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Deforestation in the Postwar Philippines. By David M. Kummer. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1993. 178 pages.

Population-land pressure is presented in the Philippine Forestry Master Plan as the major problem of the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in its management of the uplands. Figures are given as to population growth and forest cover, but the plan lacks an adequate understanding of the process of deforestation and the role of logging, especially during the Marcos era. Deforestation is explained by appealing to the ostensible logic of a growth in population, resulting in an increased need for agricultural land. People who have not seen the activities in the uplands may have accepted this evaluation and so may be surprised to learn that population growth has not been the actual driving force behind the country's deforestation. If the recent effort by David Kummer could put the record straight, then better forest management policies may be forged. The author's intention is to review what is known of tropical deforestation in general and to analyze those factors which are relevant to deforestation in the postwar Philippines, using multivariant analytical techniques and evaluating the constructed model. Presented in research format, the work entails persistent reading for those with a genuine environmental concern so they could weigh the value of the research and the specifics of the issue.

Deforestation

Deforestation is "the complete removal of existing forests and their replacement by other forms of land use" (p. 2) The research identifies two phases in the process of deforestation: from primary to secondary forest by loggers, and secondary to other uses, including open grasslands by shifting cultivation. The first phase is not a result of population-land pressure but of the economics of lumber exploitation. Technically, it does not result in deforestation but in a logged-out forest easily cleared by shifting cultivators.

In reviewing comparative figures for some countries of Southeast Asia, the Philippines has the highest population with 220 per square kilometers, yet Thailand (109) has sustained the highest rate of deforestation during the

postwar period (p. 22). As a result, Kummer asks whether population pressure is a function of density alone or should it be included under socioeconomic considerations and migration to the uplands due to the failure of macroeconomic policies.

Of the theories on deforestation presented, the most applicable to the Philippines is that of Guppy. The four separate but related factors given are population growth and land hunger, inequitable social conditions of a skewed land ownership, an elite politically maintaining its position, and the active support of other governments and international lending agencies. A review of political ecology and disaster theory also strengthens this argument.

Kummer's analysis of postwar Philippines is that economic development did not provide adequate jobs, resulting in the further marginalization of the impoverished in the uplands. He says it is impossible to prove the political framework and the corruption that went with it. However, for this, the research strategy has to change, and include investigative journalism and legal action. Marites Danguilan Vitug recently completed a significant work on forest politics with undeniable accusations as to the unlimited resource access gained by the elite. This for the moment leaves Kummer to prove that the apparent cause of deforestation—population growth—is not *the* critical factor.

To deal with such a perception of deforestation, a list of 14 parameters or more can be considered. However, data for such—like geophysical attributes, climate, migration, poverty, commercial agriculture, and peace and order—were not available, while it was difficult to get a time sequence for the others. In an effort to correlate forest cover with available data sets on deforestation, population, agricultural area, roads and distance from Manila, figures were established for 1957, 1970 and 1980.

Much of the text deals with the necessary establishment of what data really exist for forest cover. A great deal is missing, and for those data that exist, there are problems of incompleteness, dubious quality "and substantial circumstantial evidence to indicate deliberate manipulation or destruction of data by government officials." Any analysis is further compounded by the lack of standardization in data-gathering over the years.

The findings are that deforestation in the postwar period was 23 percent to 300 percent greater than that of agriculture until the 1980s, when the latter began to expand into these degraded lands at a faster rate. This means that although agriculture has generally extended into logged-out areas, there was a time-gap before the land was converted. Furthermore, this conversion of the uplands from logged-out forest to temporary agriculture continues as a degenerative process to the level of unproductive grasslands.

Such grass and scrublands today are in excess of six million hectares mainly due to the lack of protective action by those responsible for forest management. Now with less than 3 percent primary commercial forest in the country, the pressure is on logging the remaining 20 percent of secondary forest

and using it for plantations. These activities continue to displace many of the two million or so upland traditional *kaingeros* whose practices significantly differ from the lowland migrants of much larger numbers. Since the war, neither regeneration nor reforestation was seriously encouraged, confirmed by the very few exceptions out of nearly 500 concessions during the Marcos era.

Factors in Deforestation

The effort to rank factors according to their relative contribution to forest destruction was done by various analyses. The order of significance was forest area, distance from Manila, change in agricultural area, population, and roads. The model of the deforestation process initially proposed could not be confirmed since data could not be gathered on corruption, illegal logging, elite access to resources, development projects, rural and urban poverty and migration, and other factors which provide the socioeconomic framework for logging and shifting cultivation (p. 95).

Given that illegal activities could be well in excess of the legal annual allowable cut (AAC) and concessions ran for twenty-five years, it is not surprising that there was no significant correlation of the AAC with deforestation. Yet with virtually all forest land given out as concessions, forest cover has become increasingly indicative of logged-over forest ready for conversion. Therefore, it is not surprising to find the highest correlation between forest area and deforestation.

The increase in roads is one factor not generally included, yet it plays an important role in the extraction of timber, particularly in the wetter areas of the country, and for hauling timber across an island. However, there is little basis for saying that the density of government roads indicates the active logging roads in a province (p. 109). Furthermore, though distance from Manila is a factor, in the Philippines it does not indicate corruption or lack of control from Manila (p. 123), in that the highest members of the state and the members of the political and military elite knew no distance in depleting this resource.

Neither can logging be considered on a purely provincial basis (p. 102), as many logging concessions overlay two and in a number, three, provinces. Moreover, that which was legally extracted was recorded only in one designated province. It would have been helpful, however, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other people analyzing their province or regional situation to have had the province data for all the factors included in an appendix.

The work shows the data problems in doing serious quantitative analysis of tropical deforestation on a national level and raises important questions about the validity of cross-national regression analysis in understanding deforestation. It clearly shows that forest-cover studies are of limited help in

understanding the process of deforestation. Outside of the lack and loss of data, if the government is indeed serious, in the future much attention must be given to standardize data-gathering over time and the choosing of categories. So far, the evaluation of many is that government policies have resulted in a process of deforestation that "has been more manipulated than mis-guided," with logging being viewed by many studies as another example of "institutionalized looting" (p. 139).

Conclusion

Kummer's work fills a crucial gap in our knowledge and is a significant revision of the national perspective on deforestation necessary for policy development. Since the analysis stopped in 1988, DENR has become more responsive and a degree of change has been achieved in dialogue. Though the study gives attention to the difference between traditional shifting cultivation and that of lowland migrants to the uplands and the struggle of these communities to establish a recognized and sustaining livelihood, these areas need much greater attention. The data on primary and secondary forest is not analyzed, and the process of degradation has not been investigated.

As a result, the much-needed data on regeneration cannot be developed in response to present policies and programs of reforestation, which attempt to improve forest cover and land-use. If such studies are not seriously undertaken, they will only lead to poor management of our forests. Then there are the further external costs of the postwar logging industry, including upland erosion and the increasing drought-flood pattern in the lowland. Hopefully, this study will encourage such further work.