This essay explores the environmental politics of resort development in Bali in the 1990s. It will focus especially on the political and economic context and cultural discourses in which environmental issues have become embedded. The controversy surrounding the luxury resort development at Tanah Lot provides a watershed case study for exploring the social and ideological ground of emergent environmentalism and for tracing alignments between formal institutions, activist groups and the general public. The case reveals the changing relationship of peripheral provinces to the centre as Jakarta comes to exercise more pervasive political and economic influence, and the importance of the regional press in articulating resistance to the appropriation of local resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS IN LATE NEW ORDER INDONESIA

Throughout Indonesia, environmental activism has been evolving alongside broadly based dissenting positions on the direction of development policy more generally. Aside from the international prominence of the issue, mounting evidence of the economic and social costs of environmental degradation, the changing class structure in Indonesia and the connection between environmental questions and other hotly contested political issues (land tenure, the rights of workers, farmers and indigenous minorities, the demand for democratisation and greater press freedom) all played a part in moving the environment to centre stage. In Indonesia, environmental issues have become highly politicised, not only because the environment became for a time a surrogate for the expression of dissent on broader issues, but also because they are ultimately connected with questions of cultural identity and social security. Official and contesting constructions of the nation-state and of the relationship between local, metropolitan and transnational interests within it have become part of the sub-text of environmental discourse.
The recognised difficulty of disarticulating the 'environment' from social and cultural contexts is particularly problematic in Indonesia. In fact, the Indonesian term for environment, lingkungan, has always had a primarily social connotation in the Indonesian language (Cribb 1990:11 - 27). This conceptual conflation has been compounded by the practical exigencies of contemporary Indonesian politics, where opposition movements of any kind face dual processes of cooptation and repression. Aditjondro (1994) argues that the prominence of environmentalism in Indonesia reflected a marriage of convenience between non-governmental organisations and student activists hoping to gain political space for the expression of dissent, and a regime seeking to use the environment bandwagon to secure international credibility and restore some legitimacy in the eyes of its critics. Environmental protection also offered the state, under pressure to liberalise and deregulate, an interventionist role and a rationale for bureaucratic expansion. The consequence has been an ambiguous response by government to environmentalism, at times using environmental rhetoric to recruit public support against business and at others to serve bureaucratic or well-connected investors' interests against the public (Cribb 1988).

The environment has been from the outset, then, a highly ambiguous site of political contestation in Indonesia. Neither the state, business, nor the non-governmental organisations or institutions claiming to represent 'the people' are homogeneous entities and the processes of alliance formation on environmental questions reflect this complexity. In exploring the coalescence of social forces around competing constructions of the environment, therefore, attention must be paid to the broader political tensions inevitably implicated in the content and framing of these issues.

**THE MEGA-PROJECTS OF THE TOURISM SECTOR AND LOCAL INTERESTS**

The period of the late 1980s and early 1990s has proved a watershed in the direction of development in Bali and in the relationship between central government and this previously peripheral province. Regional economic development, which had earlier been based on agricultural intensification, small-scale tourism and handicraft export, began to assume a very different character after 1987 when deregulation of the banking system fed an unprecedented investment boom. Official figures show a tenfold increase in both foreign and domestic investment in major projects on Bali between 1987 and 1988 from US$17 million to $170 million, almost doubling again in 1989-90 (Statistics Office, Bali 1991). As of 1991, approval had been granted for over 1.5 billion US dollars worth of new investments in star hotels for the already overbuilt Badung area alone (UNDP 1992, Appendix 3: 21). The heavy skewing of investment policy towards the development of tourism and the infrastructure to support it is indicated by the dominance of the Communication and Tourism sectors in the breakdown of investment approvals for the island. For the 422 foreign and domestic project approvals recorded by the Regional Investment Board (BKPMD) over the 25-year period to 1994, 88 per cent of the Rp 10 trillion\(^2\) worth of realised investments went into Communication and Tourism (BKPMD 1996). In the wake of this investment boom, popular reaction to the effects of the increasingly visible Jakarta conglomerates began to shake the sacred cow status of the tourist industry and government development policy itself. These reactions initially found their way into the public domain as part of an emerging discourse of environmentalism.

By 1990 a number of acute environmental problems connected with these developments were receiving intense coverage in the regional press. The unregulated mining of limestone and coral for hotel construction and extensions to the airport; the incursion of high-class hotels into the remotest parts of the island against the provisions of the 1971 Master Plan for tourism; the erosion of beaches; increasing levels of plastic, sewage and air pollution; salination of underground aquifers; the diversion of water from farms to hotels and golf courses; the conversion of productive land - often forcibly expropriated - to these tourist facilities; and the complicity of the army and government officials in facilitating projects in breach of regional planning regulations became subjects of front-page news, political cartoons and letters to the editor in the local Indonesian-language newspaper, the Bali Post. Already by the end of 1990, disquiet over uneven and uncontrolled development was sufficient to lead the Minister of Tourism to announce a one-year moratorium on major tourism projects until a UNDP-funded consultancy, commissioned by the Indonesian government to review the industry's development on the island, could provide the basis for future planning. It soon became apparent, however, that the expansion of the industry was a foregone conclusion. Even before the UNDP study had been completed, the moratorium on investment approvals was lifted. The study was carried out in a context in which control of tourism development was never on the agenda, given the power of vested interests in its expansion. The UNDP study itself notes, 'The planning scenario which had no new classified hotel rooms after 1995 has disappeared in the face of investment pressure' (UNDP 1992, Annex 9: 28).

Despite a continuous flow of rhetoric espousing earlier commitments to 'Cultural Tourism' and 'Tourism for Bali, not Bali for Tourism', development policy had become almost entirely geared towards gross maximisation of the number of tourists visiting the island and the income they might generate. From under 5,000 rooms available in star-classified hotels in 1987, Bali registered 13,000 operating and another 20,000 under construction or approved by 1992 (Statistical Office Bali 1991; UNDP 1992, Annex 3: 20-21). Planning authorities were projecting expansion to accommodate 5 million foreign and domestic visitors by 1998 (Tourism Statistics Bali 1993). The UNDP report in effect rationalised up-market investment outside the three enclaves specified in the original 1971 Master Plan, concluding that 'Quality Tourism' focused on high-spending visitors would 'foster economic growth, protect the environment and maximise cultural expression' (UNDP, vol. 1992:1). Little more than the concept made its way into the government planning agenda, where it has mainly been used to legitimate the rapid expansion of capital-intensive resort-oriented tourism projects.

Provincial and regional government authorities for their part demonstrated an insatiable appetite for tourism growth. Eager to increase their revenue base - not to mention the opportunities for graft - they played midwife to enormous quantities of outside capital seeking a literal and figurative 'home'.\(^3\) The three established tourist zones identified by the original Master Plan in 1971 to contain the impacts of mass tourism were expanded to 15 in 1988 and to 21 in 1993 by decree of the Governor, legally opening one quarter of the land mass and one in five Balinese villages to commercial exploitation for the tourist industry.\(^4\) Furthermore, agreements between the Ministries of Forestry, Agriculture and Tourism opened even the supposedly protected areas zoned for these purposes to 'agro' and 'eco' tourism development.\(^5\)
After decades of controls on visa entry and a gateway policy which had the effect of restricting the rate of growth of the tourism industry, national deregulation policies aimed at raising the proportion of foreign exchange coming from the non-oil sector turned tourism into one of Indonesia's cinderella industries (Booth 1990). According to government figures, almost half of the US$8.8 billion in foreign investment in Indonesia in 1990 was for hotel development, with tourism already the fourth largest foreign exchange earner after oil, gas, textiles and processed wood (Far Eastern Economic Review 22 April 1993).

Economic arguments, however, are insufficient to explain the scale of this investment boom or its concentration at the elite end of the market. Mass tourism, although continuing to expand significantly in this period, was not keeping pace with the amount of capital seeking a place to invest in the island. Hotel occupancy rates declined in the early 1990s, with price-cutting star-hotels threatening the mostly locally owned middle-range accommodation in an effort to fill their vacant rooms. The sudden attractiveness of the industry to domestic capital, especially at the luxury end of the market, also reflected changing national class structures within Indonesia and the desires and self-image of a new wealthy elite (see Robison and Goodman 1996). In search of new clients to fill the gap, luxury resort and residential markets joined the down-market version of leisure tourism pitched to the sun and surf set in shifting 'cultural tourism' further from its proclaimed status as Bali's unique model of development. The controversial new developments in the industry aim to lure well-to-do visitors by catering to leisure lifestyles - now for the select few on a full-time basis in residential apartments and condominiums they can purchase.

The modern lifestyle desires and capital accumulation interests of the Jakarta elite fused to produce a scramble for property in Bali in the 1990s. Luxury residences with resort facilities are intended to service the New Rich (Orang Kaya Baru) among the Indonesian elite, who seek to escape the traffic and pollution of Jakarta in this 'last paradise'. Compounding the effects of the new combination of real estate marketing and resort tourism were new investment regulation reforms which undermine prohibitions on foreign ownership of land, a once sacrosanct pillar of Indonesian nationalism.

Both the quantitative acceleration and the qualitative shift in the nature of tourism developments set in train complex and ominous conflicts over Bali's natural and cultural resources between local and 'foreign' capital and labour ('foreign' often now extended in local perception to include non-Balinese Indonesians).

The new direction in tourism industry development reflects what might be called a 'mega-complex' driving economic expansion and intensifying environmental impacts in the late New Order. This orientation is closely associated with the controversial high technology and large-scale investment strategy of Research and Technology Minister Habibie, who has gained increasing prominence in Indonesian policy-making over the last decade. But it also reflects the dominant cultural orientation of Indonesia's New Rich seeking status and economic power in an international arena, and projecting the extravagances often associated with nouveau riche lifestyles onto the nation's policy agenda.

Two projects came to epitomise the new direction in tourism development, bringing together previously diffuse concerns over the direction of environmental, cultural and social change in Bali - the Golden Garuda Monument and the luxury resort complex at Tanah Lot. The discourses surrounding these controversial examples of the mega-complex at the same time reveal growing tensions between centre and periphery across Indonesia, a polarisation that must be understood in both geographical and class senses. The mega-projects are large-scale, highly capitalised and in most cases owned by outside interests with close connections to Indonesia's ruling elite.

The plan to build an enormous golden statue as a tourist attraction on a 100 hectare site near the three original centres of mass tourism (Kuta, Sanur and Nusa Dua) is a particularly expressive manifestation of this megacomplex. Intended to rival the Statue of Liberty in New York as the largest of its kind in the world, the Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) monument will accommodate 20,000 visitors daily and cost an estimated 80 billion rupiah (US$40 million). Its design includes a museum, theatres, exhibition space, an amusement centre, souvenir shops, restaurants and other attractions and recreational facilities.

In the same way that the size and scale of monuments and public works have always been used to signify the power and authority of the state, hi-tech monumentalism is meant to display the sophistication and cosmopolitan status of contemporary Indonesia and its urban elite. Lifts and escalators in the GWK monument will take visitors to gaze at the landscape from the top of this 'mega-proyek', as it is appropriately described by its sponsors, while laser beams from the Garuda cast illuminated images over the surrounding waters by night. A 3-D theatre, offering animated versions of folk tales and special-effects experiences of Ieyak (witch-demons), has been planned to re-create the atmosphere of Bali 'in bygone days'.

The statements of project proponents, the Nuarta Studio of Bandung, are revealing indications of the value complex which dominates policy in contemporary Indonesia. 'This task truly forms a mega-proyek on a world scale' (Nyoman Nuarta Studio 1993: 1). References to grandiosity - mega, ekstra, bear, spectacular - pepper the proposal document, whose cover sketch contrasts the height of the Garuda statue with those of other great monuments of the world. In tandem with the prevailing hi-tech line in late New Order policy espoused by the influential Minister Habibie, Nuarta asserts that the GWK will demonstrate that Indonesians are no longer victims of a cultural and technological inferiority complex. 'We are capable of building any kind of statue; however big, we can do it' (Bali Post 16/6/93). 'The GWK project is offered to the Indonesian people to raise the status and prestige of our nation in the international forum' (Nyoman Nuarta Studio 1993: 5).

The instrumental appropriation of Indonesian nationalism to legitimate large private developments is typical of late New Order political style. The gilded monument was originally intended for completion on 17 August 1995 as a 'gift' to celebrate Indonesia's 50th anniversary of independence. '[I]t is appropriate that we build a new feeling of nationalism in keeping with the momentum of the rate of growth and development that we have reached' (Nyoman Nuarta Studio 1993: 3). In fact, the debate generated by the GWK proposal feeds into two very different versions of nationalist discourse, which in turn closely parallel competing conceptions of the environment. ‘Mega' discourses play on one strand of the old 'national meta-narrative' (Tickell 1994: 8), combining pride in technical achievement with appeals to national unity in the 'common' interest. Here the similarity with Aditjondro's case of large dam development in the national psyche deserves note. But this strand strikes only some of the chords associated with the Indonesian nationalist and revolutionary movements of the mid-twentieth century. Also central to the revolutionary ethos were...
conceptions of equality and participation in a common effort. The latter strand is associated with a different kind of development in the popular view, one that had more to do with social process than competitive acquisition or display and one deeply suspicious of unbridled capitalism.12

Popular criticism in Bali, which had been seething beneath the surface for several years, became focused initially on the debate over the Garuda monument and reached boiling point when another, still more sensitive project was announced. Construction had already begun on the Bali Nirwana Resort (BNR) before the general public became aware of the project in December 1993. Facing the ancient and beautiful temple of Tanah Lot, a religious shrine of great significance to Hindu Balinese, the BNR was the first of a new-style integrated resort development to be approved for the island. The project involved a 401-room five-star Meridien hotel, 450 residential units (the most expensive of these each with its own pool), an 18-hole international golf course and a range of other recreational facilities. Valued at US$200 million, the BNR project absorbed 120 hectares of rice-land in the fertile agricultural region of Tabanan, known as the rice storehouse (lumbung beras) of Bali. While luxury hotels had for several years been mushrooming outside the limited enclave originally established for them at Nusa Dua, the inclusion of permanent residential dwellings and full-scale resort facilities in the BNR development posed impacts of a new order.

Environmental and Social Impacts

Tourism is widely promoted as a culturally and environmentally soft development option, and Bali has often been held up as a successful example of the accommodation of this modern industry to local material needs and traditional cultural ends (McKeon 1978; Booth 1990: 71-2). The problem for the industry is that economic expansion tends to overtake planning (Francillon 1990; Parnwell 1993). With the rapid growth of tourism, new environmental problems were added to the accelerating impacts of old ones. Beach erosion as a consequence of coral extraction and widespread violation of the 100 metre set-back regulations for hotel construction, green strip incursions and the prevalence of plastic waste are among the more visible environmental impacts, both commented upon and contributed to by Bali’s nearly one million annual foreign visitors. All have been subjects of little-heeded and selectively enforced government regulation as well as a considerable amount of publicity in the budding environmental journalism fostered by the local press.

Most important from the point of view of Balinese livelihood and identity are the direct and indirect impacts of tourism development on land and water and on the cultural basis of Balinese community life, with which they are intimately connected. In all three respects, the new-style resort developments pose problems of a quantitatively and qualitatively different order. The diversion of productive land and water resources is among the most serious of the physical impacts wrought by expansion of the tourist economy in general and resort facilities in particular. Resort developments demand disproportionately more of these resources than smaller-scale facilities (UNDP 1992, Annex 3: 22, Annex 9: 21-30).13 At the staggering rate of more than 1,000 hectares a year, land is being diverted from agriculture for large-scale resort and residential developments along with infrastructure projects required to serve them. The effect of diversion of land and water in Bali will mean rice shortage and high prices in one of the world’s most fertile and productive traditional agricultural regions (Bali Post 5/9/94).

Golf courses are a notoriously land and water hungry aspect of this kind of development. At Tanah Lot, two-thirds of the land expropriated for the Bali Nirwana Resort project will be taken up by the golf course. In the first of a series of articles responding to the announcement of the BNR project, Professor Manuaba, head of the Department of Physiology at the state university in Bali and a respected commentator on environmental issues, levels a broadside at ‘The Golf Course - Maniac Consumer of Water and Purveyor of Environmental Disaster’ (Bali Post 4/12/93). Citing chemical inputs of 7-10 times those used in agriculture up to 400,000 litres of water per day required to maintain greens to support this ‘manufactured environment’, alongside the social effects of farmers becoming labourers on what was once their own land, he urges serious reconsideration of golf development in Indonesia through the stringent application of the impact assessment process.

Water shortages have already been reported for downstream agricultural areas in Bali; and the salinisation of aquifers as a result of over-exploitation of ground-water supplies in the Sanur, Kuta and Nusa Dua areas was noted in the UNDP study (UNDP 1992, Annex 9: 8-14). Five-star hotels require an average of 2,300 litres of water per room per day, compared with 400 litres in non-star accommodation and an average of 77 litres per person per day in Balinese households (UNDP 1992, Annex 3: 2-21, Annex 9: 22-23; Martopo and Suyono n.d.: 11). The UNDP projects that on current rates of use and existing policies for the expansion of tourist facilities, water supply for Bali would be in deficit within a decade, and demand would reach four times potential supply by the middle of the next century (UNDP 1992, vol. I: 207-13). It specifically flags conflicts of interest between farmers and the developments at Tanah Lot (still then officially at proposal stage) because of the impact of decreased water supplies for irrigation (UNDP 1992, vol.11: 14).

Land and water have cultural significance as well as practical importance in Bali. The earth is mediator of life and death and a basis of local citizenship in Balinese villages. Certain classes of village land in many parts of Bali are regarded as ancestral heritage which cannot be alienated under local customary (adat) law (Warren 1993). Water is the life-blood of the complex wet-rice agricultural system and the spectacular ‘engineered landscape’ of Bali. It is also at the centre of Bali-Hindu religion, sometimes referred to as ‘agama tirtha’ (the religion of holy water), cleansing and renewing the earth and its human dependants (Lansing 1991). Water sources and land near or associated with temples, graveyards or other ritually significant spaces must be protected from spiritual as well as physical pollution. Hence, while physical environmental impacts on land and water might be more or less localised, the effect of spiritual pollution at Tanah Lot, one of the ancient sea temples which protect the island, had Bali-wide dimensions.

From the point of view of local social and economic welfare, the rationality of resort developments has also to be questioned. Erawan’s economic research (1994, 1995) shows that local multiplier effects are significantly greater at the non-classified hotel end of the tourism market than for four- and five-star accommodation. The multiplier effects for the local economy from semi-permanent residents of condominiums and apartments who shop in supermarkets and have no reason to purchase souvenirs or patronise tourist performances are likely to be much lower still.
Luxury tourism developments were already in the early 1990s beginning to squeeze small local hotels and to displace land and labour in Bali. As of 1991, 76 per cent of four- and five-star hotels were owned by non-Balinese Indonesians either outright or as joint ventures with overseas partners, and they account for an undoubtedly underestimated 17 per cent of the workforce in the hotel industry (UNDP 1992, Annex 3, 27-33). Immigration from other parts of Indonesia, initially attracted by employment in the booming construction industry, has reached annual levels of 6-80,000 in the 1990s, and is beginning to generate serious ethnic and religious tensions (Editor /9/93: 73; Couteau 1994: 43). Local reaction to these developments reflects a growing unease over the consuming power of Jakarta-centred interests to appropriate the physical and cultural landscape of this previously economically peripheral region. Indeed, the term ‘Jakartan’ (Orang Jakarta) has become synonymous with the transformation Bali is currently experiencing -and ‘environmental protection’ (kelestarian lingkungan) a legitimating defence of local identity and interests.

**THE PRESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE**

 Debates about the environment featured prominently in the regional paper at a time when editors were still uncertain of the limits of the government-proclaimed ‘openness’ (keterbukaan) policy in the Indonesian media, when suggestions of political reform during the 1992 election had been aborted, and even as official rhetoric was turning away from previous claims of common cause, towards fixing an image of environment and human rights activists as the ‘new traitors’ threatening Indonesian national interests (Editor 1/9/93). In the period between 1990 and 1994, the local Indonesian-language newspaper, the *Bali Post*, came to play a critical role in promoting consciousness of environmental issues and defining the relationship between these and broader questions of politics and culture.

 The first sweeping public criticism of the environmental impacts of large-scale development projects occurred during a weekend seminar in 1990 on ‘Culturally and Environmentally Sensitive Development’ organised by Udayana University’s Technical Faculty at the Bali Beach Hotel. The presence of Emil Salim, then Minister for the Environment, precipitated the first muted volley between centre and periphery in a debate that to that point had largely revolved around the failure of regional government planning and law enforcement.

 Over the three days of the seminar, the initially academic presentations of planning problems became increasingly confrontational, and reporting shifted from a news item on the bottom of the front page to the headlines. The *Bali Post* reports that Salim appeared ‘stunned’ by the opinions expressed at the conference and stated that he intended to engage in a ‘dialogue’ with the Governor over contravention of regional planning regulations, urging the public to ‘report to the Centre if projects do not comply with the law’. But an academic participant reminded him that major developments were in fact approved and facilitated by central government.

 It was apparent in the staging and coverage of the seminar that environmental issues had become a vehicle for the expression of disaffection on broader social and political questions. Corruption, press freedom, the power of global capital to override local interests, and increasing social inequalities were raised by participants in only mildly modulated tones, and remained a feature of press coverage of environmental issues thereafter. The significance of the press increased during the early 1990s and played a pivotal role in mobilising response to the Garuda Wisnu Kencana monument and Bali Nirwana Resort projects. In both cases, public controversies erupted following front-page announcements of the developments in the *Bali Post*, soon followed by colour photographs, editorials, by-line articles, cartoons and letters to the editor.

 Several innovations in media presentation of these issues were deployed to arouse and engage the public. The ‘seminar’, unlike what may seem, developed into a vehicle for focusing attention on controversial local issues, with a popular style of reportage that took a long-standing relationship between bureaucracy, academia and the local media in new directions. Seminars are frequently organised by the *Bali Post* itself, usually in a contentious atmosphere in which invited academics, government officials and prominent (sometimes notoriously outspoken) public figures felt prompted to make informative, even provocative, statements. Another novel feature which functioned to mobilise public opinion and maintain momentum was the special comment column, ‘Your Turn’ (*Giliran Anda*). The column, inviting public response on topical themes of serious import, typically ran for a month and gave as many as a hundred contributors space to express their opinions.

 Not only did the regional newspaper play a key role in bringing these tourism projects under public scrutiny, but it self-consciously set out the terms of discourse. Excerpts from the introductory invitations to contribute to the ‘*Giliran Anda*’ column on both subjects are indicative:

 ‘*Giliran Anda:* “Landmark” Bali GWK’ (26 June-28 July 1993)

 The plan to build a Golden Garuda Wisnu monument has brought responses from a number of supporters, including the Governor of Bali... Many explanations, comments and questions on the origins of the concept, its financing, location, form, and benefits in the context of the Hindu religion have been raised in the *Bali Post*. Now, it is your turn, readers, who have not yet had the opportunity to give comment, criticism, advice or praise concerning this idea to build the GWK monument. Please send the editors no more than one double-spaced page with photo by July 10th. (*Bali Post* 26/6/93)

 ‘*Giliran Anda: Kawasan Tanah Lot*’ (9 December 1993-5 January 1994)

 As our readers know, Pura Tanah Lot is a unique, great and holy temple. Its sacredness is protected by a sanctified area known as the Hutama Mandala. Now with the arrival of development the sacred site of Tanah Lot will also function (let us hope this does not mean to ‘shift’ function) and become a tourist area, with the construction of very large hotel facilities including apartments and a golf course that is now starting. At this juncture, we offer the opportunity for you to comment on two questions:

The Cultural and Environmental Politics of Resort Development in Bali

first, how should the Tanah Lot area be developed if the intent is for it to become a comprehensive Tourist Zone? Second, is apartment development for private use and purpose, which is likely to have very limited impact on work opportunities and income creation for the Balinese public, the kind of development appropriate to the island of Bali Whose environment has a limited carrying capacity? (Bali Post 9/12/93).

From the outset, the connection between environmental and cultural integrity framed these debates. This is the link that captured the public imagination and that has contributed to a significant shift in attitude among Balinese towards the large-scale tourism development that was entering a new phase in the 1990s. The linkage of other discourses of a socio-economic nature should not be overlooked either. Local impacts of conglomerate capital and aspects of private consumer culture, regularly criticised in the editorial columns, cartoons and feature articles of the paper, are directly addressed in the invitations to readers to take their turn. The emerging discourse of environmentalism sets centre against periphery, big capital against the little person, and growth-driven development against cultural and environmental balance and preservation. This discourse, while certainly a rhetorical construction that over-simplifies the situation (and partly because it does), has strong resonance across the spectrum of Balinese society. And indeed general awareness of environmental problems has become widespread and sophisticated among the Balinese public. It is indicative of growing awareness of the importance of environmental issues that the term 'lingkungan' appears in so many of the numerous commentaries on the subject of the GWK monument published in the Bali Post over several months in 1993.

Objections were raised to further concentration of tourism in the Badung region of South Bali and consequent socio-economic distortions and environmental strains. The increase in traffic would burden an already overloaded road system and add to rising levels of air pollution. The waste problem had become 'an epidemic'. The huge new tourist facility, like the high-class hotels in the Nusa Dua area, would place further demands on water reserves in other parts of the island already showing signs of crisis. The displacement of farmers as a result of land expropriation was another issue that prompted disaffection with a pattern of capital-intensive development on a grand scale that has caused social unrest throughout Indonesia. The extravagant costs of the project, amounting to two thirds of the annual budget of the province, could be better put towards reducing poverty and dealing with Bali's waste, pollution, land degradation and water problems.19

The perceived integrity of culture and the environment is at the same time a striking feature of comment on the project. Reaction centred on the map appropriateness of the monument in both respects, arguing in particular that it was not in keeping with basic Hindu philosophy, requiring the maintenance of balance between divine, human and natural orders: 'The arrival of the grand (megah) and super-expensive GWK monument will only bring into being a heap of meaningless concrete, whose significance cannot be compared with the small monuments ... for the guardian spirits in every household in Bali. So what is its meaning for Bali .. except as an indictment of devastation and environmental rape?' (letter to editor, Bali Post 16/6/93). 'We have no reason to be shy about the efforts of our ancestors who have bequeathed us their brilliant work... Our enthusiasm for development is not shackled by our resistance to arrogant attitudes and thinking. As heirs to the ancestors' legacy our primary duty is to protect and preserve' ('Your Turn' column, Bali Post 6/7/93).20 Not least cause of offence was the name of the monument, which appropriated the Hindu Deity, Wisnu, the protector of life and source of well-being, to a purpose that threatened both environmental and cultural integrity.21

But resistance to the Garuda monument proposal never developed beyond the stage of public debate. First of all, since the 1965 massacre of those accused of Communist party affiliations, Bali appeared in most matters beyond local affairs thoroughly depoliticised. Secondly, there were some differences of opinion among Balinese, reflected in press coverage, on the relative evaluation of costs against benefits of the monument project.22 Finally, ambiguous signals from proponents suggested that the monument might remain in limbo - as had other previous controversial proposals. Statements such as Nuarta's that it was 'only an idea that might eventuate or not' depending on 'the acceptance of the people and government of Bali' (11/7/93) and the Governor's insistence that he would support the project only 'if it is the will of the Balinese people' (15/7/93) defined some of the urgency in the public debate.

In hindsight, ambiguity and disengagement appear part of a systematic official tactic for minimising reaction to sensitive projects. The orchestration of public information on potentially controversial developments of this sort appears to follow a pattern: little or no information of substance is released during the planning stages; once the project is sufficiently advanced, a media event unveiling it is organised in Jakarta, involving a select group of coopted officials and private sector notables including several Jakarta-based Balinese. In the GWK case, Nyoman Nuarta, a Balinese artist residing since his youth in Bandung, Ida Bagus Sujana, the Minister of Energy, and the Governor of Bali served the purpose. Having connected the project to prominent figures with whom the public supposedly identified, the proponents issued a few press releases and interviews (typically again from Jakarta) and then absented themselves from the media stage.

Without further official comment, reaction to the GWK monument proposal abated towards the latter part of 1993. Many of the active participants in the debate suspected the project would proceed if capital could be raised, with or without the unambiguous consent from the 'people' by and for whom it was supposed to be built (see Nyoman Nuarta Studio 1993: 5). The Bali Post editorial summarising public reaction to the monument proposal appeals to Nuarta not 'to sacrifice the feelings of the Balinese people' in making this 'donation' 'He himself ought to be aware the people of Bali have been forced to sit quiet and say nothing for so long . . . about several tourist projects that suddenly appeared in Bali' (15/7/93). No organised resistance accompanied the intense media discussion the GWK monument proposal had precipitated in the press. But growing environmental consciousness and cultural sensitivity did contribute to active resistance several months later, when the next of the mega-projects set about 'developing' Tanah Lot, a religious site and symbol of island-wide significance.

TANAH LOT: CULTURAL SYMBOLS AND SOCIAL ACTION

Opposition to the BNR development went further than it had in the case of the Garuda Monument, partly because activists were
able to build on the experience gained in the earlier case. But Tanah Lot also presented opponents with symbolic capital of a higher order. The Temple, perched on a tiny rock outcrop off the coast, epitomises the integrity between culture and environment of Balinese aesthetic and religious sensibilities. The terms tanah and lot mean land and sea, and indicate the temple's physical character as well as its importance in the complex of mountain and sea temples which protect the spiritual balance and natural fertility of the island. It is also undoubtedly the most photographed of the island's temples - the silhouette of Tanah Lot at sunset, an immediately recognisable representation of Bali and its culture in the iconography of the international travel industry.

The cultural link is a crucial dimension of emerging environmentalism in Bali and the metaphorical associations which connect the two are essential to understanding the unfolding of environmental politics there. A common fate for culture and environment is explicit in the rhetorical allusions of the opponents of the mega-projects, and a deeply felt unease with the political economy and cultural politics of late New Order Indonesia is the barely veiled subtext of local response. The threat of environmental and cultural 'erosion' is expressed in many of the feature articles, editorials and letters to the editor published in the Bali Post. As one writer expressed it:

At the moment Bali is still 'walking in place', accepting everything that comes from outside as if it were of benefit. In this condition, Bali could erode in both a literal and a figurative sense. All the more, when Balinese have repeatedly witnessed, and with 'forced consent' (paksa rela) had to accept, so much deception (Bali Post 12/7/93).

The strong cultural-religious symbolism evoked by these projects was critical in galvanising island-wide opposition. Religious symbols seem to have been able to represent Balinese collective interest in a less ambiguous or fragmented way than the apparently more complex and localised environmental aspects alone. In the case of the Garuda monument the latter lent themselves to ambivalent interpretation around which political action proved more difficult to mount.

Proponents of both mega-projects in fact proved adept at wielding environmental images and arguments in their own interests. As part of their 'idealistic mission' (Bali Post 16/6/93), the group supporting construction of the Garuda Monument claimed the project would rehabilitate the barren and eroded land of the Bukit site. With the land made productive by conversion to an alternative use, local people who had only been able to scrape a meagre existence from dry farming would now be able to find employment in the more lucrative tourist sector (Nyoman Nuarta Studio 1993:1; Bali Post 17/7/93). Espousing a technocratic version of environmentalism (Pepper 1986), proponents display a keen faith in the scientific and technical expertise which these mega-projects can afford to deploy. They point to the large budget and range of professional consultants employed in field studies. In a token gesture to environmental considerations, the Minister of Mining and Energy promised to contribute recycled copper from waste cabling to cast the statue (Bali Post 16/6/93).

Similarly the literature on the Tanah Lot project promotes it as 'Preserving Bali's Natural Beauty ...'. The master planners of Bali Nirwana Resort have exercised great care in preserving the natural contours of the land and the varied richness of local vegetation. The entire complex blends harmoniously into the landscape' (BNR brochure 1993). Existing rice terraces were to be incorporated into part of the fairway (although these had already been levelled by bulldozers by the time the project was temporarily halted in February). Responding to concerned letters to the editor about the future demands of the project on local water supply, the landscape manager points to plans for establishing a three-stage waste water treatment and recycling facility, 'the first of its kind in Indonesia', for garden and golf course maintenance (Bali Post 3/12/93).

Such claims of employment potential and environmental enhancement complicate public perceptions of major development projects everywhere, the more so where the 'development concept is invested with the mantra-like status (Van Langenbergh 1986) it has in Indonesian national ideology. It was only when environmental exploitation became tied to the appropriation of important cultural symbols in the Balinese case that an unequivocally shared public stance could be achieved. In the repressive political climate which still prevails in Indonesia, that culturally based solidarity was essential to mounting an activist campaign. The fusion of cultural and environmental metaphors proved explosive. The arrival of the bulldozers was met by an outcry - was this important temple now 'to be eaten by the times' and were 'Balinese to become foreigners in their own land?' asked one of the contributors to the 'Your Turn' column (Bali Post 28/12/93). A Balinese living in Sulawesi wrote to the paper:

I keep asking why the conglomerates find it so easy to get permits to scoop up the area around Tanah Lot which is so sacred to us '. To the power-holders in Bali, don't be taken in by the dollar or rupiah that has made you so easily give permits to the conglomerates to take over our religious sites. From one angle the government is asking the people of Bali to transmigrate with the excuse of reducing the population, while from another you open the door as wide as possible for the conglomerates. Haven't you ever measured how small this island of Bali that we cherish really is? (Bali Post 21/12/93)

Anxiety that local people were losing control over both environmental and cultural resources comes through very strongly in Bali Post reporting as well as in readers' comments in letters to the editor and in the 'Your Turn' column. Representations of the underlying cultural politics and opposed economic interests between centre and periphery in the regional newspaper were becoming increasingly polarised by the 1990s. Public opinion fuelled as much as it was incited by press coverage. Powerful front-page colour images of earth-moving equipment moving across the flattened landscape, maps indicating the layout of the Bali Nirwana Resort complex and the adjacent location of nine others to follow suit in the Tanah Lot tourism zone, and the BNR's own sketch of golfers playing at hole 12 in view of Tanah Lot Temple reinforced the conflated sense of physical dispossesssion and cultural displacement.

It was, in fact, an act of desecration which finally brought former landholders into open opposition. A few days after approval was granted to resume construction in September 1994, a shrine on rice-land already appropriated for the project was bulldozed despite guarantees of protection by the project managers.23 The farmers' relative silence throughout the public protests of 1993-4 had been a weak link in the opposition movement and allowed the BNR to claim that local people had been consulted and that the majority had sold out willingly for reasonable compensation and job assurances. Several days after the incident, 96 former landholders presented a petition to the head of the regional parliament asserting that they had been deceived and forced into
selling their land. They demanded cancellation of the project so that the land could 'be managed with care and ceremonial treatment as before ... and so that we and our families are not faulted for the wrong and improper use of these ancestral lands' (petition 20110/95).24 They asserted they had been led to believe the land was being resumed for development 'in the national interest', only to find it appropriated to a private project. Their irrigation water had been cut off, and those who resisted selling had their lives threatened and their land impounded by the court.

The power of religious symbols in the debate was such that questions of environmental protection were ultimately subordinated to those of cultural preservation, so intimately bound up with social and economic tensions between centre and periphery. It is notable that most of the groups allied in the struggle bore religious or cultural names. These included the Society for Balinese Studies, the Forum of Concerned Hindu Dharma Community of Indonesia, Forum of Hindu Students, Balinese Youth and Student Alliance, Young Artists Group, and other Hindu, Muslim and Christian student groups from outside Bali. Environment groups remained actively involved but were less visible as environmental discourses became subsumed by those of cultural and religious idioms, and the metaphor of erosion was overtaken by images of invasion.

In the case of the Bali Nirwana Resort, not only were religious and cultural symbols appropriated to outside interests, but the development was physically located at one of the most important sacred sites on Bali. Condensing so much of significance to Balinese, the site and symbol of Tanah Lot mobilised a more powerful and unambiguous reaction to the BNR development. Public outcry culminated in the first major political demonstrations on the island, and swelling opposition brought about an unprecedented eight-month suspension of construction on the project.

**SOCIAL FORCES AND FORMAL INSTITUTIONS**

A key question raised in this chapter is how formal institutions (in this case, the press, religious and state authorities) interact with social movements and interest groups (student organisations, environmental and cultural associations) and broader political processes in influencing the outcome of concrete cases in the political economy of Indonesia's environment. Despite highly organised social structures at local level,25 Bali has to date developed surprisingly little in the way of organised social movements around the environment or any other contemporary social issue. The generally apolitical orientation of Balinese society in the recent period has to be understood in the context of the traumatic effects of the 1965-6 massacres which brought the New Order government to power. That period, in which tens of thousands of Balinese associated with the then legal Communist Party lost their lives, has been a powerful reminder of the dangers of political factionalism.

It was apparent from the ambiguous stalemate in the debate over the Golden Garuda Monument that the expression of adverse public opinion in the local newspaper alone had been unable to provoke a definitive rejection of major projects so closely tied to the interests of state and capital. With the earlier experience of the limits of press power, but with heightened public awareness of the issues at stake created by media coverage, the stage was set for a new phase of resistance. When news of the Tanah Lot project broke, a hastily constituted coalition of students and intellectuals formed to attempt to stop the project. The only organisational base they had was an entirely apolitical association of scholars, the Society for Balinese Studies, and an ad hoc network of student groups and small NGOs, organised around a few unfurnished rooms and postbox addresses.

In a preliminary attempt to trace the possibilities and limits of roles played by key agents (the media, business, parliament, bureaucracy, army, students, religious and cultural organisations) in the unfolding environmental politics of Bali, a brief chronology of events surrounding the Tanah Lot case will serve to introduce the formal institutions and informal social groups engaged in the controversy:

- 31 December 1991. The Indonesian Investment Coordination Board issued approval for investment in the PT Bali Nirwana Resort (BNR) to include a 250-room hotel, 266 cottages, an 18-hole golf course as well as ‘cultural villages’.
- November-December 1993. A small, unpresupposing article in the Bali Post announced land clearance for the Bakrie conglomerate's Bali Nirwana Resort project at Tanah Lot (17/11/93). Bulldozers had already begun to level the land before all landholders had agreed to sell, and before the required building permit was issued or the environmental impact assessment (AMDAL) process completed. A series of critical feature articles by a prominent Balinese academic and commentator on environmental issues appeared over the next several weeks: ‘Bali Hit by Disturbing News’ (23/11/93); 'The Golf Course - Maniac Consumer of Water and Purveyor of Environmental Disaster' (4/12/93); ‘Cultural Tourism Requires Desire, Ability and Courage’ (6/1/94). These articles in turn precipitated emotional letters to the editor objecting to the development (29/11/93); asking readers to reconsider whether ‘any further expansion of tourism, not dismissing its economic benefits to date, was worth the ruin of Bali's environment’ (4/12/93); and urging the preservation of the island's natural beauty and 'most importantly the sacredness of its temples' (20/12/93).
- December 1993-January 1994. The Your Turn column published comments from the general public on the Tanah Lot project (Bali Post 9/12/93-5/1/94). These were almost unanimously opposed to the development, unlike comment on the GWK monument, where a substantial minority among the contributors had expressed qualified support. During this period, a series of headline articles implied that the Governor had been bribed to approve the project, questioned environmental impact assessment procedures, and challenged the Hindu Organisation (Parisada Hindu Dharma) and the Regional Parliament to take a stand. These were accompanied by large colour illustrations graphically depicting physical and cultural impacts:
- January-February 1994. Student groups, allied with a number of scholars and respected cultural commentators, organised a campaign of protest demonstrations and marches, as well as poetry readings, traditional shadow puppet performances and prayer-sessions. They sent a delegation to the national parliament, met with opposition party leaders and the head of the national Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI), and networked behind the scenes to link sympathetic individuals and groups. Demonstrations grew steadily...
larger, reaching an estimated 5,000 people at the 21 January rally.

- 21 January 1994. Following mass demonstrations, the Regional Parliament (DPRD) called a temporary suspension of construction on the BNR until the religious, cultural and social issues surrounding the project could be sorted out.
- 25 January 1994. Parisada Hindu Dharma, the national Hindu organisation, issued a 'Bhisama' (religious pronouncement) on the sacred space of temples. Although weakly framed, its explicit provision of a two-kilometre radius within which developments potentially polluting a sacred site should not take place provided an authoritative statement around which public support could be rallied. This was seen as a decisive event in bringing the government-sponsored religious organisation directly into the debate on the protestors' side and delineating a specific issue as the focus of opposition.
- 12 February 1994. Following an abrupt change of military command (9/2/94), the army cracked down on a student demonstration at Jagatnatha Temple near the Governor's residence in the capital. Several students were hospitalised, ending this form of active resistance.
- 21 June 1994. Three national weeklies - *Tempo*, *Editor* and *Detik* - had their licences to publish removed for political criticism of Minister of Technology Habibie, indicating how vulnerable the media still was to the arbitrary exercise of central government power.
- 9 August 1994. It was announced that the Garuda Wisnu Kencana monument proposal had been approved.
- 12 September 1994. The long-awaited review of the BNR environmental impact assessment by the provincial AMDAL Commission was presented, recommending formalisation of job guarantees to former landholders, restrictions on water use, design revisions reducing and shifting dwellings, and planting a green belt to screen the development from view of the temple to uphold the 'essence' of the Bhisama; the Governor immediately approved resumption of construction on the BNR project.
- 20 October 1994. Farmers whose lands had been expropriated for the Tanah Lot project came forward to declare their opposition and call for cancellation of BNR and the return of their land. The general unpopularity of the project throughout the rest of Bali and their direct experiences dealing with the project proponents turned early ambivalence among landholders to outright opposition by the end of 1994. Ninety-six landholders signed a petition declaring that they had been deceived into giving up their land and threatened by the regional government head (a military officer).
- 25 February 1995. Twenty-four landholders and members of the local irrigation association (*subak*) built a fence across a *subak* road being used by BNR construction vehicles. The fence was removed by authorities and one *subak* member sued in court. The court found the villager not guilty (17 July 1995).
- 29 December 1995. Three Balinese farmers lost their legal suit against the owners of the Bali Nirwana Resort in the Tabanan court, and were ordered by the judge to pay Rp 75 million (US$35,000) to cover legal costs as well as damages 'to restore the company's good reputation' *Bali Post*, 30 December 1995.
- 1996. Construction of equally controversial projects of the same type as the BNR near the ancient temples of Sakenan and Ulu Watu is also scheduled, again without public consultation. Suharto family members are closely associated with these developments.

The interaction between "institutional forces and more informal social groupings is one of the interesting facets of the development of activist resistance in the Tanah Lot case, and is an issue of considerable importance to the environment movement generally. Unquestionably the synergism between the press and the student groups spearheading the campaign to stop the Tanah Lot project was catalytic. Without sustained pressure from students and the press, construction of the resort would doubtless have rolled on without impediment. Protesters depended upon the press for information dissemination and for the vital expressions of public opinion which legitimated their actions. At the same time, the *Bali Post* could not have maintained focus on the issue without a series of attention-drawing events which gave a sense of direction, momentum and possibility to opposition demands.

The atmosphere of broadly based common cause was probably the most important effect of the tacit alliance built slowly between press and activists between December 1993 and February 1994. Strongly worded headlines levelled at the Provincial Parliament and Hindu Organisation put each of these formal institutions under intense public scrutiny, forcing them to adopt public positions they would certainly have preferred to avoid. Even the editors of the *Bali Post*, adventurous as they had become over the previous few years on environmental issues, were reluctant to go beyond brief informational accounts without clear indications of mass support for their stand (interview 1994). More than a month had elapsed between the initial announcement of the project and the concerted media attention the *Bali Post* devoted to the issue from December until the forceful stop the army put to public demonstrations in mid-February. In this respect the 'Your Turn' column had the double effect of testing public opinion and building conditions for local action.

The style of press publicity for the activist campaign contrasted sharply with the standard presentation of bland official pronouncements and placed the Regional Parliament (DPRD) and the Hindu religious organisation of Indonesia, historically constrained by official sponsorship, in a position where they were obliged to respond. Unlike the press, these other established institutions were drawn more or less unwillingly into the fray. Only after the January demonstrations and relentless media attention did they finally act.

When the Provincial Parliament suspended the BNR project, it passed the burden of responsibility on to the Environmental Impact Assessment (AMDAL) Commission, which was explicitly given the directive to take account of unaddressed cultural and social issues in its review of the Bakrie project's EIA report. In what many hoped would prove the critical turning point, the Parisada Hindu Dharma issued its Bhisama religious pronouncement interpreting traditional religious texts on the sacred space at temple sites. Hedged with formulaic acquiescence to 'development' and 'progress' in the spirit of the national ideology, Pancasila, the Bhisama effectively prohibits any development that might pollute the 'zone of sanctity', a two-kilometre radius around Tanah Lot Temple. From that point the controversy came to revolve almost entirely around this question, since the Bhisama interpretation of Hindu principles, upon which religious figures were adamant, would preclude use of any of the land bought by the Bakrie group for
Institutional action was critical to the prosecution of resistance. The suspension provided legitimacy and space for contestation and the Bhisma a focal point for opposition that was apparently simple and politically incontrovertible. Religious tolerance had been a central principle of national ideology (Pancasila) and one of the most sensitive underpinnings of the Indonesian state - so sensitive, the President himself felt obliged to issue a statement indicating that the decree should be the basis for resolution of the conflict. Although heavily compromised by their positions in the Indonesian political system, the Provincial Parliament, the national Hindu organisation and the Environmental Impact Commission had been forced by public pressure and by their own charters to produce statements which at least offered a handle upon which further resistance could be mounted. Still, public institutions are only as powerful as the civil society which supports them and in Indonesia are still subordinate to political processes of patronage. Agents of formal institutions, precisely because of their relative stability and security, tend to be disproportionately both more influential and more sensitive to subtle pressures and self-censorship than independents.

As it turned out, other institutions closer to the centres of power in Indonesia proved compliant agents of the interests of corporate capital and its rent-seeking political counterparts. Two interventions altered the possibilities for continued expression of those critical voices of emerging civil society that had ground the project to a halt. The first was replacement of the military commander who had permitted demonstrations to continue unimpeded to that point and who was regarded as too sympathetic to the dissidents' position (Suasta and Pujastana 1994). Soon after taking up his post, the new commander forcibly ended the series of demonstrations which had been growing steadily larger and attracting mass support. The second event was the revocation of the publishing licences of three national weeklies - Tempo, Editor and Detik - for fuelling controversy surrounding Minister Habibie's defence purchases. Already muted by informal pressures since February, critical coverage of local affairs in the Bali Post virtually ceased after the national bannings.

The press release announcing resumption of the Tanah Lot project some months later makes it appear that a compromise had been struck and significant concessions made. According to it, the Environmental Impact Assessment Commission requires that the 'essence' of the Bhisma ruling be observed, and that the project be redesigned, eliminating condominiums, relocating buildings away from the temple, and planting a green strip to screen the project from view. But gaps in the newspaper coverage and the dead silence which followed the announcement invited reverse readings. The statement that the 'essence of the Bhisma ruling would be respected suggested that its literal proscription would not (Bali Post 12/9/94). Unreported documents, in fact, reveal that the central government's Department of Development Coordination had been involved in a manipulative revision of the interpretation of the Bhisma to alter the two kilometre ruling. It claims to 'adapt' the Bhisma by a perverse use of the adat concept of 'Desa, Kala, Patra' ('according to place, time and circumstance'), which is in fact supposed to legitimate local autonomy and variation in customary law. Critics also questioned whether the claimed elimination of 'condominiums' from the project was simply a play on words, since advance sale of residential accommodation was subsidising construction costs. Throughout the suspension, full-page advertisements for investment in BNR luxury villas continued to appear in the national press and airline magazines. As it turned out, the final 'compromise' only succeeded in bringing the number of hotel and residential units back to the total originally determined by its 1991 National Investment Board permit (see ANDAL BNR 1993, to which this document is appended).

The central importance of the media in the prosecution of the case became especially evident after military intervention in the demonstrations and the banning of three national publications. The Bali Post article covering the September announcement is in the bland and uncritical old style of reporting on government activities, classically accompanied by a picture of the governor shaking hands with the BNR's Chief Manager (13/9/94). There were no editorials or follow-up commentaries this time on the irregularities or obscurities in the official announcement (for example, the fact that the impact assessment document was not available to the public for scrutiny, and that some members of the Commission reviewing the EIA had conflicts of interest), nor did any of the flood of letters to the editor received by the paper appear in subsequent editions. Only some time later did the paper again begin to cover the subject, in a circumspect and deflective way.

The whole process of organising resistance became extremely difficult without the source of information and stimulus to mobilise presented by the media. The alternative press blossomed in this period, with more than a dozen new publications, mainly by student groups, reporting subsequent events. But these, of course, had limited circulation and relied upon volunteers to gather information and produce and disseminate them. As the potential for use of formal channels was closing off, the fragmented resistance groups had difficult maintaining coordinated action as well as their earlier sense of solidarity. Often some of the key actors were unaware of the current course of events because activist resources and networks were spread too thin. Distrust among activist groups compounded the effects of their loss of formal sources of information.

As government strategies of cooption and repression took their toll, the solidarity and momentum of the resistance movement began to unravel. Some previously outspoken objectors fell silent; tensions emerged between student groups and NGOs, and between dissidents and journalists over ulterior motives and susceptibility to the pressures and enticements brought to bear. Academics and other public servants feared refusal of promotion or research funding, editors and journalists, the loss of their jobs or publishing permits. Funding grants to scholars and student groups, overseas trips to public servants and parliamentary members, and outright bribes to speak or write favourably about the project, or simply to be silent, were real and rumoured sources of friction. Such practices have become so pervasive a phenomenon in Indonesian politics that local people say it has become 'national culture', and one in no way confused with the subtleties of traditional patronage or reciprocity.

Throughout the Tanah Lot conflict, institutions willingly and otherwise provided important sites for contest. Explicit charters became points of engagement, critical in mobilisation of political resources. But the extent to which institutions depend upon expressed and effective public pressure to perform their duty brings us full circle to the question of political context. The dilemmas posed by the political economy of environment in Indonesia cannot be separated from questions of constructing civil society generally.

Analysis of environmental disputes often neglects to confront the fundamental advantage held by established institutions over the
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more loosely structured instruments of civil society drawn upon by social movements. The former have the weight of established authority and vested resources to prosecute their interests, while the latter must draw on moral authority and voluntarily contributed materials and labour to make their case. That originary imbalance can be mitigated in political contexts where democratic processes enable resistant social forces to direct institutional resources to their purposes (though rarely to the extent of completely redressing the imbalance). Asymmetries may also be redressed to some extent when competing interests within sectors of the state or business ally themselves with activist demands, but such support tends to be strategic and provides an insecure base for sustained prosecution of environmental causes.

It is as yet unclear whether in the longer term anything more than symbolic concessions will have been won from the concerted opposition mounted to the Tanah Lot development, or how the unanticipated ferment it has generated will impact on expansive plans for further developments of this type. Certainly, the constraints on the Bali Post that were already being felt before the June media bans made it clear that the press would be unable in the immediate future to provide the exposure that galvanised public sentiment initially. It is indicative of media importance in the case that Abu Bakrie, the head of the conglomerate investing in Tanah Lot, was involved in resurrecting a rival regional newspaper, Nusa Tenggara, which began publication a month following resumption of the BNR project. 33

It might have been unrealistic to expect that public opinion could stop the Tanah Lot development with instruments of civil society so weakened by decades of military-backed executive domination of Indonesian politics. Certainly some activists were sceptical from the outset about the possibilities of halting a development for which ground was already broken and when a long string of similar projects waiting in train (many directly involving the Suharto family) would be jeopardised. The resumption of construction activity in this watershed case was certain to be taken as a green light for investors. Indeed, by 1995, the Indonesian Investment Board (BKBM) had approved 20 golf courses/resorts in addition to the three already operating in Bali. The most extravagant of these, involving a 335 hectare, 45-hole course at Ulu Watu, has sparked the newest phase of local opposition. 34 Meanwhile the Governor, flanked by the Indonesian Investment Board agents, was calling on regional authorities to do everything they could to attract the US$850 million in the coming budget year claimed necessary to maintain Bali's 7.8 per cent growth rate (Antara News Agency 19/12/95 indonesianet@indonesianet.com).

But resistance in the Tanah Lot case has also to be assessed in terms of the shifts in public opinion and the reworking of meanings which this experience brought about. It was a surprise to me that two years after the violent end of the demonstrations, the press bans and resumption of construction, activists, landholders, religious leaders and ordinary people on the street were still so open in their expressions of antagonism to the project and the political system that had left them ultimately powerless to prevent it.

Towards the end of 1995, a new coordinating group had been established to try to overcome rifts in the earlier struggles, this time with suggestions of more active involvement from affected farmers and community groups, thanks to the quiet and persistent liaison work of several small NGOs and the Legal Aid Institute. The open meeting establishing the liaison group was attended by lawyers, students, academics, NGO activists and a few representatives from the community at Ulu Watu, now emboiled in the latest controversy over the new mega-development there. Their aim was to link general opposition to the kind of development represented by the Tanah Lot resort and equally controversial projects at Serangan Island and Uluwatu to an attempt to revoke and revise the entire planning document which facilitates these new forms of tourism development. The December 1995 damages award to the BNR was a salutary reminder of the heavy price of popular resistance in late New Order Indonesia; but legal action on this and other fronts was still being pursued by legal aid groups.

The general public remains quietly angry and cynical, both of government objectives and of opposition effectiveness. Nevertheless, the emergence of open and organised resistance to the Tanah Lot development was in many respects itself a watershed in Bali's history under the New Order. It had after all succeeded in halting the construction of the Bali Nirwana Resort for eight months at considerable cost to the Bakrie group, and in forcing some redesign of the project. More importantly perhaps, it signalled a significantly changed attitude among the general public to the new megadevelopments and a more reflective phase in local political and cultural consciousness.

THE TOURISM SECTOR: ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND POLITICS

Culture and environment form separate but convergent battlegrounds in the contest over the direction of development in Bali. They are interdependent 'resources' that for Balinese are the basis of local livelihoods, social relations and spiritual meanings. At the same time, they offer prime assets upon which the tourism industry seeks to capitalise. Sacred sites such as Tanah Lot magnify the contest of interests and meanings ascribed to tourist potential and other values. The aesthetic (natural and humanly constructed) and historic heritage values which make cultural and environmental icons so important to local identity are the drawcard which multiplies their commodity value to the tourism industry.

Exploitation of these resources in the unique context of the tourism sector has complex and paradoxical effects for conservation. Hotels and golf courses consume water and land at the expense of alternative uses by the local population, but, proponents argue, may provide more jobs or better incomes than agricultural options, and less natural destruction and pollution than industrial alternatives. Opponents insist that the mega-developments are short-term and less secure or sustainable options than agriculture combined with smaller-scale, locally owned forms of tourism and handicraft industries.

On the cultural side, income brought by visitors may subsidise artistic endeavour which might otherwise wither under the pressures of modernity and globalisation. But, although the kind of 'consumption' affected by the tourist gaze upon culture does not directly 'use up' a limited natural resource as it does in extractive industries such as timber or mining, it may be part of a cultural colonising process with analogously transforming effects. Certainly the character of the tourist gaze (see Urry 1992) affects and is affected by the political economy of the industry. This is one of the reasons why site, scale, ownership and the inclusion of residential units made the new kind of leisure industry developments in Bali so explosive. The BNR project offers investors the opportunity to consume a piece of this 'last paradise'. Like the GWK monument, its preservationist claims of environmental and

cultural protection are about synthesising their forms while displacing their content.

Tourism *per se* was not the real bone of contention in the debates surrounding the Tanah Lot resort. There had long been a general consensus among Balinese that tourism within certain limits offered a form of development complementary to local interests. For Balinese critics the fundamental issues raised by the Garuda monument and Bali Nirvana Resort projects revolve around questions of balance and control in the use of cultural and environmental resources. As a letter to the editor in the *Bali Post* concerning the Garuda monument proposal expressed it,

> We have to be conscious of the threat this poses . . . It exceeds the dimensions of our Balineseness. Bali is small and small can be very beautiful. The era of bigness is past. Faced with the interdependence among fellow human beings, and the fragility of our dependence on the environment which is under continuous threat, the concepts of *Tri Hita Karana* [balanced relations between the divine, human and natural domains] and *Desa, Kala, Patra* [appropriateness to place, time and circumstance] are more suitable. The problem of the future is the problem of balance between people and environment.

(*Bali Post 16/6/93*)

The Tanah Lot dispute has made it clear to Balinese that environmental and cultural integrity cannot be taken for granted; that the struggle over meaning is a central aspect of the politics of environment; and that cultural and environmental protection cannot be separated from broader political and societal processes.

### Notes

**Related Readings**

- The McDonaldisation of Bali
- Whose Tourism? Balinese Fight Back
- Letters From a Sacred Site
- Manila Declaration on the Social Impact of Tourism
- Letter from the Government
- World No Golf Day, 1995
- World No Golf Day, 1996
- Impact Assessment and Development/Land Use Planning in Bali

**Bali Slide Show**

- Slide Set One
- Slide Set Two

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