reform and internationalism, the government promoted tourism as a vital source of economic development and foreign exchange. Through the encouragement of the government, in the 1990s Vietnam experienced a surge in tourism. International arrivals rose from 300,000 in 1991 to 2.14 million in 2000; while domestic tourism expanded from 1.5 million to 11.3 million visits in the same period.³¹⁹ In the 1990s, about one-third of foreign tourists to Vietnam visited natural sites in the country, and the government viewed nature-based tourism as one of the country's key tourism products for development.³²⁰ Much of this focused on the creation of a system of national parks and by 2005, Vietnam had established thirty national parks.³²¹

³¹⁸ Ari Kokko, Kerstin Mitlid and Arvid Wallgren, "Internationalisation and Macroeconomic Management in Vietnam," in Ari Kokko, ed., *Vietnam: 20 Years of Doi Moi* (Hanoi: The Gioi Publishers, 2008) 127-30; Le Thanh Forsberg and Ari Kokko, "The Role of Donors in Vietnamese Development Planning," in Ari Kokko, ed., *Vietnam: 20 Years of Doi Moi* (Hanoi: The Gioi Publishers, 2008), 242-45.

³¹⁹ Phan Nguyen Hong, Quan Thi Quynh Dao, and Le Kim Thoa, "Ecotourism in Vietnam: Potential and Reality," Young MAB Science Award Program (Hanoi: MAB/UNESCO, 2002); General Statistical Office, *Statistical Yearbook 2002* (Hanoi: Statistical Publishing House, 2003), 381; Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, accessed April 4, 2012, www.vietnamtourism.com.

³²⁰ 420,000 of the 1.52 million foreign tourists went to natural attractions in that year, Pham Trung Luong, "The Ecotourism in Vietnam: Perspective and Challenges." Paper presented at 1st International Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Vietnam, Hue, (1997), 15; Stefanie Wurm, *Eco-tourism: A Preliminary Feasibility Study as Part of a Sustainable Conservation Strategy for Phong Nha—Ke Bang Area* (Quang Binh Province, Vietnam: World Wide Fund for Nature Indochina Programme, 1999), 14. See also J. Perry Hobson, V. Heung, and Kye-Sung Chon, "Vietnam's Tourism Industry: Can It Be Kept Afloat?" *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* 35 (1994): 42–48; Bruce Prideaux and Stephen Witt, "An Analysis of Tourism Flows Between Australia and ASEAN Countries: An Australian Perspective," in Kaye Sung Chon, ed., *Tourism in Southeast Asia*, (New York: Haworth Hospitality Press, 2000), 91; Phan Nguyen Hong, Quan Thi Quynh Dao, and Le Kim Thoa, "Ecotourism in Vietnam: Potential and Reality," *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia* (October 2002), http://kyotoreview.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/issue/issue1/article_167.html; Wantanee Sunkul, Richard Butler, and David Airey, "Vietnam's Heritage Attractions in Transition," in Michael Hitchcock, Victor T. King, and Michael Parnwell, eds., *Heritage Tourism in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2010), 202-04.

³²¹ "Vietnam," UNEP-WCMC, accessed April 4, 2012, <http://protectedplanet.org>.

National parks contributed to Vietnam's tourism portfolio; they also helped to fulfill environmental obligations. After *doi moi*, Vietnam became party to the Man and the Biosphere Programme, the Mekong River Commission, RAMSAR, World Heritage Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and many of the prominent international programs, commissions, and "multilateral environmental agreements." Participating in the international community required the Vietnamese government to embrace international standards in environmental protection and biodiversity conservation. Starting with the adoption in 1991 of the National Plan for Environment and Sustainable Development, 1991–2000, national parks were increasingly promoted as locations for the integration of the principles of sustainable development and biodiversity conservation. National park development was introduced into the policies and programs of all sectors as recognized in national policy documents at the highest level, including the 1995 Biodiversity Action Plan, the National Strategy for Environment Protection, 2001–2010, the Orientation Strategy for Advancing toward Sustainable Development (National Agenda 21), and the Management Strategy for a Protected Area System in Vietnam to 2010.³²²

Money was a main factor that stimulated the government's attention to national parks. Promoting national parks for the protection of Vietnam's extraordinary flora and fauna generated a great deal of foreign development aid. Having been shut out of many international funding circles during the 1970s and 1980s, attracting international

³²² The World Bank et al., *Vietnam Environment Monitor 2005: Biodiversity* (Hanoi: The World Bank, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment [Vietnam], Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency, 2005), 34-37.

development aid was a new and important enterprise for the state.³²³ International funding for national parks programs was sufficient motivation for authorities that were constantly in search of new sources of money to legitimate institutional reproduction.³²⁴ Vietnam became a magnet for international conservation funding and by the year 2000 there were twenty-one national park and nature conservation projects underway.³²⁵ Most of these programs either directly or indirectly provided funding for Vietnam's expanding national parks. Five Vietnamese national parks were deemed particularly important for the protection of unique and valuable mega-fauna, and received millions of dollars in project funding.³²⁶

For their part, zoologists, biologists, and conservationists were excited by the new opportunities for conducting research in Vietnam. The discovery of the saola, muntjac, and other exotic animals resulted in international attention. As the head of the Hanoi office of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) indicated, "The saola and the giant muntjac have done quite a lot to raise awareness of conservation in Viet Nam."³²⁷ Indeed, in

³²³ Pamela McElwee, "Lost Worlds and Local People: Protected Areas Development in Vietnam," in Dawn Chatty and Marcus Colchester, eds., *Conservation and Mobile Indigenous Peoples: Displacement, Forced Settlement, and Sustainable Development* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 301-04.

³²⁴ Déry and Vanhooren, "Protected Areas," 197.

³²⁵ Some of the agencies which involved in funding initiatives in Vietnam's parks included: GEF - Global Environment Facility (GEF), European Union (EU), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Protected Areas Management for Resource Conservation Project (PARC), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). For a list of programs see McElwee, "Lost Worlds," 304; The World Bank et al., *Vietnam Environment*, 52-53.

³²⁶ The five parks were Ba Be, Cat Ba, Cuc Phuong, Bach Ma, and Cat Tien.

³²⁷ D. Drollette, "The Last Frontier: In Viet Nam, Zoologists Discovers Animals Long Hidden by Rugged Terrain and Political Strife," *Newsday* April 27, 1999, 2.

1990s Vietnam became celebrated as a “global biodiversity hotspot” and its forests “a lost world that modern science has never before looked at.”³²⁸

Although Vietnam’s park program did not develop until the 1990s, there had been previous attempts at national park development. In the colonial era, a commission met in Tonkin in 1925 to consider the implementation of a system of *parcs nationaux de refuge* (“sanctuary national parks”) that had been promoted by professors at the Museum of Natural History in Paris (see Chapter One). In December 1925, the governor-general of Indochina petitioned the resident superiors of Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina—the three regions that would become Vietnam—to investigate the possibility of implementing the recommendations of the 1925 commission.³²⁹ In response to the recommendations of the 1925 *Commission*, Resident Superior René Robin of Tonkin ordered his own commission to study the recommendations. The six member “Tonkin Commission” included representatives from the Civil Service, Agricultural Service, Forest Service, and Chamber of Agriculture.³³⁰

In the deliberations, the representatives were unanimous in their disapproval of the creation of *parcs nationaux de refuge* in the colonies of Vietnam. The Tonkin Commission concluded that the creation of national parks for the protection of wildlife was unnecessary, as wildlife was in no area in danger of disappearing, and would be ineffective in protecting animals in any event. According to the commission, the colonial

³²⁸ “Journey into Viet Nam’s Lost World,” *Time Magazine*, August 10, 1992.

³²⁹ Archives d’Outre Mer (hereafter AOM): L85, N92: Folder 3041. “Le Gouverneur Général de l’Indochine à Monsieur le Résident Supérieur au Tonkin.” 24 December 1925. AOM: L 85, N92: Folder 3041, “Voeux de la commission de protection de la faune coloniale.”

³³⁰ AOM: L85, N92: Folder 3041. “Création des parcs nationaux de refuge pour certaines espèces animales.” 13 March 1926.

Forest Service was already practically incapable of stopping illegal cultivation, and it would be even more impossible to prevent the local populations from killing wildlife that damaged their crops. Any regulation would be a dead letter because the system of surveillance proposed would be impossible to implement.³³¹

The members of the Tonkin Commission argued that the development of parks would be dangerous. They emphasized that elephants, tigers, and panthers were ferocious animals that endangered humans and ravaged crops. Indigenous people had the right to defend themselves against these depredations, and to organize *battue* when their property and personal safety were threatened by these animals. Wild ruminants were also agents for the transmission of disease, and creating reserves for the protection of wildlife could cause substantial harm to domesticated animals. Moreover, the proposed *parcs nationaux de refuge* contained over 250,000 inhabitants, and the commission pointed out that the Vietnamese would respond violently to any attempt to remove them from their homes, and they would hardly understand the need to protect animals that destroy their farms.³³² As a consequence of the resistance by the colonial administration, a system of national parks was never developed in colonial Vietnam.

Hence, unlike the British who created a national park in Malaya, and the Dutch who developed a sophisticated system of reserves, the French did not leave an established reserve system that would be the foundation for the Vietnamese system of national parks. Nevertheless, the French did promote nature tourism at hill-stations such as Dalat and Sapa, and scenic locations such as Ha Long Bay, and these developments would have an

³³¹ AOM: L85, N92: Folder 3041. “Procès Verbal, La Commission chargée de l’étude des questions relative à la création des parcs nationaux de refuge pour certaines espèces animales.”

³³² Ibid.

important influence on the subsequent design and management of Vietnam's national parks, which would emphasize the linkages between tourism and national parks.³³³

The first “national park” in Vietnam is considered to be Cuc Phuong, declared by Ho Chi Minh in 1962 who in a speech announcing the park allegedly stated that “Forests are gold.”³³⁴ The motivation for creating the park at that time is unclear, perhaps it was in response to US proposals at the time to create national parks in South Vietnam.³³⁵ In any event, as we will discuss below, the park was largely a “paper park” without regular funding or tourism until the 1990s. Five more areas would be declared national parks by 1986, but they also existed in name only, without substantial management or funding.³³⁶

Following international conventions established by the IUCN, in Vietnam a national park (“vuon quoc gia” literally “national garden”) was defined as a natural area for “the conservation of one or more typical or representative ecosystems.” According to the definition, “National parks serve as a basis for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreation and eco-tourist activities which are controlled and have less negative

³³³ AOM: L81: 2929, “Tourisme,” 1931. Ellen Furlough “*Une lecon des choses: Tourism, Empire, and the Nation in Interwar France*” *French Historical Studies* 25 (2002): 441-473. Patrick Blandin, *De la protection de la nature au pilotage de la biodiversité* (Paris: Editions Quae, 2009).

³³⁴ McElwee, “Lost Worlds,” 297. The declaration of the park in 1962 and Ho Chi Minh’s statement “Forests are gold” are often repeated in secondary literature. However, none of these authors provide a source, and I have yet to find the transcript of the full speech or any explanation of the background and context for this famous event. Apparently, there were numerous speeches in which Ho Chi Minh stated that “Forests are gold and the sea is silver.” For example, “Lesson at the Party History Research Conference of the Central Propaganda Department,” 28 November 1959, and a talk given at the 7th Conference of Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers’ Party, 16 April 1962. See Tran Quang Dai, “Nen Hieu The Nao Cho Dung Ve Rung Vang Bien Bac?” accessed March 2, 2013, <http://dantri.com.vn/ban-doc/nen-hieu-the-nao-cho-dung-ve-rung-vang-bien-bac-364043.htm>.

³³⁵ Lee M. Talbot and Martha H. Talbot, eds., *Conservation in South East Asia. Proceedings of the Conference on Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in Tropical South East Asia* (Bangkok: IUCN/UNESCO, 1968), 213-215.

³³⁶ McElwee, “Lost Worlds,” 304.

impacts.”³³⁷ The purpose of the parks was to conserve valuable and rare flora and fauna; to protect and maintain the representative tropical forest ecosystem; to provide a platform for environmental education and scientific research; to develop ecotourism activities; and to create jobs for people living in proximity to the parks. Further, the national parks were integrated into a master plan, which included ecotourism (and historical tourism) in order to attract domestic and foreign tourists.³³⁸

While the official definition for Vietnam’s national parks adhered to international conventions, their actual design and management differed substantially from the national park ideal exemplified by the vast wilderness parks of North America. Throughout the twentieth-century, Vietnam was one of the world’s most densely populated agricultural countries; and virtually all of Vietnam’s national parks had a previous history of human exploitation and occupation. Many of the areas that would be declared as national parks were previously production forests during the French colonial and early post-colonial eras, while the recent history of the American war left a large footprint on Vietnam’s precious flora and fauna. By the 1980s, wilderness did not exist in Vietnam, and the national parks were established comprising areas where natural resources were at least not “acutely devastated.”³³⁹

Vietnam’s parks were smaller than the limits generally recognized by many other nations for the minimum size of national parks. The average size of Vietnam’s national

³³⁷ “National park” was defined through Decision No.62 -2005/QD-BNN (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development). Thuy Ngoc Nguyen, “Role of Social Capital in Natural Resource Conservation: A Case Study of Cat Tien National Park in Vietnam” (PhD diss., University of Florida, 2007), 40-41.

³³⁸ Vo Quy, “About Buffer Zone Management in Vietnam: The Initial Experiences,” in *The Summary Record of an International Conference: “Buffer Zone of Natural Reserves in Vietnam”* (Hanoi: Agricultural Publishing House, 2002); Nguyen, “Role of Social Capital,” 40-42.

³³⁹ Vo, “About Buffer,” 4.

parks at the start of the twenty-first century was about 35,000 hectares (ha) with the smallest (Xuan Thuy National Park) measuring only 7,100 ha. Yok Don National Park, Vietnam's *largest* park, was 115,545 ha, about one-tenth the size of Yellowstone.³⁴⁰ Vietnamese national parks also deviated from the "wilderness" ideal for national parks in that all of the parks had substantial resident populations residing within the park boundaries and a much larger population on the borders surrounding the parks that also lived off accessing the resources of the national parks. As indicated above, already in the colonial period Vietnam was a densely populated country, and the attempts at that time to create reserves were hindered by the presence of people. In fact, many of these remote regions that became parks had been part of the government's relocation programs in the 1980s. Thousands of Vietnamese, mostly demobilized soldiers, had recently arrived in many of these regions and were eagerly converting the areas to agriculture.³⁴¹

Much of the population in and around the parks lived in poverty, without access to electricity or running water. Often these groups were isolated due to lack of roads, and those roads that did exist were often unpaved and impassible in the rainy seasons. The villagers had limited or no education. Their subsistence depended mostly on hunting and gathering activities in the park areas and the buffer zones. The farming practices consisted of shifting cultivation or "slash-and-burn" agriculture.³⁴² One of the great issues confronting Vietnam's national parks was how to accommodate the large numbers of

³⁴⁰ Linh Nguyen Vu, "Status of Protected Area Governance in Viet Nam," accessed May 22, 2012, http://teknologimalaysia.academia.edu/AmranHamzah/Papers/1716645/Managing_the_Impact_of_Visitors_to_Protected_Areas_in_Malaysia_Success_Stories_and_New_Challenges.

³⁴¹ Nguyen, "Role of Social Capital," 67.

³⁴² Vo, "About Buffer," 6.

indigenous peoples, as well as the expanding populations that immigrated to the areas, all of whom extracted the parks' resources.

Ecotourism was promoted as the ideal method for reconciling conservation and development, and for moving local people from their destructive practices towards alternative livelihoods based on tourism. In the 1990s and 2000s, conservation organizations promoted ecotourism development for Vietnam's national parks, and implemented training programs to raise the awareness of ecotourism within the park administrators and heads of the Vietnamese National Administration of Tourism (VNAT). According to its proponents, ecotourism would not only educate travellers, but also provide funds for conservation, and bring economic and political power to local communities.³⁴³ In 1999, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Economic and Social Commission Asia Pacific, and the Vietnamese National Administration of Tourism organized the conference, "Eco-tourism Development in Vietnam," which was considered an important step in defining the concepts and practices of ecotourism in Vietnam. At an earlier workshop on the role of ecotourism in Vietnam, Le Van Lanh, Secretary General of the Sub-Association of Vietnam's National Parks and Protected Areas provided the following ethical guidelines for ecotourism in national parks:

Respecting local culture without bringing urban lifestyle to the destinations.
Neither approaching too closely to wild animals nor feeding them.
Not collecting protected and endangered animals and plants.

³⁴³ Pham, "Ecotourism in Vietnam," 15; Wurm, *Eco-tourism*, 14; Phan, Quan, and Le, "Ecotourism in Vietnam."

Not buying protected and endangered animals or plants or products made from them.
Carrying rubbish back home and trying not to pollute the land and water environment.
Studying culture and nature of the destinations being visited before departure.
Paying attention to the day-to-day life of residents and environmental issues at the destination during the visit.
Learning to live with nature and become closer to nature, based on the experiences gained during the visit.³⁴⁴

At the same workshop, representatives from the Forest Protection Department also described the development aims of ecotourism in Vietnam's national parks:

Ecotourism development in national parks should be in combination with the development of the community nearby. Development projects should combine the protection of the national parks, ecotourism and suitable development of the community nearby...In addition, ecotourism can contribute to raising the local community education and public health through education on the environment, cultures, history and recreation.³⁴⁵

The government fully embraced ecotourism in its planning strategy, and ecotourism development was indicated as an official objective in the management plans for Vietnam's parks. According to the *Revised National Tourism Development Plan for Vietnam 2001–2010*, ecotourism and village-based tourism in particular were both promoted as priorities for bringing tourism business to the level of a “spearhead” economic branch of the country.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴ Le Van Lanh, “Ecotourism and Management of the Tourism Environment in Vietnam's National Parks,” Workshop on “Role of Ecotourism in Sustainable Tourism Development in Vietnam,” Hanoi, April, 1998.

³⁴⁵ Nguyen Ba Thu and Nguyen Huu Dzung, “Ecotourism with the Conservation and Development of National Parks,” Workshop on “Role of Ecotourism in Sustainable Tourism Development in Vietnam,” Hanoi, April, 1998.

³⁴⁶ *Revised National Tourism Development Plan for Vietnam 2001–2010* (VNAT/ UNDP/WTO, 2001), 15; Asian Tour: European-Asian Integration in Sustainable Tourism Management, 16.

Despite the official promotion of ecotourism in the national parks, conservationists argued that environmental awareness was uncommon within the government, and that “ecotourism” development in Vietnam was merely “nature based” tourism, often in the form of organized mass tourism that did not satisfy the criteria of ecologically minded tourism.³⁴⁷ Guides, administrators, and other staff were criticized for their ignorance of conservation and their failure to educate visitors in environmental issues.³⁴⁸ Graffiti, littering, noisy tour groups, as well as the construction of tourist amenities such as artificial lakes and swimming pools inside the parks, and the common practice of eating wild meat in natural areas were all cited as indications of a low level of ecological awareness among Vietnamese tourists.³⁴⁹

If conservationists accused the Vietnamese government of failing to implement authentic ecotourism, a similar charge was leveled at the conservationists themselves. In contradiction to the principles of ecotourism, conservationists in Vietnam identified indigenous people and their practice of shifting (slash-and-burn) cultivation as a threat. NGOs funded and promoted numerous programs for the removal of villages from inside national park boundaries. Despite recognition that these policies were becoming

³⁴⁷ The conflation of ecotourism and mass nature tourism is revealed in the papers presented by the Secretary General of the Sub-Association of Vietnam’s National Parks and Protected Areas and other government representatives at the “Ecotourism in Vietnam” workshop held in 1998. For example, better transportation networks and tourism facilities are promoted as improving “ecotourism” in national parks. See Le Van Lanh “Ecotourism and Management of the Tourism Environment in Vietnam’s National Parks,” and Nguyen Ba Thu and Nguyen Huu Dzung, “Ecotourism with the Conservation and Development of National Parks,” Workshop on “Role of Ecotourism in Sustainable Tourism Development in Vietnam,” Hanoi, April, 1998.

³⁴⁸ According to a survey conducted in 2000, some 90% of eco-tourist guides were found to lack sufficient environmental knowledge. Phan, Quan, and Le, “Ecotourism in Vietnam.”

³⁴⁹ Suntikul, Butler, and Airey, “Implications,” 206.

increasingly unpalatable amongst development agencies, resettlement of native populations was undertaken at many Vietnamese parks.³⁵⁰

The transplantations have been sources of extreme resentment amongst the rural poor who in most cases have been further impoverished as a consequence of relocation. The promise of benefits through alternative livelihoods and tourism did not compensate for the suffering resulting from the forced relocations, or more importantly, the long-term restrictions on the villagers' access to the forest resources necessary for their survival. Even in cases where villages directly benefited from tourism or funded development programs, generally these advantages were limited to a handful of the more privileged members of the community who monopolized any profits from the national parks.³⁵¹

Nor did Vietnam's national parks succeed in protecting the environment. From 1990 to 2010, Vietnam experienced one of the world's highest rates of deforestation and biodiversity loss. National parks suffered from the continued hunting of valuable species, most famously the poaching of the last Javan rhinos in Cat Tien National Park in 2010.³⁵² Researchers attributed the degradation of Vietnam's national parks to unsustainable tourism, population pressures, government corruption, incompetent and confused bureaucracy, lack of coordination between different agencies, and insufficient funding.³⁵³ However, in many cases, the damage to Vietnam's parks has resulted from the *doi moi*-

³⁵⁰ McElwee, "Lost Worlds," 305-07.

³⁵¹ ICEM, *Vietnam National Report on Protected Areas and Development* (Indooroopilly, Australia: ICEM, 2003), 14-17.

³⁵² "WWF Report confirms Javan rhino extinct in Vietnam," accessed March 2, 2013, http://www.wwf.org.uk/what_we_do/press_centre/?unewsid=5367.

³⁵³ Suntikul, Butler, and Airey, "Implications," 206-07; C. Cresswell and F. Maclaren, "Tourism and National Parks in Emerging Tourism Countries," in R. Butler and S. Boyd, eds., *Tourism and National Parks: Issues and Implications* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2000), 294; Wurm, *Eco-tourism*, 5, 20.

era emphasis on infrastructure development projects such as dams and highways that in many cases have flooded or bisected national parks. Indeed there is strong evidence to suggest that the national parks programs were calculated in part to contribute to implementing the government's larger national infrastructure programs. National parks provided funding from the NGOs, while also justifying relocation schemes that removed the human obstacles to the implementation of large and destructive development projects in the area.³⁵⁴

In fact, it would appear that the central government tended to separate itself from control over the management national parks. The development of Vietnam's parks was not due to government planning, but rather a consequence of gradual administrative decentralization and economic privatization that increased throughout the 1990s and 2000s. In this era, the central government did not impose park policy, but instead parks became a location for negotiations in which NGOs competed with the ambitions of a range of local governments and business interests for control over the resources of Vietnam's national parks.³⁵⁵ A closer examination of two of Vietnam's most celebrated national parks, Cuc Phuong and Cat Tien, will help to illustrate some of these issues and conflicts that I have introduced.

³⁵⁴ McElwee, "Displacement," 400-02.

³⁵⁵ Gert Polet and Stephen Ling, "Protecting Mammal Diversity: Opportunities and Constraints for Pragmatic Conservation Management in Cat Tien National Park, Vietnam," *Oryx* 38 (2004): 192; Suntikul, Butler, and Airey, "Implications," 209; ICEM, *Vietnam National Report*, 11-13; Nguyen Thi Hai and Tran Duc Thanh, "Using the Travel Cost Method to Evaluate the Tourism Benefits of Cuc Phuong National Park," in Herminia Francisco and David Glover, eds. *Economy & Environment: Case Studies in Vietnam* (Singapore: International Development Research Centre, 1999), 123-25.

Declared in 1962, Cuc Phuong National Park is the oldest and most popular of Vietnam's national parks. Covering 22,200 ha of forest, the park is home to diverse flora and fauna including hundreds of types of animals, and thousands of plant types. The park's attractive forest with its diverse plant, bird, and animal life as well as the beautiful lakes, waterfalls, and limestone caves are among the park's principal appeal for tourists. One of the park's most famous attractions is the spectacular waterfall known as Giao Thuy, located at the junction of the Buoï and Ngang Rivers, which border the park. Other highlights of the park include the many very ancient trees, including the "1,000 Year Old Tree," a 45-m high *Terminalia myriocarpa* specimen, and a scenic lake, Yen Quang. In the early-1990s, the Delacour's Langur was rediscovered in Cuc Phuong and became the park's flagship-species, appearing on the official "park seal."³⁵⁶

Pagodas and other cultural artifacts in the park region indicate that the area has been inhabited for quite some time, and the park was discovered to house a series of large limestone caves filled with ancient archaeological remains. The most significant discovery occurred in 1966 when human remains reckoned to be over 2,000 years old were discovered in one of the caves.³⁵⁷

Before the 1990s, Cuc Phuong National Park received few visitors—according to one estimate, about 2,000 people a year, mostly from government or official organizations or students.³⁵⁸ In the 1990s, tourism to Cuc Phuong expanded due to the convenience of its location—close to Hanoi and the main highway—and its proximity to

³⁵⁶ Cuc Phuong National Park, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.cucphuongtourism.com>.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Szaniawski, *Assistance*, 15.

several major tourist attractions, including Bich Dong Pagoda and Sam Son Beach. Organized package tours for both domestic and overseas visitors in the 1990s started to include a stopover at Cuc Phuong.³⁵⁹ International private tourism companies began to offer tours to the park. Tour operators from the Netherlands and Spain started bringing tourists to Cuc Phuong in 1990.³⁶⁰ By 1994, there were 21,795 domestic visitors and 1,472 foreign visitors, and by 2003 this number had risen to 52,009 domestic and 4,227 foreign tourists.³⁶¹

Many of the park's service operations that sprung up since *doi moi*, such as restaurants and souvenir shops, were a consequence of private enterprise, which was encouraged by park administrators as more dynamic than government-provided services. For example, private investment of US\$ 3 million went into the construction of a bathing lake in Cuc Phuong in 2002.³⁶²

According to the park staff, good road access and availability of communications technology, as well as tourism amenities such as a swimming pools and a karaoke facilities, determined the attractiveness of the park to tourists above all other factors. More development brought more tourism and thus more revenue. Hence, they encouraged developments in the park.³⁶³ Officials at Cuc Phuong National Park hoped to

³⁵⁹ Vietnam News Briefs, "Environment: Crowded Tour Groups Menace National Park Ecosystem," *Vietnam News Briefs*, May 23, 2002; Le "Ecotourism and Management," 3-4; Nguyen and Nguyen, "Ecotourism," 6.

³⁶⁰ Than, "Organising," 122.

³⁶¹ Suntikul, Butler, and Airey, "Implications," 208.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 209-10.

³⁶³ Hoang Van Than, "Organising for Visitation, Tourism And Scientific Research In Cuc Phuong National Park," In *Proceeding National Workshop on the Participation Of Local Communities In Management Of Protected Areas In Vietnam* (Ho Chi Minh City, 1997), 120; Pham Trung Luong And Nguyen Tai Cung,

capitalize on the increase in tourism in order to raise funds to support preservation of the park. Moreover, to quote the former park director, they hoped to “create conditions for people in the buffer zone to be involved in tourism and get more income. When knowing that the park can provide good returns to their family, farmers will be much more active in its protection.”³⁶⁴

According to conservationists, the emphasis on increasing visitation numbers was at the expense of the environment. The large amount of waste these tourists produced, their collecting of plants, and the noise created by large groups was considered environmentally damaging to the park. Conservationists were concerned that Cuc Phuong was being developed for mass nature-based tourism, instead of for the purposes of legitimate ecotourism. While the visitor center with museum, botanical gardens, and “Endangered Primate Rescue Centre,” as well as the model Muong village located in the park were compatible with the conservation objectives of “ecotourism” objectives, other activities were not. For instance, in order to improve the road system inside the park, trees were cut down, tourist trails were paved, and concrete steps were added. Similarly, the creation of artificial lakes inside the park required forest clearance and resulted in alterations to the local hydrology. By offering entertainment facilities inside the park, such as karaoke and a swimming pool, the park management supported and encouraged

“Organizing Tourism Activities in Protected Areas,” in *Proceedings of National Workshop On The Participation Of Local Communities in Management Of Protected Areas in Vietnam* (Ho Chi Minh City, 1997), 104.

³⁶⁴ Suntikul, Butler, and Airey, “Implications,” 210; Nguyen Ba Thu, “Measures to Build Up Buffer Zone in Cuc Phuong National Park,” in *Proceedings of National Conference on National Parks and Protected Areas of Vietnam* (Hanoi: Agricultural Publishing House, 1995), 198.

activities that international conservationists considered “inappropriate” in a national park.³⁶⁵

The residents in and around Cuc Phuong are mostly Muong people, belonging to the third largest of Vietnam’s fifty-three official ethnic minority groups. Hoa Binh province south of Hanoi, in which Cuc Phuong is partially located, has long been regarded as the cradle of the Muong people.³⁶⁶ Traditionally, the Muong lived in mountainous limestone country, primarily in the narrow valleys, within a distinct territorial area. They engaged in shifting (slash-and-burn) agriculture in forest clearings, hunting, and some irrigated rice growing in valleys. The forest clearings were used to grow cotton, cassava, maize and some pumpkins and gourds.³⁶⁷ The Muong also engaged in animal breeding, mostly pigs and poultry, but buffaloes were also raised for meat and for use as draught animals. The Muong diet was supplemented with bamboo shoots, mushrooms, wild tubers and vegetables, and other products from the forests. In the mid-1990s there were approximately 50,000 settlers of Muong origins living in thirteen communes surrounding Cuc Phuong and some 2,500 Muong living within the park, close to the park boundaries.³⁶⁸

From the 1980s, reports from conservation organizations expressed concern regarding the presence of people inside of Cuc Phuong. According to a WWF report from

³⁶⁵ FFI, *Management Plan Draft Outline*, 33; Suntikul, Butler, and Airey, “Implications,” 210; Vietnam News Briefs, “Environment: Crowded tour groups menace National Park ecosystem,” *Vietnam News Briefs*. (23 May 2002); Rugendyke and Nguyen, “Conservation Costs,” 197.

³⁶⁶ Nguyen Tu Chi, “A Muong Sketch, Ethnographical Data,” *Vietnamese Studies* 32 (1972): 50.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 80

³⁶⁸ Rugendyke and Nguyen, “Conservation Costs,” 191. Nguyen Ba Thu, “Measures to Build Up Buffer Zone in Cuc Phuong National Park,” in *Proceedings of National Conference on National Parks and Protected Areas of Vietnam* (Hanoi: Agricultural Publishing House, 1995), 198.

1984, at that time there were some 1,000 Muong people living in the park. The report described them as engaging in illegal hunting and damaging the environment by raising chickens, pigs, and cattle inside the park. The report was especially critical of the swidden (slash-and-burn) agriculture practices of this minority group, which were considered a threat to the biological integrity of the park, noting “...there are considerable areas which will become seriously degraded if this practice continues much longer.”³⁶⁹

In response to conservationists’ concerns about population pressure on park resources, in 1986 the Vietnamese government agreed to relocate several villages to outside of the park boundaries. By the end of 1990, about 1,000 Muong people had been relocated from the central valley area, as were people from two villages from the Buoi river valley.³⁷⁰ Conservationists argued that the Muong people in the park were able to supplement their income from farming with “illegal” hunting, unlimited free wood for fuel, and pasture land for their cattle; consequently, they were considered prosperous enough to be able to survive relocation.³⁷¹

The Muong villagers forcibly resisted the resettlement. They insisted that they and their ancestors had lived on the Cuc Phuong site long before the national park was established.³⁷² The Muong residents in the park removed notice boards from tourist areas and destroyed articles in the park out of resentment for being prohibited from pursuing

³⁶⁹ Egbert W. Pfeiffer, “The Conservation of Nature in Vietnam,” *Environmental Conservation* 11 (1984): 219.

³⁷⁰ “Cuc Phuong National Park, Sourcebook of Existing and Proposed Protected Areas in Vietnam,” (2001), accessed May 3, 2012, www.wing-wbsj.or.jp/~vietnam/source_book/sb_pdf/Cuc_Phuong.pdf.

³⁷¹ A. Szaniawski, *Assistance to Strengthen Cuc Phuong National Park* (Field Document No. 1). (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 1987), 3-4; McElwee “Lost Worlds,” 305.

³⁷² McElwee, “Displacement,” 399.

their slash-and-burn forestry practices.³⁷³ Despite the resistance, resettlement continued to take place and by 1995, a total of 233 households were resettled.³⁷⁴ As compensation, those moved received a one-time cash payout, a newly prepared village site outside the park, timber for reconstruction, seeds for new fields, and one year's supply of food.³⁷⁵ Improved water supply and road access, as well as electricity generators and agricultural initiatives, were also designed to benefit the entire community. A number of development programs were implemented, including a system of microloans and a plan to involve the local communities in assisting bioprospecting programs. A "conservation awareness and education" program for training park staff in conservation-oriented tourism skills such as visitor interpretation and protected areas management was extended to include adults and schoolchildren in four districts bordering the park. It was hoped the program would provide the dual benefits of increasing the level of conservation awareness among current park staff while enhancing the employability of the local population in future park jobs.³⁷⁶

Expanding education was also initiated at the primary and secondary schools.

Fauna and Flora International, in cooperation with the Vietnamese Ministry of

³⁷³ Nguyen Nhu Phuong and Stephen A. Dembner, "Improving the Lifestyles of People Living in or Near Protected Areas in Viet Nam," *Unasylva* 176 (1994): 176; Le Van Lanh, "The Preparation Steps For The Participation Of Local Communities In Ecotourism Projects In Protected Areas. In *Proceeding National Workshop On The Participation Of Local Communities In Management Of Protected Areas In Vietnam*, Ho Chi Minh City (1997), 123-126; Suntikul, Butler, and Airey, "Implications," 209.

³⁷⁴ Nguyen Ba Thu, "Measures to Build Up Buffer Zone in Cuc Phuong National Park," in *Proceedings of National Conference on National Parks and Protected Areas of Vietnam* (Hanoi: Agricultural Publishing House, 1995), 198.

³⁷⁵ McElwee, "Displacement," 399.

³⁷⁶ Fauna and Flora International (FFI), *Management Plan Draft Outline: Cuc Phuong National Park 1998–2008 Cuc Phuong Conservation Project*. (Cuc Phuong : Fauna and Flora International, 1998). *Management Plan Draft Outline*, 40; Lanh "Preparation Steps" 123-26.

Agriculture and Rural Development, established the Cuc Phuong Conservation Project in 1996. One feature of the project was the Cuc Phuong Conservation Awareness Program. The program aimed at raising the level of awareness and understanding about nature and the need to protect Cuc Phuong through activities carried out in local schools and in communities bordering the park. According the program, these efforts represented “a long term investment in changing attitudes and behavior necessary for the park’s sustainable conservation.”³⁷⁷

According to the state, the program for the relocation of the Muong was a success. In a report from 1997, the ministry in charge of parks claimed that “forest was rehabilitated quickly, living conditions of people after removing to buffer zone area were improved positively, some of the households even became wealthy. In short, both economic conditions as well as culture and spiritual conditions of the residents were much improved.”³⁷⁸ However, officers of the Cuc Phuong Commune, to which the resettlement villages belonged, admitted that what they called “voluntary” resettlement projects were not very successful. In a 2005 report based on interviews of resettled villagers, the relocated people complained that there was better access to food in the national park, and there was insufficient food in the new location. According to the 2005 report, the resettled people “were unused to agricultural pursuits, had little knowledge of agriculture techniques and land in the resettlement areas was not fertile enough for

³⁷⁷ Vu Thi Quyen, “Environmental Education in Vietnam: Building Sustainability into a Training Programme,” *ASEAN Biodiversity* 1 (2001): 26.

³⁷⁸ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), *Review Report on Planning Organization and Management of Special Use Forests* (Cuc Phuong National Park: MARD, 1997), cited in McElwee, “Displacement,” 399.

successful cultivation. People have low levels of education and there has been little investment in the area to assist local people to find any alternative means of survival.”³⁷⁹

Moreover, tourism only benefited a small number of the wealthier villagers. For example, the park administration implemented a program that enabled tourists to visit a Muong village, Ban Khanh, located approximately 15 km from the park center. The “model village” was marketed to Western visitors who were invited to stay overnight with the villagers. However, all of the visitors stayed with the same Muong family in *Ban Khanh*, limiting the benefits of the program.³⁸⁰

The greatest threat to biodiversity conservation in the park did not come from the people inside or bordering the park, but from the Vietnamese government. In 2000, the government decreed that a new Ho Chi Minh National Highway running north to south linking Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City would be built, and that it would need to bisect Cuc Phuong. The government argued that the road would improve commerce. The new highway was also expected to increase the accessibility of the park and encourage the acceleration of tourism. Conservationists resisted the highway’s construction. The manager of conservation programs at Cuc Phuong said that in addition to damaging the park’s natural resources, the highway would increase the accessibility of the area for illegal loggers and poachers. Despite opposition from park managers, environmentalists, and even some politicians, the plan was approved and by 2005 the new national highway had been completed.³⁸¹ As expected the highway greatly increased the accessibility of the

³⁷⁹ Barbara Rugendyke and Nguyen Thi Son, “Conservation Costs: Nature-Based Tourism as Development at Cuc Phuong National Park, Vietnam,” *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 46 (2005): 194-96.

³⁸⁰ Rugendyke and Nguyen, “Conservation Costs,” 190; Vo Quy et al., *Cuc Phuong National Park* (Hanoi: Agricultural Publishing House, 1996).

park and facilitated further acceleration of growth of visitor numbers, which reached 160,000 in 2010.³⁸²

What is especially interesting is that the new national highway runs along the Buoi River valley through the areas where the Muong settlements used to be, while alternative routes for the highway proposed by conservationists were rejected precisely because these routes would go through the areas where the new resettlement camps were located. By promoting the removal of the people along the river, the conservation organizations unwittingly opened up the opportunity for the construction of the highway.³⁸³

Cat Tien National Park is situated in southern Vietnam, approximately 150 km north of Ho Chi Minh City. The park has a total area of 73,878 ha and is the largest lowland tropical forest of southern Vietnam. The park contains thousands of plant species and hundreds of mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, and fish species.³⁸⁴ Although partially declared a protected forest in 1978, Cat Tien did not become a high profile park until the 1990s, when a population of an estimated seven to ten Javan rhinos, the world's rarest large mammal, was discovered in the Cat Loc region soon to be integrated into the national park.³⁸⁵ The park itself was cobbled together from three separate areas. The

³⁸¹ Rugendyke and Nguyen, "Conservation Costs," 197; Suntikul, Butler, and Airey, "Implications," 209.

³⁸² UNDP, *New Vietnam Highway May Cut Through National Park*, October 30, 2001, accessed March 15, 2012, <http://www.undp.org.vn/mlist/envirovlc/102001/post96.htm>; ICEM, *Vietnam National Report*, 19.

³⁸³ McElwee, "Displacement," 399.

³⁸⁴ Cat Tien National Park (CTNP), *Conservation Management and Operational Plan Cat Tien National Park, 2003-2008*, (Dong Nai: Cat Tien National Park, 2003), 8-12; "The Park," Cat Tien National Park, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.namcattien.org>.

southern region, Cat Tien, was declared a reserve in 1977 and in 1992 became a national park. Cat Loc and another adjacent area to the south were added in 1998. Thus, Cat Tien National Park includes three separate areas that are adjacent, but which contain large areas of settled agriculture in between them.³⁸⁶

As a nature area of ecological importance due to the Javan rhino, Cat Tien gained international attention and was designated an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2001. The global status of Cat Tien as a conservation area provided the opportunity for attracting funding from international conservation organizations as well as gaining increased tourism publicity.³⁸⁷ One of the most substantial conservation programs initiated at the park was the Cat Tien National Park Conservation Project—a joint initiative of the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Royal Netherlands Government, which took place from 1998 to 2004. The objectives of this project were to (1) conserve the remaining tropical forest at Cat Tien and its full compliment of biodiversity, (2) maintain a viable population of Lesser One-horned Rhinoceros resident within Cat Tien National Park, (3) protect a critical part of the water catchment of the Tri An reservoir, (4) enhance public awareness of the physical and biological values of the national park and its surroundings, and (5) improve income-generating opportunities for the national park and the local population.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁵ CTNP, *Conservation Management*, 12.

³⁸⁶ Gert Polet, “Co-management in Protected Areas: The Case of Cat Tien National Park, Southern Vietnam” in Gerard A. Persoon, Diny M.E. van Est and Percy E. Sajise, eds., *Co-management of Natural Resources in Asia: A Comparative Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2004), 28-29.

³⁸⁷ The World Bank et al., *Vietnam Environment*, 34-35.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 42-44.

A second major donor-assisted project initiated at Cat Tien from 1999 to 2003 was the Forest Protection and Rural Development Project, implemented in conjunction with MARD and with funding from the World Bank and the government of the Netherlands. This project aimed to reduce local people's dependency on the natural resources of the national park through community development activities and rural infrastructure development.³⁸⁹

At the time, there were eleven different ethnic groups living within the park, each with a different history, a different connection to administrative structures, and a different land-use strategy. The indigenous ethnic minorities, including the Xtiêng, Ma, and Chau Ro tribes had occupied the region of the park for several centuries. These indigenous minorities survived by collecting forest products and engaging in shifting (slash-and-burn) cultivation. There was also a large population of ethnic Kinh Vietnamese who moved into the areas in the 1970s, when they had been designed an economic development zone and there were high rates of government sponsored in-migration. Army veterans in particular had been subsidized to move to the Cat Tien area to work on state cashew and timber plantations. There were also the recently migrated minorities from the Northern provinces of Lang Son, Cao Bang, and Bac Kan, including the Tay, Nung, Dao, Hoa (Chinese), and H'Mong groups who started arriving in the late-1980s, but most settled after 1990. Their traditional livelihood strategies consisted of fishing, hunting, and shifting cultivation, but after moving to the regions in and around Cat Tien, they became mainly engaged in settled agriculture.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁹ CTNP, *Conservation Management*, 10.

³⁹⁰ Nguyen, "Role of Social," 54-57.

In the 1990s, the Dong Nai provincial authorities tried to resettle some of the indigenous villagers in order to reduce shifting cultivation in the region, but most of these villagers soon returned to the forests around Cat Tien. As one Ma villager exclaimed, “Better to be struck dead immediately and die here! If we go down [to the resettlement site] people don’t know how to make a living.”³⁹¹

Despite the problems with earlier resettlement programs, in 2003 the Cat Tien park authorities and the WWF devised a new “Integrated Boundary Re-Demarcation and Resettlement Action Plan,” which recommended the resettlement of approximately 1,000 households from inside the park. According to WWF representatives, the resettlement plan was “based on realistic and scientifically-informed planning” and applied international guidelines to ensure that “no person will be worse off because of resettlement.”³⁹² While the WWF representatives acknowledged that the application of exclusionary conservation practices in Cat Tien was contrary to the new conservation standards of collaborative management, nevertheless “the plan to draw a clearer divide between humans and nature at CTNP was deemed both necessary for conservation and socially appropriate in this particular context...based on the park’s critical conservation status, preliminary acceptance of local communities, and consistency with Vietnamese legal and institutional contexts.”³⁹³

In May 2004, the Vietnamese government approved the US\$ 3.3 million for the relocation project. The project preparation phase was driven mainly by the WWF, but the

³⁹¹ McElwee, “Displacement,” 400.

³⁹² Jason Morris and Gert Polet, *An Agenda for Linking Conservation and Development through Land Use Re-arrangement and Landscape Planning—Experiences from Cat Tien National Park and Surrounding Forests* (Dong Nai Province: Cat Tien National Park Conservation Project, 2004), 17.

³⁹³ Cited in McElwee, “Displacement,” 400.

responsibility for developing compensation plans belonged to the “compensation committee” of the district government. District officials adhered to national and provincial legislation regarding relocation; despite the financial support from international conservation organizations, officials did not favor special conditions for the villagers relocated from Cat Tien.³⁹⁴

The District Compensation Committee manipulated the negotiation process for the resettlement, gaining agreement from villagers while avoiding addressing the specifics of the compensation rates. Once the villagers’ agreement to resettlement was documented, the compensation rates were revealed resulting in protests from the villagers who viewed them as lower than expected. The intervention of the World Bank finally allowed the residents to receive greater compensation for their land and the cashew trees. However, the success of the “voluntary” resettlement program is open to question.³⁹⁵ In a 2006 survey sponsored by MARD, only forty-one percent of residents in and around Cat Tien answered affirmative to the statement, “We receive benefits from the Forest Protection and Rural Development Projects of Cat Tien National Park and other projects/programmes.”³⁹⁶

The promotion of tourism did not have a decisive impact as an alternative livelihood for the residents in around the park. Unlike Cuc Phuong, Cat Tien was not

³⁹⁴ Jason Morris-Jung and Robin Roth, “The Blurred Boundaries of Voluntary Resettlement: A Case of Cat Tien National Park in Vietnam,” *Journal of Sustainable Forestry* 29 (2010): 214.

³⁹⁵ Morris-Jung and Roth, “Blurred,” 215; Gert Polet and Stephen Ling, “Protecting Mammal Diversity: Opportunities and Constraints for Pragmatic Conservation Management in Cat Tien National Park, Vietnam,” *Oryx* 38 (2004): 186-90.

³⁹⁶ Tram Duc Luan, “Rural Change and Decentralization: The Case of Cat Tien National Park,” in Neil Powell, Asa Gerger Swartling, and Hoang Minh Ha, eds., *Stakeholder Agency in Rural Development Policy: Articulating Co-governance in Vietnam* (Hanoi: World Agroforestry Centre ICRAF, 2011), 73.

developed as a premier national park due to its tourism appeal, but the discovery of internationally prestigious animals, which in any event were rarely spotted. Cat Tien not only lacked the attractions of Cuc Phuong, but it was also more difficult to access for the casual tourists. In 1995, only 2,000 Vietnamese and 200 foreign tourists visited the park. After the expansion of the park in 1998 and the publicity in the wake of its designation as a Biosphere Reserve in 2001, more effort was made to promote Cat Tien as a tourism destination, including the development of tourist bungalows, canteen facilities, and tourism-related staff. In 2002, visitation numbers rose to 13,790 (12,844 Vietnamese and 946 foreigners).³⁹⁷

A proposed plan for the development of ecotourism in Cat Tien included opportunities for local residents to work as park staff. However, only the wealthy villagers had the resources and education to be able to exploit any tourism benefits.³⁹⁸ Some local residents were able to gain income from tourism to the park by providing “motorcycle taxi” service from the highway (where the bus stopped) to the park entrance, renting bicycles to tourists, or selling food and water. Similar to the situation in Cuc Phuong, the trend was for the increased privatization of the food and beverage facilities, transportation, and other amenities in and around the park, which improved both the quality and profitability of Cat Tien’s tourism services.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ Cat Tien National Park, *Eco-Tourism Development Plan Period 2003-2008*. Unpublished document. (Cat Tien National Park, 2003), 7.

³⁹⁸ Hoang Thi Son, “New Arrangement for Forest Management in Vietnam: Implementation Processes and Impact on Rural Livelihoods,” in Neil Powell, Asa Gerger Swartling, and Hoang Minh Ha, eds, *Stakeholder Agency in Rural Development Policy: Articulating Co-governance in Vietnam* (Hanoi: World Agroforestry Centre ICRAF, 2011), 95.

³⁹⁹ Suntikul, Butler, and Airey, “Implications,” 212.

Conservationists were ambivalent about tourism development in the park. Some of the tourism plans, such as the opening of the Cat Loc Javan Rhinoceros habitat, raised the question of whether adequate consideration had been given to the intended goals of true ecotourism, or whether this designation was being used as publicity for tourism, using nature as a spectacle for consumption. As in Cuc Phuong, there were repeated concerns that the park regulations were not enforced. Despite daily visitation quotas, large organized groups came unannounced, and ignored the rules regarding littering and the use of megaphones.⁴⁰⁰

Conservationists were also concerned about the fragmentation and degradation of the park's environment. Part of Cat Tien's boundary was shared with the government-operated State Forest Enterprises, which continued to be logged to varying extents, both legally and illegally. Moreover, Cat Tien's resources continued to be degraded due to the extraction by the increasing populations that resided around the park. While relocation schemes were successful in removing people from the boundaries of the park—the total population living in Cat Tien in 2003 had been contained to approximately 9,000—the human population of the buffer zone, comprising 31 communes and 2 towns in 8 districts, increased to nearly 200,000 people. The buffer zones and borders of the park were converted to agriculture, and the hunting and gathering inside the parks borders increased.⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰⁰ ICEM, *Vietnam National Report*, 22.

⁴⁰¹ Nguyen, "Role of Social," 46-50; Nguyen Thuy Ngoc et al., "Role of Social Capital in Determining Conservation Attitude: A Case Study from Cat Tien National Park, Vietnam," *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology* 18 (2011): 143-153.

In 2010, the WWF discovered the corpses of three Javan rhinos, their horns having been sawed off. The experts at the WWF who had already suspected that the Javan rhino was extinct in the park, finally announced that the rhino population was extinct. The reports issued by WWF placed the blame squarely on the local residents and government corruption. Regarding the incident, the official park website instead indicated that “these problems are of course driven by rural poverty...”⁴⁰² However, little mention was made by conservationists or park officials regarding the relationship between the translocation schemes and the extermination of the rhinos. The relocation programs removed villagers from the regions where the rhinos were discovered in order to protect the rhinos from humans. However, without witnesses or a local community committed to protecting the region and willing to report on illegal activities, the poachers were able to work without fear. Making the areas devoid of people created the ideal conditions for criminal activity by either corrupt government officials, organized private raiders, or both.

Aside from reinforcing the fact that Vietnamese national parks have a long way to go in terms of fulfilling their conservation, local development, and ecotourism objectives, the examination of the conflicts in these two high profile parks reveal several important points. In both Cuc Phuong and Cat Tien, the removal of people did not solve the problem of biodiversity loss in the parks. The conservationists in both locations found that villagers continued to use the resources of the park, only clandestinely. Indeed, the removal of people may have exacerbated the destruction of these parks’ fauna and

⁴⁰² Cat Tien National Park, “Conservation,” accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.namcattien.org/conservation.htm>.

flora—bullying impoverished villagers incited them to retaliate while, removing them eliminated potential witnesses to criminal activity. Indeed, an empty forest was the ideal setting for illegal hunting or forestry operations. Even if relocated villagers were aware of illegal activity in the parks, there was no incentive for them to report it. Moreover, focusing on the villagers as the source of the problem of environmental degradation in the parks removed attention from the real culprits. Illegal logging companies and mine speculators, which had the resources to undertake large-scale illegal activities, were the real agents responsible for damaging Vietnam’s parks.

Despite the failures of these two parks to cultivate “genuine” ecotourism, it is undeniable that as locations for mass nature tourism, these national parks have been a great success—more and more domestic and international tourists visit the parks every year. Conservationists point to an internal contradiction between the conservation and recreation functions present in both parks, as can be seen in the disparity between the ecological goals of NGOs involved in the parks, and the non-ecological expectations and recreational practices of domestic tourists to natural areas. Conservationists also alleged that government programs were based on encouraging exploitation of the natural attractions of the areas to induce economic gain, while doing little to guarantee the protection of that environment, or the long-term sustainability of the economic or tourism practices that are being developed. According to conservationists, a continuation of this practice would lead to a situation in which overuse and misuse of the environment would devalue the basis of the local economy and tourism trade.

But the eventual degradation of Vietnam’s parks predicted by the conservationists is not a foregone conclusion. Millions of people today visit national parks in the US and

Canada that were designed for only a few thousand, yet these parks still maintain their dignity and capacity to awe and inspire. The swimming pools and karaoke facilities developed in Vietnam's parks were no different from the spas and golf courses found in national parks across the US and Canada. These amenities may be incompatible with some Westerners' ideals of nature, but that is a separate question from their actual impact on biodiversity. In any event, from 1990 to 2010 tourism to Vietnam's national parks continued to expand, and there is no reason to believe that mass tourism development will not remain the main management objective for Vietnam's national parks for the foreseeable future.

The vast majority of the visitors to Vietnam's national parks are Vietnamese, yet there has been very little research that has investigated the Vietnamese tourist at national parks or their interest in nature tourism. While the management plans for Cuc Phuong and Cat Tien addressed the principles of ecotourism, they failed to provide information regarding the variety of tourists to the parks. They did not distinguish domestic and international tourists and their different expectation for visiting parks, except to denigrate the Vietnamese tourist for making noise and littering. More research on the unique social and cultural features of the Vietnamese tourist will help to develop national parks that satisfy their interests. For example, one noteworthy recent examination on domestic Vietnamese tourism has revealed that a principal motivation for this tourism is to be with family.⁴⁰³ Consequently, future management plans for addressing tourism needs and objectives in Vietnam's national parks should be based on large family outings in large tours, and not the solitary ecotourist.

⁴⁰³ Pham Hong Long, "Tourism Impacts and Support for Tourism Development in Ha Long Bay, Vietnam: An Examination of Residents' Perceptions," *Asian Social Science* 8 (2012): 28-30.

Perhaps more significant is that the resident people in and around Vietnam's national parks generally supported mass tourism development—or at any rate it has not been a source of hostility. Interviews with the relocated groups in Cuc Phuong and Cat Tien indicated that these groups viewed the rise in tourism as positive benefits to the communities. While they did not necessarily gain direct financial benefits, the villagers were pleased with the infrastructure developments that accompanied the tourists, such as paved roads, electricity, and shops and increased access to transportation networks. Villagers also indicated that they enjoyed the novelty of seeing new people in their areas.⁴⁰⁴

Instead of viewing Cuc Phuong or Cat Tien as unsuccessful national parks, it may be more fruitful to consider that conservationists tried to impose a model in an area where it was historically and socially inappropriate. For example, the British or Japanese national park model, where parks are “lived-in environments,” might have provided a more sustainable model for Vietnam's parks. Defining which measures would be most effective would require further research based on detailed surveys, interviews, and collaborative studies with the broader population that lives both inside and surrounding the national parks. Ultimately, it appears that for the foreseeable future commercial development will continue to be prioritized in the management of Vietnam's national parks. Tourism is the most obvious sector for continued commercial development and is thus well positioned to serve as a catalyst for change that could benefit all interests in the parks.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁴ Hai and Thanh, “Using,” 125-26.

⁴⁰⁵ Suntikul, Butler, and Airey, “Implications,” 214. Sue Solton, Nguyen Thi Dao, and Nigel Dudley,

“Categorising Protected Areas in Vietnam,” *Parks: The International Journal for Protected Area Managers*
14 (2004): 22-27.

CONCLUSION

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, national parks in Southeast Asia entered a new period of development and expansion. By 2010, Indonesia had fifty national parks, Vietnam thirty, and Malaysia thirty-two. As the economies and populations of these nations continue to expand, and more of the forests are converted to agriculture to fuel the continued growth of these nations' economies, national parks will become increasingly important for reconciling the conflicts between development and conservation, as well as for providing recreation for these nations' increasingly affluent, cosmopolitan, and urbanized populations.

There were two basic goals for this dissertation. The first goal was to offer an alternative to the previous research on the history of national parks in Southeast Asia, which I argue has too narrowly emphasized the “failures, failures, failures” of these parks programs. It is not that I disagree that national parks have been sources of conflict and abuse, but that the emphasis on the failures of national parks has detracted from examining other features of national park development that would explain, for example, why national parks programs have continued to proliferate in Southeast Asia. The second ambition for this project has been to use this historical analysis in order to yield some new insights into how national parks might be conceived differently in order to better achieve their conservation, development, and recreation objectives.

I started by examining the expansion of the international conservation regime that would influence the early establishment of national parks in Southeast Asia. The active lobbying and financial support of international conservation organizations was instrumental in stimulating and guiding the initial development of the national parks that

I have examined. While these national parks programs might not have succeeded in protecting the environment in the manner that the global conservation organizations desired, these programs facilitated the transfer of information and ideas between Western and Southeast Asian scientists, providing locations where they could interact, collaborate, and share research. Irrespective of their conservation failures, the national parks have made a significant contribution to the development a common pool of ideas and institutions that facilitated global interaction and the expansion of the science and institutions of conservation.

Critics have argued that this process resulted in the imposition of Western notions of conservation that privileged a wilderness paradigm of conservation that divided humans from nature, and thus was a harmful source of conflict. Conservation organizations have responded to this charge. In an article published in conjunction with the fifth World Parks Congress held in Durban, South Africa in 2003, the former head of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas, Adrian Phillips, announced that global conservation organizations had embraced "a new paradigm" for national parks which contrasted in almost every respect with that which prevailed in the 1960s and 1970s. According to Phillips, previously, national parks were "Planned and managed against people" and "Managed without regard to local opinions."⁴⁰⁶ By contrast, at the start of the twenty-first century parks were increasingly, "Managed to meet the needs of local people, who are increasingly seen as essential beneficiaries of protected area policy, economically and culturally." Moreover, parks were "Run with, for, and in some cases by

⁴⁰⁶ Adrian Phillips, "Turning Ideas on Their Head: The New Paradigm for Protected Areas," *The George Wright Forum* 20 (2003): 12.

local people—that is local people are no longer seen as passive recipients of protected areas policy but as active partners even initiators and leaders in some cases.”⁴⁰⁷

Looking at the development of national parks in Vietnam and Indonesia, Philips’s declaration that national parks were being managed under a new paradigm was premature. Despite the formulation of new management models for national parks, as this dissertation has demonstrated, at the start of the twenty-first century, the leading international conservation organizations continued to promote wilderness and exclusionary management principles for national parks in Southeast Asia. Despite the new rhetoric of “sustainable development,” “ecotourism,” and “collaborative management” popular among conservationists in the 1990s and after, the history of national parks in Indonesia and Vietnam revealed that international conservation programs continued to promote the culture/nature dichotomy in the management plans of national parks programs, and if anything the resurgence of “fortress conservation” and the exclusion of people from parks. The poorest people in and around national parks continued to suffer economically and socially when these national parks were created.

However, whether these international conservation paradigms have changed is less relevant than the fact that these international conservationists never had the capacity to force their conservation ideas or their conservation programs in Southeast Asia. One of the most interesting discoveries of this dissertation is that, at least as far as concerns the management of national parks, the characterization of the IUCN, WWF, The Nature Conservancy, and other international conservation organizations as neo-imperialist organizations that impose their conservation programs on Southeast Asian nations is

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 11.

inaccurate. The case studies in this dissertation have consistently revealed the limitations of international conservation organizations in implementing their exclusionary national parks programs in Southeast Asia. Southeast Asian governments participated in international conservation programs, but only insofar as it served these governments' interests. While organizations located in Europe and the US could influence policy, they were powerless to implement it. The most obvious case in point being Komodo, where all of the resources of several major conservation organizations and the World Bank could not impose its conservation program on West Manggarai, one of the poorest regions in Indonesia.

Western-based, international conservation organizations have even less power now that Southeast Asian nations have developed bureaucracies for nature conservation, schools for wildlife management, as well as university departments, journals, and domestic conservation NGOs. Local wildlife biologists and conservation professionals manage and guide national parks in Southeast Asia. International conservation organizations may have transplanted the national parks idea, but they no longer guide the agenda. Moreover, conservation organizations now compete with other Western and non-Western development organizations that are implementing projects in and around national parks. For example, in the Sapa region of northern Vietnam, it is not Western-based international conservation organizations that are influencing the management of the area, but rather Chinese development firms.

In the twenty-first century, Indonesia and Vietnam are increasingly decentralized, with the regional and local leaders gaining more control over natural resources, including national parks. When considering the management of national parks, the role of the

federal government and international NGOs need to also consider the dynamics of local politics. The international organizations were able to establish relations with the forest protection agencies of the central government, but this did not necessarily indicate power over the provincial leaders, who at the end of the century had increasingly gained control over the national parks. Moreover, decentralization in these nations has multiplied the fiefdoms of corruption, further complicating the implementation of a well-managed national parks program. Greater emphasis on local politics will reveal the new dynamics of control, and situate the discussion of national parks more within the nations themselves, moving the locus away from the Western conservation organizations.

International conservation organizations did endorse the removal of villagers from national parks in Vietnam and Indonesia. However, efforts to impose exclusionary management plans for national parks were not successful. The populations living within the parks and their borders increased, as did the exploitation of the resources of these areas. Indigenous people were able to organize resistance, both informally through the clandestine use of the parks' resources and through organized protests supported by the rising number of NGOs dedicated to indigenous rights. Even in instances where the government removed people from national parks, it merely accelerated the destruction of the environment. Far from relieving pressure from the national parks' resources, in every case that I have examined in which people were removed from the national parks they were replaced by poachers, illegal logging companies, and mining interests, or the depopulated areas became locations for roads, dams, and other infrastructure development projects. In regions of the world where poverty, population pressures, and

corruption were prevalent, a global system of uninhabited wildlife sanctuaries could be imagined but was impossible to implement.

I have examined colonial Malaya's national park as an example of success—the national park remains well protected, the region has enjoyed rising tourism, and the indigenous residents have been permitted to remain in the park. Furthermore, Taman Negara has managed to survive intact. Unlike in Indonesia, where national parks programs were implemented by a centralized, authoritarian government, colonial Malaya was decentralized with many actors competing over resources. Moreover, the supporters and detractors of the park were equally powerful and persuasive, forcing compromise. Compromise not only created a lasting park, the compromise was the creation of a park. Although the individual model developed for Malaysia's national park may not be applicable in other nations, the process of contestation and compromise proved to be an effective method for producing a sustainable national park model. Just as civil society must develop through contestation, so does the national park. Parks cannot be transplanted; they must be molded to their unique social and political contexts.

This dissertation has demonstrated that nature tourism to regions with extraordinary geological phenomenon such as canyons, mountains, and waterfalls is a popular activity for Indonesians, Malaysians, and Vietnamese of different ethnicities, classes, and genders. Many tourists in these nations may have had a preference for a higher degree of development, including golf courses, swimming pools, and karaoke. This situation of course, is similar to early national park tourism in North America, when bear feeding, the “fire falls,” swimming in the geysers, and resort lodges were among the major attractions of Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Banff. Increased research on domestic

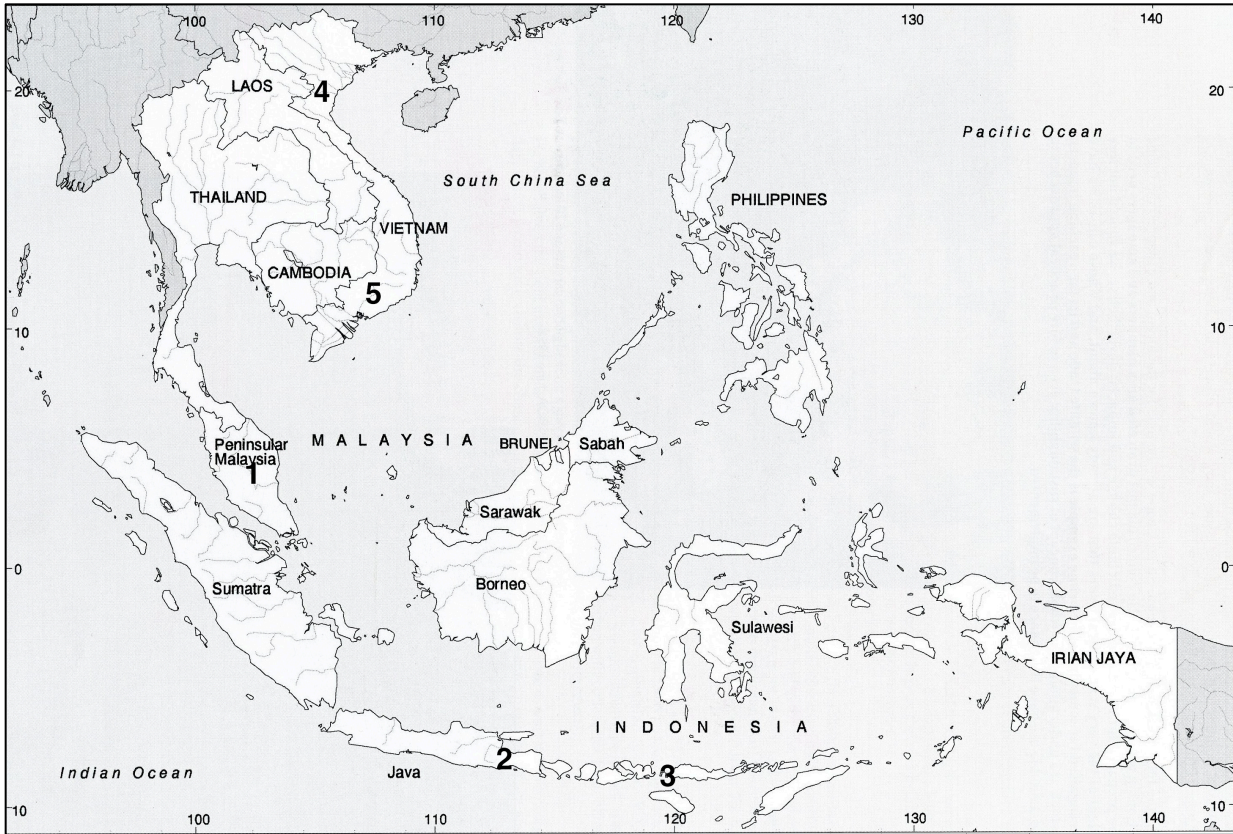
Vietnamese, Indonesian, and Malaysian concepts of nature tourism and their motivations for visiting nature areas would contribute to maximizing the potential for creating enduring national parks.

Tourism has provided practical advantages. Tourists bring transportation and infrastructure development—because of tourism to Komodo or Cuc Phuong, the residents around these parks now have accesses to roads, airports, hospitals, electricity, cell-phone towers, and many other amenities that were created to cater to the growing tourism market.

The conception of a “national park” as a fixed archetype to be applied globally has been deficient. A new conception of the “national park” as an adaptable model designed to address specific and unique cultural and social contexts is essential for the future success of national parks programs in Southeast Asia. National parks, like nations themselves, develop from local cultures and contexts. Parks may include resident populations, selected logging, and even industrial development, as is the case in England’s national parks. And like the Lake Districts, national parks must provide pleasure. As Frederick Law Olmstead emphasized in his celebrated report on Yosemite in 1865, the main purpose of the national park is to give every advantage practicable to the mass of the people to enjoy great scenery “which employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it, tranquilizes it, and yet enlivens it; and thus, through the influence of the mind over the body, gives the effect of refreshing rest and reinvigoration to the whole system.”⁴⁰⁸ It is their capacity to give the mass of people the opportunity to experience pleasure that will determine the future success of national parks in Southeast Asia.

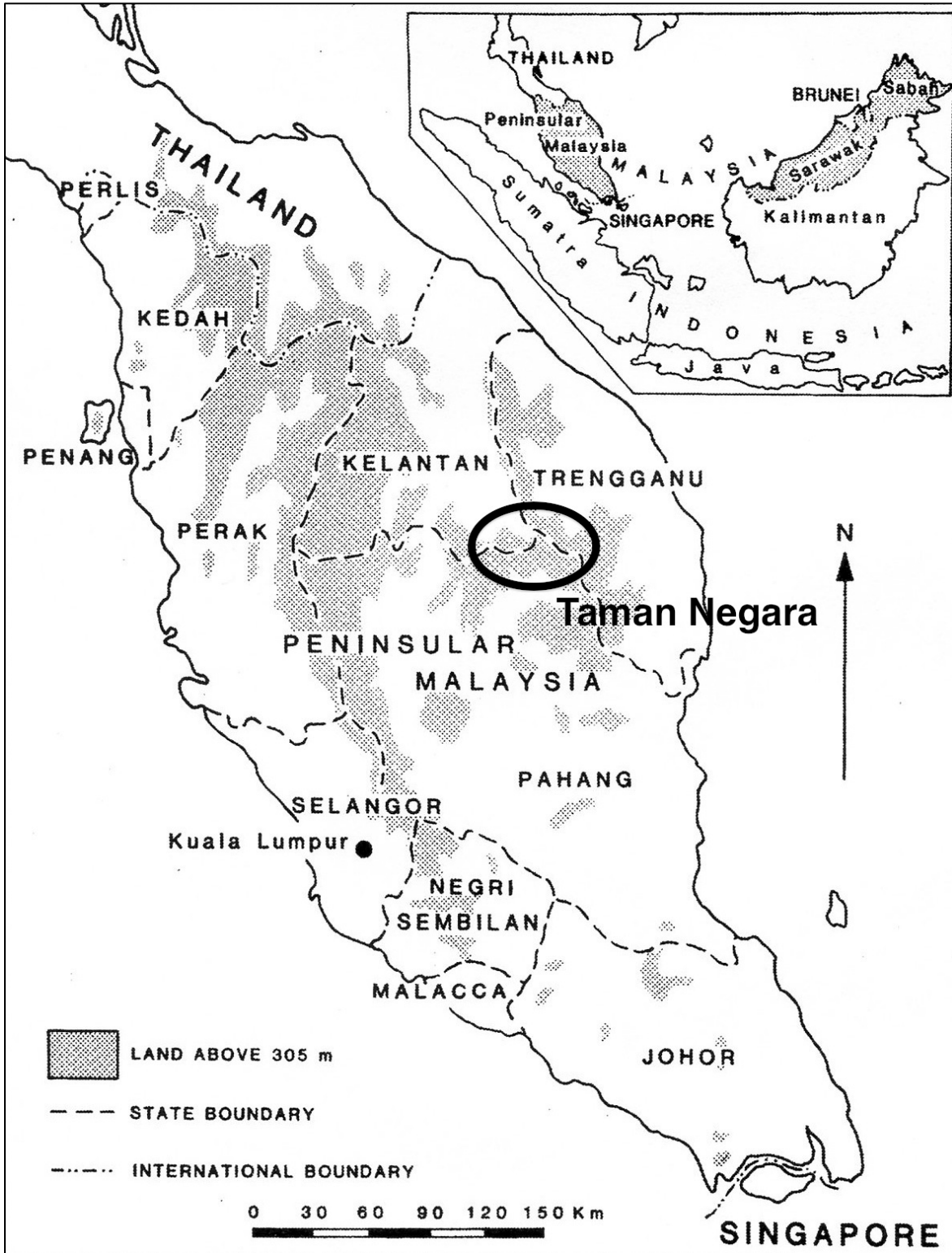
⁴⁰⁸ Frederick Law Olmstead “Preliminary Report upon the Yosemite and Big Tree Grove [August 1865],” in Victoria Post Ranney, ed., *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmstead, Volume V: The California Frontier*,

APPENDIX: MAPS

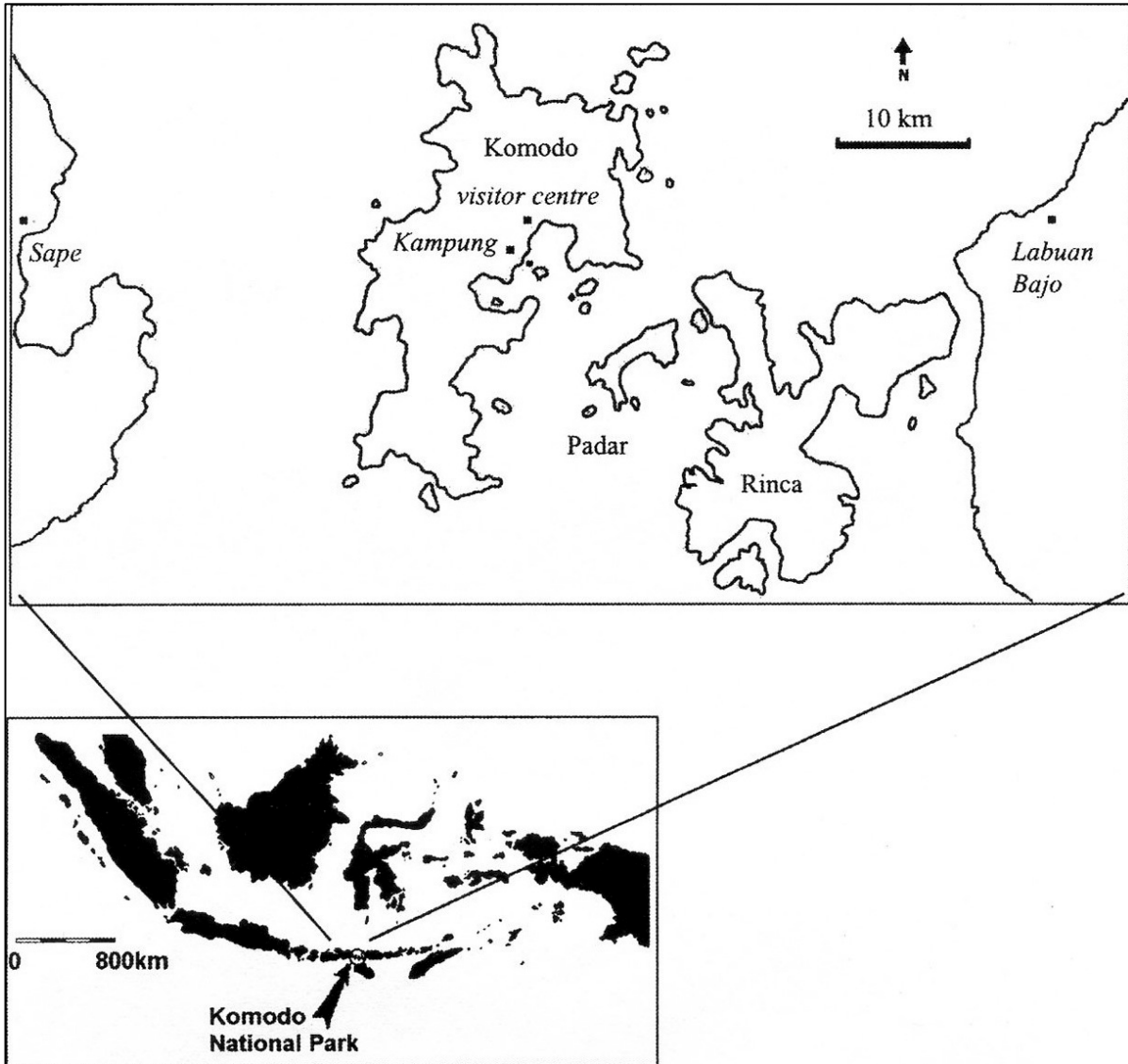


Map 1. Southeast Asian National Parks Examined in this Dissertation.

(1) Taman Negara (2) Mount Bromo-Tengger-Semeru (3) Komodo (4) Cuc Phuong (5) Cat Tien. Source: WCPA

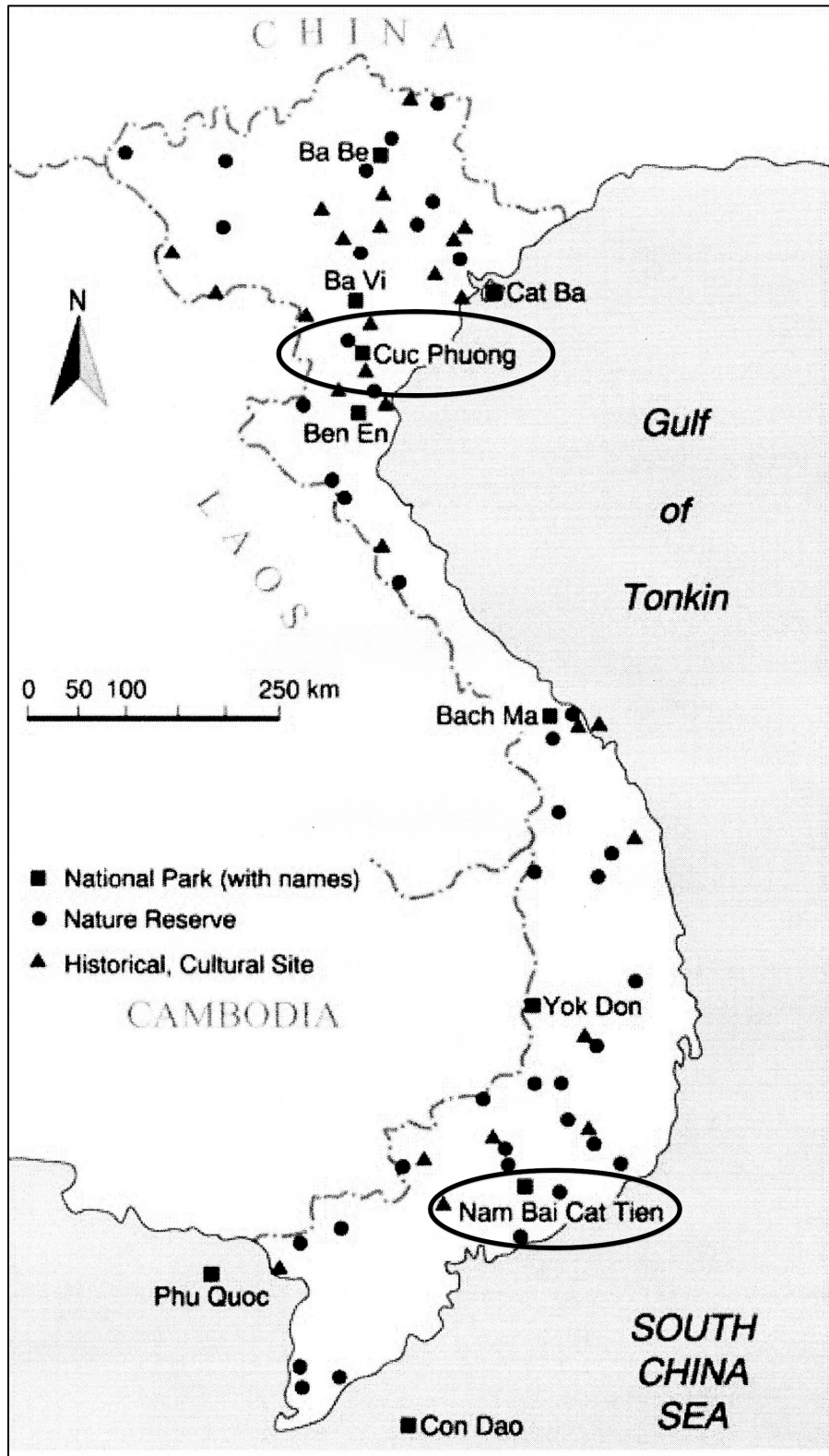


Map 2. Peninsular Malaya and Taman Negara (King George V) National Park.
 Source: Aiken and Leigh, "On the Declining Fauna of Peninsular Malaysia," 15.



Map 3. Komodo National Park.

Source: Walpole and Goodwin, "Local Economic Impacts of Dragon Tourism," 562.



Map 4. Cuc Phuong and Cat Tien National Parks.
 Source: Rugendyke and Nguyen, "Conservation Costs," 188.

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