

# From ethnocide to ethnodevelopment? Ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia

GERARD CLARKE

**ABSTRACT** *This paper examines the impact of development, including the impact of government and donor programmes, on ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia. Through an examination of government policy, it considers arguments that mainstream development strategies tend to generate conflicts between states and ethnic minorities and that such strategies are, at times, ethnocidal in their destructive effects on the latter. In looking at more recent government policy in the region, it considers the concept of ethnodevelopment (ie development policies that are sensitive to the needs of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples and where possible controlled by them), and assesses the extent to which such a pattern of development is emerging in the region. Since the late 1980s, it argues, governments across the region have made greater efforts to acknowledge the distinct identities of both ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, while donors have begun to fund projects to address their needs. In many cases, these initiatives have brought tangible benefits to the groups concerned. Yet in other respects progress to date has been modest and ethnodevelopment, the paper argues, remains confined to a limited number of initiatives in the context of a broader pattern of disadvantage and domination.*

Ama Puk is a prosperous coffee farmer in Vietnam's Dak Lak province. A member of the *Ede* (*E De*) minority, Ama lived in perennial poverty as a subsistence rice producer until the establishment of the state-run Ea Tul Coffee Company in 1985. Along with other *Ede*, Ama was given one hectare of state land to grow coffee and rapidly prospered. With fertile soil and an ideal local climate, the *Ede* farmers of Dak Lak's Cu M'Gar district achieved yields of up to five tonnes of dried coffee beans per hectare and buoyant coffee prices throughout the 1990s provided high cash incomes. In 1994, Ama and his wife Ami built a four-roomed concrete house and in 1998 they built another, bigger house for other members of their family. By 1999 Ama had acquired three more hectares of land to grow coffee, a beneficiary of the liberalisation of land ownership laws heralded by Vietnam's post-1986 strategy of *Doi Moi* (renovation).

*Gerard Clarke is in the Centre for Development Studies, University of Wales, Swansea, Taliesin, Singleton Park, Swansea SA2 8PP, UK. E-mail: g.clarke@swansea.ac.uk.*

Not all the *Ede* of Cu M'Gar district have done as well as Ama Puk, however. Unlike him, most do not speak Vietnamese, and have not adapted well to coffee, a crop that requires considerably more technical skill and knowledge than rice production. Most achieve yields of less than three tonnes per hectare and the quota of 1.7 tonnes per hectare which they must produce annually for the Ea Tul Coffee Company represents a heavy burden and a punitive form of taxation. When the price of coffee fell by half in 1999/2000, many *Ede* were pushed into debt and further into poverty.

The *Ede* had long engaged in fixed cultivation and assented in many respects to the efforts of the Ea Tul Coffee Company to convert them to cash-crop production. Other minorities in the province, however, have proved less receptive. In 1998 the company expanded northwards into Dak Lak's Eah'Leo district after long negotiations with the area's *Jarai* (*Gia Rai*) minority, developing 400 hectares of land for coffee production previously used for shifting cultivation. Today, the company continues to convert the *Jarai* to the benefits of cash crop production and of fixed cultivation. Y Ka Nin H'Dok, the Company's Director and an *Ede*, talks of coffee production and fixed, intensified cultivation as the key to fighting poverty in the district, with its mixed population of *Ede*, *Jarai*, *Tai* and *Kinh* (mainstream Vietnamese), providing cash incomes and paving the way for improvements in local housing and the construction of schools, health clinics and roads.<sup>1</sup>

Yet government policy and the objectives of the Ea Tul Coffee Company are also underpinned by distinct political objectives. The Vietnamese government has long been distrustful of the ethnic minorities/indigenous peoples of the Central Highlands, and their record of militancy and support for South Vietnamese and US forces during the Vietnam War.<sup>2</sup> Since the mid 1980s the government has promoted their assimilation by introducing cash crops such as coffee and rubber, hoping that fixed cultivation and integration into the cash economy, along with the promotion of the Vietnamese language, will erode their traditional independence. The resettlement of *Kinh* farmers from the impoverished provinces of the North throughout Dak Lak and the Central Highlands has also diluted the region's minority cultures and further facilitated their absorption into *Kinh* society.

The *Ede*, *Tai* and *Jarai* of Dak Lak symbolise the plight of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples throughout Southeast Asia. Like Ama Puk, many ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples have benefited from the region's economic growth and policy reform since the early 1960s. More commonly, however, government policies have directly and indirectly discriminated against minority groups, often violently, while complex processes of economic and social change have worked to compound the resultant disadvantage. Yet, prospects for the region's minorities have become brighter in many respects over the past decade. Since the late 1980s many Southeast Asian countries have experienced significant political change and governments have become more sensitive to the impacts of development on minority groups. In many cases, they have introduced policies more appropriate to their needs, often with donor support.

This article therefore examines the impact of development, including the impact of government and donor programmes, on ethnic minorities and

indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia. Through an examination of government policy, it considers Hettne's argument that mainstream development strategies tend to generate conflicts between states and ethnic minorities and that such strategies are, at times, 'ethnocidal' in their destructive effects on the latter.<sup>3</sup> In looking at more recent government policy in the region, it considers the concept of 'ethnodevelopment', or development policies that are sensitive to the needs of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples and where possible controlled by them, and assesses the extent to which such a pattern of development is emerging in the region.

### **Ethnic, religious and cultural diversity in Southeast Asia**

Southeast Asia is a plural and heterogeneous region, characterised by enormous ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Broadly speaking, three types of minorities exist in the region: ethnic and linguistic minorities; religious minorities; and indigenous peoples. Here, ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities are subsumed under one heading (ethnic minorities) and distinguished from indigenous peoples. In general, the distinction between ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples is clear. Indigenous peoples are autochthonous, or descendants of the earliest known inhabitants of a territory. Ethnic minorities in contrast are generally settler populations with more recent links to a territory (often stretching back hundreds of years), who share a common identity with groups in at least one other country. In the Philippines, for instance, the *Moro* Muslims of Mindanao are considered an ethnic minority, with strong bonds to religious and cultural communities in the neighbouring states of Malaysia and Indonesia, while other groups such as the *Igorots* of Northern Luzon or the *Lumad* of Mindanao are considered indigenous peoples. Similarly, in Malaysia, distinctions are drawn between the *Orang Asli*, the original aborigines of peninsular Malaysia and the *Dayaks* in the Eastern Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak, who share a common ethnic identity with groups in Kalimantan, the Indonesian-controlled territory on the island of Borneo.

In Southeast Asia, however, the distinction can be ambiguous and complex, reflecting deep-seated and unresolved political tensions. In Vietnam, for instance, the government does not acknowledge the term 'indigenous peoples'. Instead, it regards all minority groups as ethnic minorities, which it distinguishes from *Kinh*, the ethnic Vietnamese majority. In many parts of Vietnam, however, so-called ethnic minorities are more autochthonous than the *Kinh*. *Khmers*, for instance, have lived in the lower Mekong delta in the south of Vietnam for thousands of years, in contrast to the *Kinh* who settled the area predominantly from the 19th century. This highlights a more general problem. In mainland Southeast Asia, many ethnic minorities are closely associated through cultural or linguistic affinities with groups (minorities or majorities) in other states and are thus seen as 'foreigners' to varying extents by governments and dominant populations alike especially where they appeal to extra-territorial forces in their attempts to maintain or defend their identity. Examples include the *Hmong* in southern China, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand, the *Chams* of Vietnam and Cambodia and the *Nagas* of Bangladesh and Myanmar. These peoples are thus

regarded by states as ethnic minorities, distinct from the dominant majority ethnic groups and smaller groups officially regarded as autochthonous, even where they are autochthonous to a specific part of the national territory.

Furthermore, in Southeast Asia, as in other parts of the world, it can be difficult to define the dominant ethnic group and to distinguish it from separate minorities. In archipelagic countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines island-bound communities often maintain their own culture and language while subscribing to a core national identity. In Indonesia, for instance, the main island of Java has a religious, linguistic and cultural identity that distinguishes it from islands such as Sumatra or Bali and the Javanese are thus seen by many as a distinct ethnic group, whereas in the Philippines, island-bound cultures exist but are less distinct. The labels 'ethnic minority' and 'indigenous peoples' are thus both highly political and subjective, reflecting competing efforts to define the social basis of nation-states.

In general, the distinction between ethno-linguistic and religious minorities is also clear, although again there is considerable overlap. Southeast Asians divide their loyalties between the world's major religions. Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia are predominantly Muslim, the Philippines Catholic, Singapore Confucianist and Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Burma predominantly Buddhist. Within each country, however, substantial religious minorities exist, such as Muslims in the Philippines, Thailand and Cambodia and Christians in Indonesia, Vietnam and Myanmar. In many cases, religious minorities speak the dominant national language and do not maintain a distinct ethnic identity (eg Christians in most countries, or Muslims in Vietnam). In other cases, religious identity overlaps considerably with ethnic and/or linguistic identity, eg the *Moro* Muslims of the southern Philippines. In recent decades religious-based tension or discrimination has been linked to, or subsumed by, broader ethno-linguistic cleavages (see further below), yet distinct religious tension has still been significant in recent decades. In Vietnam, for instance, the government continues to deny religious freedom of expression (denominational schools are illegal) and Buddhist activists have constituted a large percentage of political prisoners since reunification in 1975. In Indonesia, overt religious tension exploded in late 1997 following the onset of the regional economic crisis and has continued up to the present, especially in the Spice Islands of Eastern Indonesia, where conflict between Muslims and Christians has resulted in the death of hundreds and the displacement of tens of thousands.

Table 1 lists the main minorities in Southeast Asia, yet does not fully capture the extent of ethno-linguistic, religious and cultural diversity in the region. Indonesia, for instance, is a sprawling archipelago of over 13 000 islands that extends roughly 3200 miles from east to west and is one of the most culturally diverse nations in the world. Over 300 ethnic groups speak roughly 240 languages and half of the population of over 200 million belong to ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Myanmar shares land borders with China, Bangladesh, India, Thailand and Laos and has historically acted as a cultural crossroads. Ethnic minorities such as the *Shan*, *Kachin*, *Chin* and *Karen* dominate the mountainous border regions that ring the rice plains of the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers and account for one-third to a half of the population.<sup>5</sup>

TABLE 1  
Ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia

<i>Country</i>	<i>Ethnic minorities/indigenous peoples</i>	
Brunei		
Total population: 314 000 (1997)	Chinese	47 000
Main ethnic group: Malays	Indigenous peoples (mainly Marut, Kedayan and Dusun)	19 000
EM/IP population: 66 000 (21%)		
Myanmar		
Total population: 45.5 million (1996)	Karen	4 000 000
Main ethnic group: Bamars/Burmans	Shan	2-4 000 000
EM/IP population: 16.5-24 million (34%-53%)	Mon	1-4 000 000
	Buddhist Arkanese (Rakhine)	2 000 000
	Muslim Arakanese (Rohingyas)	1 000 000
	Zo (Chin)	2-3 000 000
	Kachin	1-2 000 000
	Palaung-Wa	1-2 000 000
	Other minorities (including Akha, Danu, Kokang, Pao and Naga)	1-1 500 000
	Chinese, Tamils and other minorities of Indian origin	1 000 000
Cambodia		
Total population: 9.8 million (1995)	Cham	200 000
Main ethnic group: Khmers	Khmer Loeu (hill tribes)	75 000
EM/IP population: 575 000 (6%)	Chinese	200 000
	Vietnamese	100 000
Indonesia		
Total population: 197 million (1997)	Chinese	3 000 000
Main ethnic group: Javanese	Sundanese	29 000 000
EM/IP population: 99.46 million (50%)	Madurese	9 200 000
	Minang	4 700 000
	Balinese	3 300 000
	Buginese	4 400 000
	Banjarese	2 200 000
	East Timorese	660 000
	West Irians/West Papuans	1 100 000
	South Moluccans	1 000 000
	Batak	4 100 000
	Other linguistic minorities	34 000 000
	'National' minorities (including Gayo and Alas of Northern Sumatra, Minahasans of Northern Sulawesi, and Dayaks of Kalimantan)	2 800 000
Laos		
Total population: 4.5 million (1995)	Phuthai	440 000
Main ethnic group: Lao	Khamu	389 000
EM/IP population: 1.8 million (40%)	Hmong	231 168
	Lue	102 760
	Other hill tribes	436 000
	Chinese and Vietnamese	225 000
Malaysia		
Total population: 18.3 million (1991)	Chinese	5 300 000
Main ethnic group: Malays	Indians/South Asians	1 600 000
EM/IP population: 7.7 million (42%)	Ib an (Sea Dayaks)	500 000

TABLE 1 CONTINUED OVERLEAF

TABLE 1 (continued)  
**Ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Ethnic minorities/indigenous peoples</i>	
Malaysia	Bidayuh (Land Dayaks)	140 000
	Melanau	96 000
	Orang Asli	80 000
Philippines		
Total population: 68.6 million (1995)	Moro Muslims	3 500 000
Main ethnic group: Christian Filipinos	Lumad	1 500 000
EM/IP population: 7.06 million (10.5%)	Igorot	1 000 000
	Caraballo	460 000
	Negrito	410 000
	Mangyan	120 000
	Palawan	70 000
Singapore		
Total population: 3.1 million	Malays	434 000
Main ethnic group: Chinese	Indians (South Asians)	229 400
EM/IP population: 663 400 (21.4%)		
Thailand		
Total population: 60.8 million (1997)	Karen	402 000
Main ethnic group: Thai (Tai)	Hmong	126 000
EM/IP population: 1.4 million (2.3%)	Lahu	78 000
	Other hill tribes	184 000
	Malay Muslims	700 000
Vietnam		
Total population: 75.3 million (1996)	Chinese	1 100 000
Main ethnic group: Kinh (Viets)	Tay	1 400 000
EM/IP population: 10.9 million (14%)	Thai/Tai	1 200 000
	Muong	1 000 000
	Kho Me (Khmer)	1 000 000
	Hoa	870 000
	Nung	810 000
	Hmong	670 000
	Mien	570 000
	Gia Rai	280 000
	E De	230 000
	Other hill tribes	1 800 000

*Note:* Figures (except for total population) and percentages are in all cases estimates and are indicative at best.

*Sources:* All countries (including population figures) *The Far East and Australasia 1999*, London: Europa Publications, 1998, supplemented by the following country-specific sources. Burma: Smith, *Ethnic Groups in Burma*, and *Burma: Insurgency*; Cambodia, *Minorities in Cambodia*; Indonesia: Minorities Research Group, *East Timor, West Papua/Irian and Indonesia*; Bodley, *Tribal Peoples and Development*, G Hugo *et al*, *The Demographic Dimension in Indonesian Development*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987; Laos: K Kampe, 'Indigenous peoples of South-East Asia', in McCaskill & Kampe (eds), *Development or Domestication*; Malaysia: *Information Malaysia Yearbook 1994*, Kuala Lumpur: Berita Publishing, 1994; V T King & J A Jawan, 'The Ibans of Sarawak, Malaysia: ethnicity, marginalisation and development', in Dwyer & Drakakis-Smith, *Ethnicity and Development*; Philippines: P Mincher, *Aid, Trade and Deforestation: the Philippine Experience*, London: Philippine Resource Centre, 1994; and Thailand: Kampe, 'Indigenous peoples of South-East Asia'; Vietnam: Kampe, 'Indigenous peoples of South-East Asia'.

In Cambodia, with a population of only seven million, it is estimated that 36 distinct ethnic and linguistic minorities exist.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, some states are anxious to disguise the extent of diversity among their populations. In Myanmar an accurate census has not been carried out since 1931 and official estimates of the population of the main ethnic minorities/indigenous peoples produced since then are unreliable.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, in Vietnam, the government officially acknowledges the existence of 53 minority peoples, accounting for 13% of the population in 1989, but in reality there are far more distinct minority groups.

### **The impact of development on ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples**

Across the region, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples have been negatively affected by development since the end of World War II and the achievement of independence by most states. In Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia and Malaysia especially, ethnic tension has been significant and has had a profound impact on the groups affected. In addition to overt political tension and conflict, however, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples have also been affected by ongoing processes of economic and social change.

In some respects, the fate of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples has diverged, reflecting significant differences in their social, economic and political basis and their resultant treatment at the hands of governments. In other respects, their fate has been intertwined, reflecting the generally harsh treatment that minorities of all kinds have faced in Southeast Asia. Some ethnic minorities have benefited from development, especially from the high rates of economic growth in 'High Performing Asian Economies' (HPAES) such as Singapore and Malaysia. Throughout Southeast Asia, the ethnic Chinese are better off economically than the majority or dominant population and in many cases are well organised socially and/or politically. In Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore and to a lesser extent in the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand, where they are more assimilated, the Chinese dominate the private sector. Consequently, they have benefited enormously from the economic growth of recent decades, especially since the economic recession of the mid-1980s led to a significant reduction in state intervention in the economy. In contrast to their economic fortune, however, the Chinese have suffered politically and culturally. In Indonesia and Malaysia especially, economic success has led to resentment on the part of majority populations, often leading to violence,<sup>8</sup> and attempts by governments to curb their relative economic power.<sup>9</sup> As a result distinctions between the indigenous majority and the Chinese are significant and terms that distinguish the former from the latter, such as *Pribumi* in Indonesia or *Bumiputra* in Malaysia, have a strong cultural resonance. Following the severe economic downturn throughout Southeast Asia from the middle of 1997, resentment against the Chinese in Indonesia has again become overt and many Chinese people were killed and their businesses looted in late 1997 and in 1998.

*The nation-state project and the quest for unity amid diversity*

Throughout Southeast Asia ethnic minorities have been victimised by government policies or have suffered as a result of policies biased towards a dominant ethnic group. In large part, this discrimination has resulted from the quest for national unity by post-independence governments, or as Hettne describes it, the nation-state project.<sup>10</sup> In Southeast Asia, nine out of 10 countries achieved their independence in the three decades following the end of World War II.<sup>11</sup> In many cases, governments faced significant dilemmas in building stable nation-states in the wake of colonial policies which institutionalised ethnic tensions in attempts to contain nationalist movements. In addition, the Cold War stimulated ideological tension throughout the region while the Vietnam War in particular agitated politics and societies, often with cataclysmic effects.

Ethnic minorities account for a large percentage of the population in a number of Southeast Asian countries, especially in Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar. In such cases, ethnic and cultural diversity has traditionally been seen as a threat to national unity and to social cohesion, and post-independence governments have sought to weld from this diversity a uniform national identity. This current has been strongest in Cambodia and Indonesia, where governments adopted policies of ethnocide in an attempt to eliminate divisive forces in national cultures. In Cambodia, the *Khmer Rouge* regime (1975–79) attempted to abolish both religion and capitalism and systematically persecuted non-*Khmers*, including Muslim *Chams* who rebelled against their rule, the Vietnamese and the Chinese. On assuming power the *Khmer Rouge* renamed the country Kampuchea and proclaimed that:

There is one Kampuchean revolution. In Kampuchea, there is one nation and one language, the *Khmer* language. From now on, the various nationalities do not exist any longer in Kampuchea.<sup>12</sup>

In pursuit of this policy, Vietnamese people were murdered or expelled to the Vietnamese border. Denied entry by Vietnamese authorities who viewed them as Cambodians, they remained stranded in boat communities on the Mekong river for years, denied entry to Kampuchea and Vietnam alike. The Chinese were targeted because they were urban-based and bourgeois and they were murdered in Phnom Penh or other towns or evacuated to rural collectives where they died of malnutrition or disease. Like the *Chams*, however, they also suffered on account of their cultural distinctiveness. The policy was enforced to brutal effect and it is estimated that over half the pre-1975 Chinese population died during the four years of *Khmer Rouge* rule.<sup>13</sup> No one knows how many *Cham* died, partly because their numbers before 1975 are unclear, but in all probability they died in numbers as significant as the Chinese. The *Khmer Loeu*, or hill tribes, designated as 'base people', escaped the murderous excesses of the *Khmer Rouge* but were still subjected to cultural and economic assimilation as they were brought down from the mountains to work on irrigation projects and forced to speak *Khmer*.

In Indonesia governments since independence in 1949 have been committed to *wawasan nusantara*, the concept of an archipelagic state, and *tanah air*, the land-and-water fatherland. Under the benign slogan of 'Unity amid diversity',<sup>14</sup> the

Indonesian state has furthered the geographic extent of its authority and attempted forcibly to incorporate distinct peoples within a homogeneous nation-state. Indonesia invaded the South Moluccas in 1950, West Papua/Irian Jaya in 1962 and East Timor in 1975 and, in each case, the brutal suppression of resistance accompanied Indonesian rule. In East Timor, for instance, an estimated 200 000 people died in the aftermath of the 1975 invasion and subsequent famine,<sup>15</sup> and East Timor remained marginalised from the benefits of Indonesia's pre-1997 economic growth, despite significant expenditure by the Indonesian state.

After the invasion of East Timor, resistance to Indonesian rule continued unabated. The Armed Forces of the Liberation of East Timor (FALINTIL) waged an armed insurgency while a non-violent opposition movement led by Nobel laureates José Ramos-Horta and Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo attracted international support. Following the collapse of the Suharto regime in May 1998, the new government of President B J Habibie tabled proposals for limited autonomy for East Timor. In the wake of international pressure, Habibie agreed to put these proposals to a vote of the East Timorese and to support independence for East Timor (including the Oecussi enclave in West Timor) if they were rejected. On 30 August 1999 the autonomy proposals were defeated overwhelmingly in a referendum supervised by the United Nations Mission to East Timor (UNAMET), while troops from the International Force-East Timor (Interfet) assumed control from the Indonesian army.

East Timorese autonomy and eventual independence brings with it the spectre of further ethnic tension in Indonesia and two further conflicts—in Aceh and in Irian Jaya/West Papua, respectively—threaten to fragment the world's fifth largest country. In Aceh, the northernmost province on the island of Sumatra, the population has long adhered to a less secular form of Islam than that promoted by the Javanese. In addition, the Acehnese have long resented the extraction of the province's valuable natural resources (oil, gas and timber) for the benefit of the Javanese and the violent counter-insurgency which the Indonesian armed forces waged to suppress their dissent. In 1999 the Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh) movement stepped up its activities, emboldened by the situation in East Timor and by the end of the year President Abdurrahman Wahid, elected on 20 October, was under sustained pressure to approve a popular referendum for the region.

In West Papua/Irian Jaya the population is ethnically Melanesian and predominantly animist or Christian, with many supporting integration with Papua New Guinea. In 1965 the Organisasi Papua Merdake (OPM, Free Papua Movement) launched an armed insurgency but the Indonesian government responded with a violent counter-insurgency campaign. Between 1962 and 1984 it estimated that 200 000 died in West Papua/Irian Jaya as a result of Indonesian atrocities.<sup>16</sup> By 1999 the insurgency was effectively contained, but the pro-independence vote in East Timor reawakened the struggle of the OPM.

Struggles in Aceh and Irian Jaya/West Papua reflect more general tensions across Indonesia over successive governments' pro-unity policies. From the late 1950s to the late 1980s, Indonesian governments sought to move people from Java, Bali and Madura to the Outer Islands, including Sumatra, Sulawesi, Kalimantan and West Papua. Transmigration aimed to reduce overcrowding on the

three central islands but it also sought to encourage the 'Javanisation' of the outer islands: the assimilation of separatist populations and the creation of a uniform national identity modelled on the traditional power centre of Java. The strategy, supported at different periods by donors such as the World Bank, reached its zenith between 1974 and 1983, when revenues from the export of oil funded generous incentives for migrants and an elaborate programme of investment in infrastructure.<sup>17</sup> However, the strategy provoked violent unrest in the recipient communities amid discrimination in favour of migrants with respect to land rights and employment, the erosion of local cultures and customs and exploitation of natural resource and mineral wealth by military officers and business cronies aligned to the Suharto regime. In 1999, as noted above, the Indonesian state reaped the bitter harvest of these unification measures.

In other Southeast Asian countries governments also waged violent counter-insurgencies against ethnic minorities, especially during the 1970s and 1980s. In Myanmar, for instance, *Kachin*, *Karen*, *Kayah*, *Mon* and *Shan* states were created during the first half of the 20th century to provide a degree of autonomy to ethnic minorities but, after the coup of 1962 which brought General Ne Win and the Burmese military to power, an unofficial policy of 'Burmanisation' was launched and sustained well into the 1990s.<sup>18</sup> In rural areas, the government pursued a policy of forced relocation known as 'four cuts'.<sup>19</sup> 'Under these operations', according to Smith:

large areas are declared 'free-fire' zones and entire communities are forced to move to 'strategic hamlets', which are fenced in and subjected to tight military control. Expulsion orders are issued, warning that anyone trying to remain in their home will be shot on sight. Tens of thousands of communities have been destroyed or removed by such 'Four Cuts' operations over the past 30 years.<sup>20</sup>

In urban areas 'urban development programmes' promote similar objectives to the 'four cuts' strategy, breaking up ethnic minority communities and forcibly relocating them to new resettlement towns. The construction of such towns, according to Smith, 'is one of the commonest sights in Burma today'.<sup>21</sup>

The government's 'Burmanisation' drive sparked intense military conflict, especially in the 1980s, as insurgent armies organised along ethnic lines fought the government in attempts to secure greater autonomy. As a result of the fighting, tens of thousands of civilians died while hundreds of thousands of refugees were displaced internally or fled to Bangladesh, Thailand or China.<sup>22</sup> Following democratic elections in 1988 (in which the military refused to hand over power to the victorious National League for Democracy) and the establishment of the State Law and Order Council (SLORC) in 1990, human rights abuses increased again. In the mid 1990s, however, the government negotiated ceasefires with many of the insurgent groups and these have held up to the present. Nevertheless, reports from refugees suggest that human rights abuses, in which ethnic minority people are forced to participate in labour gangs, to act as porters for the military or to clear paths through minefields are still significant, as are child labour and rape.

The 'Burmanisation' drive and the resultant military conflict has had a significant adverse effect on development in ethnic minority areas, compounded by the eclectic form of socialism espoused by Myanmar's military junta. Ethnic

minority/indigenous peoples are significantly under-represented in the government, the bureaucracy and the military and ethnic minority states and regions are the poorest in the country. Development plans, for instance the construction of roads or hydroelectric plants, are not discussed with local communities or representative political organisations and the benefits of natural resources such as timber, minerals and natural gas, accrue largely to lowland Burmans, especially the military. As a result, the culture and economic fortunes of ethnic minorities such as the *Mon* are under severe threat and problems such as prostitution, drug-dealing and HIV/AIDS infection are significant in communities along the Thai border.

The consequences of Myanmar's civil war have affected neighbouring Thailand. The *Karen* (composed of four major subgroups: *Pwo*, *Skaw*, *Thongsu* and *Kayan*) straddle the Thai–Burmese border and *Karen* refugees receive support from the Thai government. *Karen* rebels are frequently allowed to cross the Thai border and to re-enter Burma at other points, enabling them to avoid Burmese government forces; roughly 10 000 *Karen* refugees were housed in Thai refugee camps in the mid-1990s. Thai *Karen*, however, have been disadvantaged by a number of Thai government policies. Since the 1960s, economic development in western Thailand has led to an expansion in logging and mining, and an influx of farmers from the lowlands, facilitated by road building. The *Karen* economic base, centred on swidden (slash and burn) cultivation, has shrunk as a result. *Karen* are no longer able to produce sufficient rice to meet their own subsistence needs. *Karen* men have sought alternative employment in mines, tea plantations or *Hmong* opium plantations, while a large number of *Karen* women work as prostitutes in Bangkok or regional centres. *Karen* workers are generally paid low wages and are employed by Thais in menial tasks. *Karen* communities are affected by demoralisation, often traced to weak political consciousness and tribal organisation and opium addiction is a significant problem.<sup>23</sup>

In the Philippines a similar pattern of ethnic conflict has existed since the late 1960s. From 1972, following the declaration of martial law, the government of President Ferdinand Marcos tried to suppress Muslim *Moro* claims for autonomy led by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Throughout the 14 years of the Marcos dictatorship, the Armed Forces of the Philippines waged a bitter counter-insurgency campaign against the MNLF in the Muslim provinces of western Mindanao. In addition, the government sought to defeat the New People's Army (NPA), the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, and areas with a minority Muslim population in southwest and northwest Mindanao became battlegrounds for the NPA and government forces alike. As in Myanmar, thousands of people died and tens of thousands were internally displaced in the provinces in which the Muslim population was concentrated. Following the collapse of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, the government of Corazon Aquino entered negotiations with the MNLF and other rebel groups. From 1987, however, fighting with the NPA and the MNLF resumed and the government launched a concerted counter-insurgency campaign against rebel strongholds in northern Luzon and in Mindanao. Provinces in which the Muslim *Moros* were concentrated bore the brunt of the renewed conflict, along with others on the island of Luzon inhabited by indigenous peoples.

*The development project and the quest for economic growth*

In the case of South Asia, Hettne argues that the nation-state project has been a primary cause of ethnic conflict and of policies which at times have proved ethnocidal in their effects on minority groups. In addition, Hettne argues that a number of other tensions stemming from the process of development have generated additional conflicts. The sources of these conflicts, he argues, include:

- the unevenness of long-term trends such as modernisation, proleterianisation, demographic change or urbanisation;
- competition for the control of scarce natural resources;
- major infrastructural and industrial projects affecting local ecological systems;
- the differential effects of development strategies on majority and minority groups;
- the distribution of public goods among culturally defined groups.<sup>24</sup>

Hettne doesn't use the term 'development project' to encapsulate these conflicts but clearly they are all linked by the efforts of governments to achieve 'modernity' through economic and social development. The nation-state and development projects overlap in many respects but in other respects the development project has created distinct tensions.

In Southeast, as in South, Asia the development projects of governments and their supporters among dominant ethnic groups have had a significantly negative effect on minority groups. Ethnic minorities and indigenous people, for instance, are generally concentrated in remote and inaccessible areas, usually mountainous. Such areas are often rich in valuable and relatively unexploited natural resources such as forests, minerals or hydroelectric potential. As natural resources in lowland areas become over-exploited, or as economies begin to grow quickly, pressure to exploit those in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples in particular increases. This invariably leads to political conflict, as the lifestyles and livelihoods of indigenous peoples are jeopardised, and to economic disadvantage as the revenue from natural resource exploitation accrues primarily to outside interests. Equally, rising population pressure in lowland areas often leads to migration to upland areas, further increasing the pressure on natural resources. Inevitably, legal conflicts result, but indigenous peoples suffer further where traditional or ancestral law emphasising collective or community property rights is disregarded in favour of state law and an emphasis on private property rights.

Ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples have been affected by these natural resource pressures throughout Southeast Asia. Kalimantan, for instance, the Indonesian-controlled territory on the island of Borneo, represents one of the most important sources of tropical hardwood in the world. Javanese business interests and transmigrants dominate the timber, mining and gas industries, however, and Kalimantan's indigenous peoples, closely related to the *Dayaks* of Malaysia, have been pushed further into the mountains of central Borneo. Despite a ban on the export of raw logs, and the introduction of a National Forestry Action Programme, logging has continued unabated in Kalimantan and

across Indonesia (forest cover in Indonesia declined from an estimated 120 million hectares or 63% of total land area in 1973 to 95–105 million hectares, or 49%–55% of land area in 1993).<sup>25</sup> As a result, land disputes involving tribal minorities, the state and private logging interests have become frequent and intense.

In the Philippines mining and logging in mountainous areas inhabited by indigenous peoples have also eroded their natural base and provoked political conflict. The Cordillera Mountains for instance are rich in reserves of gold, copper and other minerals and *Igorots*, as the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera are collectively known, have traditionally engaged in small-scale mining activities. The activities of the 'pocket miners', as they were known, were ecologically sensitive. Mines were underground, based on narrow tunnels, and hand tools rather than chemicals were used to separate precious minerals from the surrounding rock. Since the early 1980s, however, mining companies such as the Benguet Corporation have opened large open cast mines, depleting mineral reserves, disrupting and polluting water supplies and destroying large swathes of mountainside.<sup>26</sup> These problems were compounded in 1995 when the Philippine Congress approved Republic Act 7942, the Mining Act, liberalising mineral exploitation, including foreign investment. The law was introduced following pressure from the World Bank from 1989 and following a series of seminars on the mining industry arranged by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).<sup>27</sup> Since the passage of the act foreign investors have clamoured for concessions. Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ), the British–Australian conglomerate acquired a permit covering 600 000 hectares to open a large-scale open cast bauxite mine. The permit has been bitterly opposed by the *Subanen*, the indigenous people of Mindanao's Zamboanga peninsula. By early 2000 RTZ had yet to proceed with the mine amid adverse economic conditions heralded by the East Asian crisis. Once the crisis has waned, however, foreign investors, their domestic counterparts and the Philippine government alike will be eager to see mining activities restored in an effort to increase export revenues and to restore high growth rates.

Second, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples often pursue nomadic lifestyles or engage in shifting cultivation. Throughout Southeast Asia, governments have found such lifestyles and agricultural practices unacceptable, the former because they make it difficult to collect taxes, monitor drug and other types of smuggling and to induct young men into the army, the latter because they are seen as environmentally destructive. In such cases minority peoples have been affected by policies of sedentarisation, in which governments encourage or force them to engage in fixed cultivation and to live in permanent settlements. In Vietnam, for instance, sedentarisation has long been a central feature of government policy towards minority groups in the northern and central highlands. Under the policy indigenous peoples are encouraged to live in permanent villages and to cultivate cash crops. During the 1980s, however, the policy was crudely enforced and the results mixed. In many cases, indigenous people were settled in areas where fertile land was scarce and competition with lowlanders significant. Cut off from the other natural resources on which they relied, such as non-timber forest products, indigenous people were affected by malnutrition and exposed to strains of malaria and other diseases to which they had not developed resistance.

From 1989, however, the Vietnamese government acknowledged mistakes. New measures were introduced to return land to indigenous peoples, to make fixed cultivation more compatible with forest protection and to strengthen ethnic minority representation in national institutions. By the late 1990s sedentarisation remained a key feature of government policy towards indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities alike, but some of its crude features had at least been removed.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, in Thailand, sedentarisation has long been a key feature of government policy towards the indigenous peoples (and ethnic minorities) of the north. In 1968 the Minister of the Interior, General Praphat Charusathien, reflecting government policy, argued that hillpeople

must settle down permanently in big villages and abandon the nomadic life they have been accustomed to in the past, always moving on in search of new and more fertile pastures.<sup>29</sup>

Central to such thinking was the perception that indigenous people and ethnic minorities, especially the *Hmong*, were engaged in opium production and trafficking, supported the Communist Party of Thailand, and engaged in environmentally destructive forms of agriculture. Throughout the 1970s the Department of Public Welfare implemented programmes to create fixed settlements and 'development zones' within which the movement of indigenous peoples was limited.<sup>30</sup>

These policies were continued during the 1980s, with indigenous peoples in many cases confined to 'hill tribe colonies', denied Thai citizenship and segregated from the rest of Thai society.<sup>31</sup> To foreign donors, the permanent settlement strategy has been successful, especially in cutting opium production: from 100 tons in the early 1960s, it is estimated that raw opium production in Thailand fell to 30 tons in the late 1980s and to 20 tons in the mid 1990s.<sup>32</sup> Over 25 years it is estimated that Western donors have spent US\$100 million on highland development in northern Thailand, perhaps the greatest investment by donors in the 'development' of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in the whole of Southeast Asia. The suppression of opium production and reduction of heroin exports to the West, however, rather than the development of the indigenous peoples themselves was the main objective of this assistance: of 12 large donor-funded projects listed by Dirksen, six were implemented under the auspices of the United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Office of the Narcotics Control Board, while two other bilateral/multilateral donor projects were also concerned primarily with drug control.<sup>33</sup> One legacy of such schemes is that ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in northern Thailand continue to be persecuted by the Thai authorities for their involvement, both perceived and actual, in drug-related activities. This persecution takes the form of deportations to Laos and Myanmar, the denial of identity cards (ie Thai citizenship) and stereotyping of the *Hmong*, *Wa*, *Akha* and *Shan*.

Third, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities have been condemned for their religious or spiritual beliefs. Animist practices have often been attacked as superstition or their adherents forced to subscribe to mainstream religions. Equally, where they devoted a share of agricultural production or labour time to religious festivals, they have been condemned as lazy and wasteful, and their festivals

banned or circumscribed. In Indonesia, for instance, belief in a supreme being is one of the five pillars of *Panca Sila*, the state ideology, and all Indonesians are required by law to adhere to one of the main world religions (Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Confucianism or Taoism). Similarly, in Vietnam, the government formally acknowledges the right to freedom of religion yet, in practice, beliefs labelled as superstition are forbidden, and animist rituals or feasting prohibited because they are considered superstitious and wasteful of resources. Some cultural rituals such as dances are performed for the benefit of tourists, often by government-established artistic troupes, yet in some circumstances, indigenous peoples themselves are not allowed to perform dances during the specific rituals from which they emerged, a policy described by Salemink as 'selective preservation'.<sup>34</sup>

The disadvantages that minority groups endure go beyond these factors. By virtue of their remote locations, minorities are invariably marginalised from markets and from government services such as health care, agricultural extension and education. Often inhabiting poor quality agricultural land on steep mountain slopes, they are usually dependent on low value subsistence crops and lack adequate supplies of food for a number of months per year. Surrounded by dense forests or jungles and without access to safe and reliable water supplies, they are prone to high rates of disease. Speaking minority languages, they are disadvantaged in educational systems based on dominant languages, and are unable to communicate effectively to protect their culture and identity where their languages are not based on written scripts. Politically, they are often poorly organised and underrepresented at local, regional and national level.

Perhaps most significantly of all, and paradoxically in view of some of the factors mentioned above, indigenous peoples have suffered from a neglect which has been at best benign and at worst malevolent. Governments and donors alike are invariably aware of the relative poverty of indigenous peoples and the social and political exclusion which accompanies it, at least at a superficial, almost anecdotal level. Few, however, have a sufficiently sophisticated and detailed understanding of the plight of indigenous peoples. Censuses and other government statistics tend to identify poor or disadvantaged people in *geographical* terms, by the regions or localities in which they live, and fail to distinguish sufficiently between *ethnic* categories.<sup>35</sup> Often governments do not know the populations of particular indigenous peoples.<sup>36</sup> Rarely do they have statistics on poverty or social exclusion that distinguishes on the basis of ethnicity.

### **Ethnodevelopment in Southeast Asia**

Despite the bleak picture painted above, governments in Southeast Asia have instituted measures in recent years to ameliorate the adverse position of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples and in many cases these measures can be seen as contributing to the 'ethnodevelopment' advocated by development theorists such as Stavenhagen or Hettne.<sup>37</sup> In the 1990s especially, governments and donors, often working closely with the representative organisations of indigenous peoples, have made strides in replacing the exclusion and alienation endured by the latter. In the work of Hettne, the concept of ethnodevelopment is heavily

influenced by the tradition of 'Another Development'<sup>38</sup> and rests on the four principles of cultural pluralism, internal self-determination, territorialism<sup>39</sup> and sustainability. In some cases, progress in Southeast Asia can be linked to these principles but in other respects it is more modest. Nevertheless, the progress is real and marks a significant change in the treatment of minority groups.

The biggest explanation for this change has been political liberalisation and movement towards more democratic and politically inclusive systems of government throughout the region, brought about in significant part by the end of the Cold War. The Marcos dictatorship collapsed in the Philippines in 1986, a fully elected government came to power in Thailand in 1988, the introduction of *Doi Moi* in Vietnam and the New Economic Mechanism in Laos from 1986 brought political as well as economic reform, and in Cambodia democratic elections were held in 1993. This process has continued with the collapse of the Suharto regime in Indonesia in 1998 and the forthcoming independence of East Timor. A corollary of political liberalisation across the region has been the expansion of civil society, especially the proliferation of NGOs, many of them concerned with the plight of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples.

Political liberalisation in Southeast Asia in the late 1980s and 1990s has made governments more sensitive to the plight of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, leading to efforts to strengthen their political participation or autonomy. In Vietnam, the Communist Party (VCP) launched a programme known as *Doi Moi* in 1986 in response to the policies of *perestroika* (reconstruction) and *glasnost* (openness) in the Soviet Union and the decline of Soviet economic assistance. *Doi Moi* focused on economic rather than political reform but the introduction of 'affirmative action' measures resulted in representatives of ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples holding 14% of National Assembly seats in the mid-1990s.<sup>40</sup>

In the Philippines, the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos collapsed in February 1986. The government of Corazon Aquino, which succeeded it, restored electoral democracy and entered negotiations with the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA), which had waged an armed insurgency since the 1970s seeking autonomy for the Cordilleras, the mountainous interior of the island of Luzon. As a result, the government established the Cordillera Regional Consultative Commission (CRCC) to consider autonomy for the region. In 1988 the CRCC approved a draft law providing autonomy for the Cordilleras, supported by the Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA), the main political grouping representing the region's one million indigenous people. The Philippine Congress, however, approved a watered-down bill in 1989, provoking anger within the CPA and, in a plebiscite in 1990, the draft Organic Act was defeated by an alliance of those who felt it went too far and those who felt it didn't go far enough. Under the government of President Fidel Ramos (1992–98) several attempts were made to revive the autonomy process but disagreements among autonomy proponents prevented the achievement of real progress.

In Muslim Mindanao proponents of autonomy and the government alike made more progress. In 1989 four provinces joined the newly created Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), following a plebiscite. However, proponents of autonomy failed to secure a majority in seven other provinces with a

substantial Muslim population in the west and northwest of Mindanao and these remained outside the ARMM. As a result, the MNLF maintained its insurgency against the government, and a more radical grouping, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) gathered strength. Negotiations with the MNLF continued after the change of government in May 1992, with other governments (Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Indonesia) acting as intermediaries. As a result, the government established the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD) in 1996 to link the 11 Muslim provinces of Mindanao and it appointed Nur Misuari, former leader of the MNLF as its head. SPCPD is widely seen as a transnational arrangement that will eventually lead to greater autonomy for 11 provinces, including those provinces in which Christians represent a majority. SPCPD includes some of the poorest provinces in the Philippines and officials of the MNLF are actively co-operating with government agencies, foreign donors and local or national NGOs to prepare development plans for the region. The SPCPD faces enormous challenges. Christians remain implacably opposed to Muslim autonomy in the provinces in which they constitute a majority; the MILF continues to wage a bloody insurgency against government forces and Christian communities; and the MNLF lacks the budgetary resources to pump-prime economic growth effectively in the war-ravaged region. Nevertheless, Muslim Mindanao is the only region in Southeast Asia in which an ethnic minority has secured autonomy from the central government;<sup>41</sup> it may become a model for replication (eg in Aceh).

In addition to autonomy, the government has also promoted reforms to provide greater recognition of traditional or ancestral land rights. In 1997 Congress approved Republic Act 8371, the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA), and the government established a new National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), replacing the two Offices for Northern and Southern Cultural Communities, respectively. NCIP was established primarily to process up to two million ancestral land claims but, by the end of 1998, operational guidelines for the implementation of IPRA had not been approved and the new government of Joseph Estrada, elected in May 1998, froze the NCIP's budget for 1999.<sup>42</sup> Many NGOs are suspicious of government and Congressional delays in the implementation of IPRA but the legislation is radical and again puts the Philippines in the forefront, in legal terms at least, of the more inclusive approach to ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples.

As a result of political liberalisation, non-governmental organisations concerned with ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples have proliferated throughout Southeast Asia and these are now implementing development projects with government and donors and lobbying for further policy reform.<sup>43</sup> In Thailand, for instance, Wildlife Fund Thailand (WFT), the Thai affiliate of the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), is working closely with Karen communities in the Thung Yai Naresuan and Huay Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuaries.<sup>44</sup> In Northern Thailand, NGOs such as the WFT have proliferated and the Centre for the Co-ordination of Non-Governmental Tribal Development Organisations (CONTO) had 39 member organisations in 1997.<sup>45</sup> In Indonesia a variety of national and local NGOs support the plight of indigenous peoples in Kalimantan (Borneo), while prominent human rights and other NGOs—including Lembaga Bantuan

Hukum (the Legal Aid Institute)—support the cause of the Acehnese or West Papuans.

In the Philippines representative organisations of indigenous peoples first emerged during the 1970s and have proliferated further since 1986. NGOs working with and supporting them have also proliferated. During the 1970s, for instance, traditional elders and community organisations in the Cordillera Mountains successfully opposed the Chico River dam project with support from Church-based NGOs and an international campaign. Construction of a series of four dams along the Chico River would have required the resettlement of large numbers of *Kalingas* and *Bontocs*. In the early 1990s, an alliance of indigenous people and supportive NGOs also opposed the Mt Apo Geothermal Power Plant project in Mindanao and succeeded in blocking donor investment in the project. Again, construction of the plant would have involved the resettlement of indigenous people and damage to a National Park sacred in the mythology of the *Bagobos* as well as neighbouring *Lumads* such as the *Tiruray*, *T'boli* and *B'laan*. In 1995, however, construction of the plant went ahead with private-sector funding.<sup>46</sup>

The proliferation of NGOs has also led to international co-operation. In Myanmar many NGOs work in territory not controlled by the Myanmar military in an attempt to alleviate the poverty induced by the civil war, eg in the Karen state. Most of them are connected to the political organisations of ethnic minority groups but could not function without support from Thai and other international organisations, nor without the ability to operate across the Thai border. In addition, many NGOs now network at a regional and international level. In November 1998 activists from the Philippines, Indonesia and Australia, including *Subanen* (Philippines) *Dayak* and *Amungme* (Indonesia) elders, attended a conference in Manila to oppose mining operations in lands occupied by indigenous peoples by international conglomerates such as Rio Tinto Zinc.

In addition to political change, indigenous peoples have benefited from many aspects of economic change in Southeast Asia. The subsistence agricultural economies of many indigenous peoples have benefited from the development of tourism. From the Banaue rice terraces in the Cordillera Mountains of the Philippines to the Sa Pa Valley of Vietnam's Lao Cai province, tourism has created jobs in handicrafts manufacturing, catering and hotel accommodation. Indigenous communities have also benefited from economic prosperity in lowland areas which have created employment opportunities for young people from minority areas. Finally, indigenous people have benefited in many cases from rising demand for the cash crops which they grow and the minerals that they mine, stimulated by overall economic growth.

Another area of progress, albeit comparatively recent, has been in the more accurate identification and targeting of disadvantaged ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples. In Vietnam census data has traditionally been too blunt to facilitate effective targeting of vulnerable minorities. Now, with the support of the World Bank and other donors, the General Office of Statistics undertakes Living Standards Surveys at five-year intervals (the first was undertaken in 1992–93 and the second in 1997–98) based on representative samples of 2000 to 6000 households. Both surveys demonstrate that ethnic minorities and indigenous

people are significantly poorer than the *Kinh* majority. Furthermore, the surveys show that, while economic growth has reduced poverty among minority and majority groups alike, the fall in poverty has been more significant among the *Kinh* majority, exacerbating income inequality.<sup>47</sup>

On a more positive note, data from the 1992–93 Vietnam Living Standards Survey (VLSS), and from the 1994 Agricultural Census have enabled US and Vietnamese researchers to generate disaggregated poverty maps highlighting the poorest of Vietnam's 545 rural districts.<sup>48</sup> With these maps and other data from the VLSS, the Vietnamese government has identified the poorest 1700 communes in the country. Most of these are inhabited by ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples and the Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA) is responsible for formulating poverty alleviation strategies appropriate to them. CEMMA has a long record of implementing projects in minority areas based on the provision of physical inputs. In interviews CEMMA officials readily concede that many projects have failed because of an inadequate understanding of the diverse communities in which the Committee works and it is now using participatory approaches to enable targeted beneficiaries to identify priorities which CEMMA can in many cases address.<sup>49</sup> It is also undertaking research aimed at developing a greater understanding of the different interests and needs of a diverse range of minorities and amending its previously monolithic approach to addressing them.

CEMMA is working closely with foreign donors in developing these new approaches. With UNDP support, for instance, it manages a project to build the policy formulation and management capacity of minority communities. It is also participating in the UNDP four-country Highland Peoples Programme, in which participatory approaches are used to enable minority communities to conduct their own needs assessments. With UNICEF, CEMMA is also managing a primary health care and education programme targeted at women and children in minority communities.

Another area of progress is the greater commitment of donors (multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental) to ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. In the past, donors have largely ignored the plight of such people and where they funded programmes for their benefit, donors usually sought to advance Western interests (eg to create an anti-communist bulwark in the countries of Indochina or to cut heroin exports from the Golden Triangle). During the 1980s and 1990s, however, donor policies changed. Anti-communism ceased to be a significant issue, and political liberalisation led to improved relations between governments in Southeast Asia and Western donors. In addition, Southeast Asian governments themselves became more receptive to the interests of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, and NGOs working with such groups proliferated, providing donors with institutional partners.

Today, Western donors support development projects for ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines and in parts of Myanmar not controlled by the Burmese state. They include multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, the UNDP and the World Health Organisation, and bilateral donors such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Swedish International Development

Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). They also include NGOs such as the Ford Foundation (USA), Oxfam (UK) and the international Save the Children Fund network.

With most indigenous peoples located in mountainous regions, many donor projects seek to protect valuable natural resources like primary forests, or to increase agricultural production. In Vietnam, for instance, SIDA is supporting the Vietnam–Sweden Mountain Rural Development Programme in the montane region of northern Vietnam, where minorities constitute a large percentage of the population. Other donor projects seek to improve social services such as education or health care. In Vietnam the World Bank is supporting the construction of semi-boarding primary schools in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples, enabling children from households scattered widely across remote mountain slopes to attend school. Other donors, including UNICEF and the UNDP are helping to develop alternative curricula to improve literacy among minority children and adults in remote communities.

Despite greater donor commitment to the plight of the region's ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, and progress towards a model of 'ethno-development', many donor projects continue to have adverse effects on intended beneficiaries. A particular source of conflict throughout Southeast Asia has been the establishment of donor-funded projects to protect the environment. In the Philippines, for instance, the National Integrated Protected Areas Systems (NIPAS) programme, funded by the World Bank and implemented by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, has provoked opposition from indigenous people who feel it targets their livelihoods and agricultural practices unfairly.<sup>50</sup>

Projects designed to improve food security or agricultural production among indigenous peoples have also had adverse effects in many instances. In the case of the Philippines, Kwiatowski has examined the impact of a number of donor projects implemented in Ifugao province, one of the poorest in the Philippines, between 1988 and 1993, including the European Union-funded Central Cordillera Agricultural Programme (CECAP) and the UNICEF-funded Ifugao Area Based Child Survival Development (ABCSD) programme.<sup>51</sup> According to Kwiatkowski, the ABCSD ignored the traditional indigenous culture of the Ifugao and enforced or reinforced stereotypical views of women.<sup>52</sup> In donor-funded development projects generally, poorer people were expected to make a disproportionate labour contribution and traditions of reciprocal labour exchange were undermined.<sup>53</sup> The activities of NGOs too can have a negative effect on indigenous peoples. In the case of the Philippines, Rood notes that NGOs working with indigenous peoples have accepted and propagated notions of indigenous culture that deviate from empirical culture, often with adverse effects for the indigenous people concerned.<sup>54</sup> Donors and NGOs alike have a long way to go in consolidating a genuine model of 'ethnodevelopment'.

### Conclusion

Bjorn Hettne's argument that development in South Asia has fuelled ethnic conflict and has at times proved ethnocidal is equally valid in the case of South-east Asia. In one of the most dynamic and fast-growing regions in the developing

world over the past three decades, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples have suffered enormously and continue to be marginalised from the benefits of economic growth and improvements in social welfare. In general, a number of trends have characterised the treatment of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia since the beginning of the 1960s. First, ethnic minorities, and to a lesser extent indigenous peoples, have been the victims of ethnocidal policies as governments attempted to promote a uniform national culture, or failed to protect minorities where social order and political stability collapsed. In Cambodia and Indonesia, between one and two million people died in four cataclysmic events between the early 1960s and the late 1970s: the 1962 invasion (and subsequent conquest) of West Papua/Irian Jaya, the massacre of Chinese and other minorities following the collapse of the Sukarno government in 1965; the 1972 invasion of (and subsequent famine in) East Timor and the genocidal rule of the *Khmer Rouge* between 1975 and 1979. In Myanmar and the Philippines members of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples also died in large numbers amid government efforts to repress armed struggles for autonomy. In many respects these deaths can be attributed primarily to the Cold War, especially the Vietnam War, and the ideological excesses it induced throughout Southeast Asia. More importantly, however, they relate to the nation-state projects of newly independent states and over-zealous efforts to promote national unity.

Second, ethnic minorities and indigenous minorities have been subjected to other policies designed to promote their assimilation and integration. These include policies of sedentarisation, in which minorities are compelled to live in fixed and permanent settlements and to engage in fixed cultivation, and policies that discriminate against their cultures, for instance, discrimination against animist religious practices. Third, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples have had their lifestyles and livelihoods eroded by exploitation of natural resources by migrants from the lowlands, by national and international corporations and by governments or military elements. Indigenous peoples have also been adversely affected by voluntary and government-sponsored migration from over-populated lowland areas to interior or upland areas, especially in Indonesia, Myanmar and Vietnam. Fourth, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples have been stereotyped as supporters of communist or other insurgencies, as smugglers or drug producers or as backward and uninterested in socioeconomic progress. As a result of this discrimination, minority groups have been persecuted and areas in which they are concentrated starved of investment in infrastructure or social services.

Since the late 1980s, however, governments across the region have made greater efforts to acknowledge the distinct identities of both ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, while donors have also begun to fund projects to address their needs. In many cases, the initiatives have brought tangible benefits to the groups concerned. Across Southeast Asia, governments have become more democratic following the end of the Cold War and as a result have become more sensitive to the plight of minority groups. Economic growth has also led to benefits for many minority groups, while the expansion of civil society has resulted in the emergence of organisations that represent or support ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples.

In some cases, these reforms echo the general principles of ethnodevelopment set out by Hettne, for instance, the establishment of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (internal self-determination), the increasing emphasis by government planners in Vietnam on poor districts and communes in which ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples are concentrated (territorialism), the recognition of ancestral land rights and of their cultural underpinnings in the Philippines (cultural pluralism) and the greater attention of governments and donors alike to environmental conservation (sustainability). As such, they point to a transition from ethnocide to ethnodevelopment in Southeast Asia. Yet in other respects progress to date has been modest and ethnodevelopment remains confined to a limited number of initiatives in the context of a broader pattern of disadvantage and domination. Ethnically charged political conflict is still latent in Myanmar, the Philippines and Indonesia. Income inequality between majority and minority groups is increasing as majority groups benefit disproportionately from the region's economic growth. The 'globalisation' of economic, political and social structures continues to homogenise societies in the region and to marginalise minority groups. Governments, donors and civil society actors alike still have a lot to do as they strive to redefine the nation-state and development projects to accommodate the region's ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The preceding paragraphs are based on research in Dak Lak province in April 2000, including interviews with Ama and Ami Puk, Y Ka Nin H'Dok and other *Ede* farmers.
- <sup>2</sup> In 1958, the Bajaraka Movement (named after the four major groups involved in its establishment (the *Bahnar* (*Ba-na*), *Jarai* (Gai Rai), *Rhade* (*Ede*) and *Koho*) was established to seek autonomy from the South Vietnamese state, later evolving into the Front Unifié pour la Lutte des Races movement (FULRO). 'Ethnic minorities in Vietnam: a country profile', report to the World Bank by Winrock International, Hanoi, October 1996.
- <sup>3</sup> B Hettne, 'Ethnicity and development: an elusive relationship', in D Dwyer & D Drakakis-Smith (eds), *Ethnicity and Development: Geographical Perspectives*, Chichester: John Wiley, 1996, p 36.
- <sup>4</sup> Including the Javanese. See further below in main text.
- <sup>5</sup> M Smith, *Ethnic Groups in Burma: Development, Democracy and Human Rights*, London: Anti-Slavery Society, 1994. Smith notes that most estimates suggest that the dominant Burmans account for two-thirds of the population. Smith also notes, however, that Burman speakers are not a homogeneous group and include members of other established ethnic minorities. Government estimates of the membership of ethnic minorities also differ significantly from the estimates of ethnic minority representative political organisations.
- <sup>6</sup> *Minorities in Cambodia*, Minority Rights Group International Report 95/2, London: Minority Rights Group, 1995, p 12.
- <sup>7</sup> See D Brown, *The State and Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia*, London: Routledge, 1994, pp 33, 273.
- <sup>8</sup> For instance in Indonesia in 1965, where 200 000 to 400 000 people—many, if not most of them, Chinese—were murdered in the months following the collapse of the Sukarno government. In 1969 riots also broke out in Malaysia, leading to the deaths of urban Chinese, provoked by (rural) Malay disquiet at the economic muscle of the mainly urban-based Chinese and Indian minorities.
- <sup>9</sup> As in Malaysia, where the New Economic Policy, introduced in 1972, aimed primarily to strengthen Malay participation in the economy.
- <sup>10</sup> Hettne, 'Ethnicity and development', p 19.
- <sup>11</sup> Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam. The exception was Thailand, which was never colonised. An 11th embryonic nation was created in 1999 when Indonesian forces withdrew from East Timor, paving the way for eventual independence.
- <sup>12</sup> Quoted in *Minorities in Cambodia*, p 11.
- <sup>13</sup> See *ibid*, p 15.

- <sup>14</sup> Indonesia's national motto, derived from the old Javanese phrase *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, 'they are many, they are one'.
- <sup>15</sup> *East Timor, West Papua/Irian and Indonesia*, London: Minority Rights Group, 1997, p 11.
- <sup>16</sup> C Deihl & R Gordon, 'The forgotten refugees: the West Papuans of Irian Jaya', in *Southeast Asian Tribal Groups and Ethnic Minorities: Prospects for the 1980s and Beyond*, Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival, 1987, p 159.
- <sup>17</sup> During which time some two million people were moved. C L Sage, 'The search for sustainable livelihoods in Indonesian transmigration settlements', in M J G Parnwell & R J Bryant (eds), *Environmental Change in South-East Asia: People, Politics and Sustainable Development*, London: Routledge, 1996, p 101.
- <sup>18</sup> See M Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, London: Zed Books, 1989.
- <sup>19</sup> From the Burmese term *Pyu Ley Pyu*, the strategy involves separating civilians and armed insurgents from four main links: food, finance, intelligence and recruits. Smith, *Ethnic Groups in Burma*, p 46.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>22</sup> See Smith, *Burma and Ethnic Groups in Burma*. In 1987, for instance, the Kachin Independence Organisation claimed that over 33 000 civilian Kachins had been killed by government forces between 1961 and 1986. Smith, *Ethnic Groups in Burma*, p 40.
- <sup>23</sup> J H Bodley, *Tribal Peoples and Development Issues*, Mayfield, CA: Mountain View, 1988, pp 137–140.
- <sup>24</sup> Hettne, 'Ethnicity and Development', pp 22–24.
- <sup>25</sup> B Eccleston & D Potter, 'Environmental NGOs and different political contexts in Southeast Asia: Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam', in Parnwell & Bryant, *Environmental Change in South-East Asia*, p 60.
- <sup>26</sup> See R Broad with J Cavanagh, *Plundering Paradise: The Struggle for the Environment in the Philippines*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993, pp 25–31.
- <sup>27</sup> *Common Ground*, Philippine Resource Centre, London, Issue No 10, June 1998.
- <sup>28</sup> See O Saleminck, 'The King of Fire and Vietnamese ethnic policy in the central highlands', pp 105–115, and J Wandel, 'Development and its impact on the indigenous and highland peoples of Vietnam', pp 470–487, both in D McCaskill & K Kempe (eds), *Development or Domestication? Indigenous Peoples of South-East Asia*, Chiang, Mai: Silkworm Books, 1997.
- <sup>29</sup> Quoted in N Tapp, 'Squatters or refugees: development and the Hmong', in G Wijewardene (ed), *Ethnic Groups Across National Boundaries in Mainland Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990, p 155.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 156–157.
- <sup>31</sup> Tawin Chotichaipiboon, 'Socio-cultural and environmental impact of economic development on hill tribes', in McCaskill & Kempe, *Development or Domestication?*, p 101. Hill tribes have been evicted from forest lands and forced to settle in *nikhom*, or resettlement villages, in efforts to protect forests. In the process, however, the livelihoods of the hill people concerned are seriously eroded. See J Rigg, *Southeast Asia: The Human Landscape of Modernization and Development*, London: Routledge, 1997, p 119.
- <sup>32</sup> H Dirksen, 'Solving problems of opium production in Thailand: lessons learned from the Thai-German Highland Development Program', in McCaskill & Kempe, *Development or Domestication?*, pp 329–330.
- <sup>33</sup> See *ibid.*, pp 333–334, note 5.
- <sup>34</sup> Saleminck, 'The King of Fire', pp 497–498.
- <sup>35</sup> In Malaysia, for instance, it is impossible to assess how ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples have been affected by economic development in the 1980s and 1990s, as government statistics since 1980 do not differentiate between different ethnic groups. V T King & J A Jawan, 'The Ibans of Sarawak, Malaysia: ethnicity, marginalisation and development', in Dwyer & Drakakis-Smith, *Ethnicity and Development*, p 203. In Laos, in contrast, the ruling *Pathet Lao* distinguishes between three categories of population, *Lao Loum* (people who live in the lowlands), *Lao Theung* (people who live in the midlands or on mountain slopes) and *Lao Soung* (upland lao or those who live in the high mountains and engage in shifting cultivation), disguising ethnic categories such as *Hmong* or *Tai*. See J Rigg & R Jerndal, 'Plenty in the context of scarcity', in Parnwell & Bryant (eds), *Environmental Change in South-East Asia*, p 153; and M J Molloy & M Payne, 'My way and the highway: ethnic people and development in the Lao PDR', in McCaskill & Kempe (eds), *Development or Domestication?*
- <sup>36</sup> In Burma, for instance a full census was last held in 1931 and official estimates of the population of the main ethnic minorities produced since then are unreliable. See Brown, *The State and Ethnic Politics in South-East Asia*, pp 33, 273.
- <sup>37</sup> R Stavenhagen, *The Ethnic Question: Conflicts, Development and Human Rights*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1990; and Hettne, 'Ethnicity and development'.

- <sup>38</sup> Elaborated in the work of E F Schumacher, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, and Paul Ekins, as well as by Hettne himself. See, for example, B Hettne, *Development Theory and Three Worlds*, London: Longman, 1995.
- <sup>39</sup> Ie greater attention to specific areas or territories in place of national strategies which fail to take account of intra-national variation.
- <sup>40</sup> Wandel, 'Development and its impact on the indigenous peoples', p 479.
- <sup>41</sup> With the exception of East Timor, which is on track to achieve outright independence rather than autonomy.
- <sup>42</sup> *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 25 November 1998.
- <sup>43</sup> See, for instance, Eccleston & Potter, 'Environmental NGOs'.
- <sup>44</sup> Covering 365 000 and 250 000 hectares respectively, these sanctuaries are important refuges for the Karen yet government wildlife and forest conservation programmes in the sanctuaries have been criticised for their insensitivity to Karen interests, especially in condemning Karen swidden cultivation as environmentally destructive. WFT, however, is promoting greater environmental awareness and basic extension activities. See S Thongmak & D L Hulse, 'The winds of change: Karen people in harmony with world heritage', in E Kemf (ed), *Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas: The Law of Mother Earth*, London: Earthscan, 1993, pp 163–164.
- <sup>45</sup> Chotchaiipiboon, 'Socio-cultural and environmental impact of development on hill tribes', pp 110–114.
- <sup>46</sup> On both the Chico River and Mt Apo campaigns, see S Rood, 'NGOs and indigenous peoples', in G S Silliman & L Garner Noble (eds), *Organising for Democracy: NGOs, Civil Society and the Philippine State*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1998.
- <sup>47</sup> In 1993 the incidence of poverty among ethnic minorities/indigenous people was 86%, compared with 54-% among the *Kinh*. In 1998 it was 75% among the minorities compared to 31% among the *Kinh*. *Vietnam: Attacking Poverty, Vietnam Development Development Report 2000*, Joint Report of the Government of Vietnam–Donor–NGO Poverty Working Group, Hanoi, December 1999, p 32.
- <sup>48</sup> N Minot, 'Generating disaggregated poverty maps: an application to Viet Nam', Markets and Structural Studies Division (MSSD) Discussion Paper No 25, International Food and Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC, October 1998.
- <sup>49</sup> Interview with Mr Vu Quang Dinh, Director, International Co-operation Department, Ms Ho Thi Thanh Truc, and Mr Ma Trung Ty, Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA), Hanoi, 23 April 1998.
- <sup>50</sup> Planned NIPAS activities on the island of Mindoro for instance were scrapped following opposition from *Mangyan* groups. For an account of the NIPAS project planning process, see *The World Bank Participation Sourcebook*, Washington, DC: World Bank, 1996, pp 103–108.
- <sup>51</sup> L M Kwiatowski, *Struggling with Development: The Politics of Hunger and Gender in the Philippines*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998.
- <sup>52</sup> In programme activities, emphasis was placed on the role of women in caring for children, ignoring the significant traditional role played by men; women were instructed to give food aid to identified malnourished children only (and criticised when they didn't), ignoring the ingrained tradition of sharing food within and between families; and women 'volunteers' working in child care centres were paid less than half the minimum wage for a 40-hour week. *Ibid*, ch 7.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>54</sup> S Rood, 'NGOs and indigenous peoples', p 152.