

The politics of deforestation in indonesia



In analyzing the article, ??? The politics of deforestation in Indonesia??? by Peter Dauvergne, first discuss two arguments that the Indonesian government state for the continuing deforestation in Indonesia.

In responding to these claims by the government, then discuss two arguments put forward by Dauvergne to explain the more significant reasons for the political support for deforestation in Indonesia. Indonesia has got ten percent of the world??™ s rain forests but is losing almost nine hundred thousand hectares of forest every year. Deforestation is a serious problem in third world countries. In this article, there are four explanations of deforestation, which are tropical government, environmental, developmental, and public policy. Development projects, which are sponsored transmigration settlement, spontaneous migration and estate crop development have decreased 1, 280, 000 hectares of forest, logging has decreased 480, 000 hectares and normal fire has decreased 360, 000 hectares. The total loss from 1980 to 1986 is 5, 120, 000 hectares, but Indonesian government claims that the culprits are indigenious people and their old fashioned farming techniques and ??? natural??? fires. The Indonesian government claims that traditional agriculture swidden agriculture by indigenious people who live on outer islands is nonefficient and devastating, and asserts that it is the main cause of deforestation.

Blaming indigenious people supports the government??™ s tribal integration policy. From 1972 to 1982, more than ten thousand native families were forced to move to sedentary agricultural areas. These people were also accused of destroying the forests. According to Dauvergne, transmigration is unfair, because these people have no legal titel to their lands and often

lose their lands to logging companies. Therefore, many farmers became incapable of practicing unsustainable farming. Transmigration policy made those people farm with inappropriate farm models for the Indonesian ecosystem and wrong farming techniques had also increased the deforestation. The most crowded transmigration was in 1987. At this transmigration, almost 3, 600, 000 people were forced to move from Java to the outer islands and almost 3, 300, 000 hectares of forest came to grief.

According to Carmel Budiardja, transmigration was allowed by military forces in Jakarta, in order to have more ??? national security??? and ??? crush dissent???. Not to mention, transmigration needed lots of money and many companies bribed the government to keep working on transmigration projects. Furthermore, World Bank provided money for Indonesia??™ s transmigration projects. The Indonesian government stopper working on transmigration project by the early 1990s. Although important numbers of people are still forced to live on the outer islands. The other cause for deforestation is logging. The legal and illegal logging has an important effect for deforestation.

There are many important political forces which allow and support logging and logging practices are not well controlled. According to an Indonesian forestry official, illegal logging is equal to 15 percent of yearly production. This activity helps Indonesia??™ s institutionalized corruption, especially with the military forces. In 1967, Indonesian government created a law the Foreign Capital Investment Law which called in multinational timber companies. According to this law, multinational companies had been free not to pay taxes for 5 years. In 1980, the government had prohibited the export

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of logs which made the multinational companies move to East Malaysia and had begun to develop a local wood industry. In 1985, all wood companies were forced to join the Wood Panel Association, known as Apkindo by the government and military forces.

In 1988, Indonesia had become the world's plywood supplier with having more than 70 percent of the market. Today Apkindo has close relations with military politics and forestry management in Indonesia. Apkindo is the only company which has an export licence in wood industry.

A senior forestry official's sentence explains the all situation in Indonesia: The forestry department cooperates with Apkindo, but Apkindo really makes policy. Apkindo requests high fees from forest holders. However, important number of these fees are lost. Person could be sure that these fees are into the military officials, politicians and businessmen's pocket. There is no government official who asks about the lost fees. To sum up, Indonesia government's policies make big companies work easier and helps deforestation. Many officials make decisions without thinking about the future, as a matter of fact that the Indonesian government five year plans focus on industrialization and macroeconomic indicators. Indonesia's Department of Environment has concerns, but is silenced by economic and political interests and it is proven that ministry officials take bribe not to see anything.

According to Indonesian government, they have planned better forest management which is increasing reforestation taxes, reapplying transmigration program, and improving overall management, however new

policy has minor effect on deforestation. The Indonesian government do not focus on right reasons to solve the deforestation problem. They are still blaming indigenous people, which is very easy, because these people have no political or military power to fight back. Not to mention, Indonesian policy is supported by international finance and markets. To solve this problem, politicians who support destroying forest practices must understand the danger of their process. Reference List Dauvergne Peter The Politics of Deforestation in Indonesia