

Dimensions, Patterns and Limits of Interdependence: An Assessment of Government - Third Sector Relations in Environmental Management

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To promote partnership between the government and the third sector in pursuing sustainable environmental management, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has promulgated administrative issuances broadening the nature of participation by the third sector since 1988. These administrative mechanisms include: the establishment of an NGO Desk in the DENR central office in 1989, the definition of requirements and procedures for accreditation of NGOs interested to become eligible partners in environmental programs, the application of competitive bidding as the mode of selecting NGOs and contracting their services, and the implementation of administrative measures to ensure that NGOs are held accountable for the program resources they utilize. While resource-dependence of the DENR on the third sector is anchored on the latter's high credibility and social/organizing skills, the third sector views that its dependence on the DENR hinges on the agency's financial resources, legitimacy and access to nonlegislative policymaking process. Interdependence, however, has limits as shown by the complaints coming from both the government/DENR and the third sector.

Introduction

After almost ten years since the national government laid down the legal mandate and framework for participation of the third sector in the country's development processes in accordance with the 1987 Constitution, the problem of operationalizing participation in environmental management continues today to baffle public administrators, planners and managers at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). There is a general perception within the department that the existing DENR-third sector collaboration in many environmental programs has not really produced the desired results such as the achievement of specific program objectives and

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better services to the target clientele. The low performance of the Asian Development Bank-Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (ADB-OECF)-funded National Forestation Program (NFP) in some areas from 1988 to 1992 is the case normally cited to support the claim that there is not much difference between the current management approach based on a joint DENR-third sector undertaking and the traditional "by administration" approach. Even the method and the quality of community organizing work done by the third sector is sometimes questioned in light of the perceived longer time devoted to the formation of local organizations than the established schedule, which causes delays in starting up other planned development activities. The applicability and the effectiveness of the collaboration between the DENR and the third sector are surprisingly perceived within the narrow confines of the performance or outcome of program implementation. Unfortunately, most monitoring and evaluation parameters currently employed to gauge performance are physically and technically oriented. The admixture of target-oriented and process-based approaches in the assessment system has not yet been successfully established.

One major management initiative to improve and strengthen the relations between the government and the third sector in the pursuit of sustainable environmental management is the formulation of administrative, fiscal and other institutional mechanisms. Since 1988, the DENR has promulgated administrative issuances (i.e., guidelines, rules and regulations) that constantly underscore the significant part of the third sector, define its roles and responsibilities, and identify requirements for participation, reporting, monitoring and assessment of its performance in the agency's programs. Many of these instruments echo the government's commitment to the principles of people empowerment and participatory and sustainable development. The desire to institute the ideal collaboration, cooperation or partnership between the DENR and the third sector is explicitly stated in the basic policy statements and objectives of some administrative edicts (e.g., DENR Administrative Order No. 52 dated 9 October 1992 or DAO 52 s. 1992), while it is implied in others. Interestingly, the edicts have also progressively broadened the nature (or "areas," as the DENR called it) of participation by the third sector, from primarily direct program or project intervention such as reforestation, livelihood and farming systems development to provision of skills and services in the transformation of social structures and traditional processes of local governance through community organizing; participatory policy and plan formulation; monitoring and evaluation; law enforcement; and information, education and communication (IEC) including training of organizations. During the past decade, however, there has been no systematic attempt to assess how third sector participation, or the nature of collaboration between this sector and the DENR, has evolved over time. In other words, the effects of existing mechanisms on participation or collaboration by the third sector in DENR environmental programs remain unclear. The thesis of this

study is that the existing mechanisms are not fully supportive of, or adequate for, an effective functioning of a DENR-third sector collaboration.

The lack of consistency between the concept and practice of participation often undermines whatever good intentions are expressed in government policies, political speeches and management pronouncements. The successful matching of its concept and praxis, however, needs "supportive" administrative policies, mechanisms and processes to be in place. What do we mean by "supportive" and why? DeHoog (1989) offered an answer when he pointed out that cooperation or partnership arrangement demands decentralized and flexible decisionmaking processes that permit adaptation of the administrative and service delivery systems to the peculiar site and resource conditions, and the uncertainties associated with environmental programs "without the constraint of artificial deadlines, unrealistic contract provisions, or complex procedures" (DeHoog 1989: 333). In short, "supportive" policies, mechanisms and processes must provide actors in the relationship a reasonable amount of flexibility to act or respond rightly and quickly to meet people's (or clientele's) aspirations and needs. The flexibility condition is expected to hasten, rather than delay, planning and implementation of environmental programs in view of the presumed commitment and willingness of both parties to comply with the terms of the partnership agreement, and avoid situations and behaviors that would impair cooperation. This presumption takes credence from the basic character of an ideal partnership in which each party in the relationship assumes almost similar responsibilities for the outcomes of their joint actions or decisions.

It is also inherent in a cooperation model that the parties act as "relatively equal partners" (DeHoog 1989: 330). The term "relative" in the relationship recognizes the likelihood of certain "resources" being owned or controlled by one of the parties which the other requires in the successful performance of its functions (Emerson 1962 and Saidel 1991). Given the frequent referral to this model by many DENR programs and administrative issuances, it has become imperative to interpret and operationalize the concept of participation in accordance with the context just described. The desired outcomes of cooperation, as DeHoog (1989) stressed, are also partly contingent on internal and external organizational conditions of both parties involved. An analysis of these conditions, along with the existing mechanisms, is a good starting point to better understand the precise character of government-third sector relationship, and their relative interdependence, in environmental management.

This article draws on the findings of a few case studies on government-NGO cooperation (e.g., Ganapin 1993; Watson and Laquihon 1993; Miclat-Teves and Lewis 1993, Gonsalves and Miclat-Teves 1993; Cerna and Miclat-Teves published in Farrington *et al.* 1993; Marco 1994; and Fugere,

forthcoming) and other available secondary information, and uses theoretical approaches to describe and analyze the dimensions, patterns and limits of dependence between the government (i.e., DENR) and the third sector (mainly the NGOs) in planning and implementing public programs on environmental management within the context of the cooperation or partnership model. For the purpose of this study, the "dimensions" of dependence refer to a set of criteria which measure the relative importance of resources to the parties in an exchange network. Saidel (1991) identifies three dimensions in her study of the relationship between state agencies and nonprofit organizations in the United States which work together in four distinct service areas (arts, health, mental retardation and developmental disabilities, and human service). These dimensions are: (1) importance of the resources to the organization to function, operate and deliver programs or services, (2) availability of the same resources from another source, and (3) ability of the same organization to compel, force or pressure the other party to provide needed resources. The resources, as Saidel proposes, include "anything of value, tangible and intangible, that can be exchanged between organizations" (Saidel 1991: 544). The present study extends this definition to take into account the unique social skills and behavioral characteristics of the third sector such as community organizing ability, its high commitment and initiative, and its ability to act quickly to meet people's needs. This particular organizational resource can also be exchanged with or imparted to the government by the third sector. In contrast, the government has reserves of technical expertise in various fields which are a vital resource that can be provided to many third sector organizations in exchange for equally important resources of the latter. All organizational resources, such as those just mentioned, which are exchanged in existing relations between the government and the third sector in environmental management will be identified and assessed by adopting and expanding Saidel's model of resource dependence relations.

The patterns of dependence point to the nature of inter-organizational (or intersectoral) arrangements or roles over time in response to changing conditions in internal and external organizational environments. DeHoog (1990) notes three of these conditions: (1) the characteristics of the external environment, especially the number of service suppliers; (2) the level (and quality) of organizational resources (e.g., personnel, funds, time and expertise) necessary to cover the many transaction costs involved in the participatory development process; and (3) the degree of uncertainty about funding, future events, service technologies, etc. The external environment condition incorporates the direct and indirect influence of the international development and funding organizations (e.g., the United Nations, International Monetary Fund/World Bank [IMF/WB], European Union and the United States Agency for International Development [USAID]) on the country's environmental policies and programs or the government's ability to cope with external pressures. It can be inferred that the higher the level of public dissatisfaction with government's

ability to deliver basic services, the more external pressures would be exerted on the government. In many instances, especially during martial law, pressures on Philippine government have generally originated from both international organizations and national multisectoral groups, which eventually contributed to increased direct external funding of third sector environmental-cum-poverty alleviation projects (e.g., the Canada Fund). The internal organizational environment condition embodies not only the level and quality of its resources but also the appropriateness of the administrative mechanisms on partnership arrangement. These two conditions will be examined in more detail below in the course of exploring the global and national contexts of Philippine environmentalism, and the evolution of specific government mechanisms in response to changing conditions. Arguably, the same conditions have tremendously influenced the changing pattern of relationship between government and the third sector. The present study does not directly address the third condition, the uncertainty issue, and any implicit reference to it occurs only in relation to the discussion of the other two conditions.

The limits of dependence refer to the perceived effects of the nature of partnership arrangements on the behavioral and structural characteristics of each party in the relationship. Unstructured interviews, in the form of informal discussions, with some officers of the DENR and the third sector serve as the main source of information for this particular aspect of the study. Perceptions about the nature of their existing association were solicited, as well as specific institutional arrangements or administrative mechanisms that create constraints on the relationship. Recent available reports and studies on the subject substantiate the accuracy and conformity of the perceptions gathered from selected actors in the partnership. The next section briefly looks at the significant global and national events that triggered the growth of environmental movements and the third sector in the country in order to shed light on the sector's distinct structural and behavioral attributes which are considered as vital resources in delivering government environmental programs and services to resource-dependent communities. The changes in DENR's legal mandate and development orientation are also highlighted to identify the strengths and weaknesses of its organizational resources.

Global and National Contexts of Philippine Environmentalism

At the international level, the motivational force of the environmental movements is rooted in (a) the experiences borne out of decades of following Western concepts of development models that mainly favored the developed world, at the expense of most developing countries; and (b) the direct interventions of foreign countries and organizations especially the IMF/WB with its series of structural adjustment loans (SAL) tied to certain policy conditionalities (Briones 1992).

The national government's early preoccupation with industrialization and modernization goals perpetuated the commercialization and intensification of tropical timber extraction and mining operation in the country. Entry to these industries by foreign investors has been facilitated by "accommodating" resource use policies (e.g., allowing foreign companies to lease or own large tracts of the public domain), accompanied by generous incentives such as low land rents and user charges. Some of these policies formed part of the government's commitments to certain "donors." Experience shows that those policies have largely benefitted the foreign-owned or -controlled companies (e.g., Cellophil Resource Corporation in Abra until its closure in 1984 and the Marcopper Corporation in Marinduque until today) and a few local elites, while leaving the country's environment in critical condition and dislocating hundreds of local settlers. By and large, loan/grant conditionalities have greatly influenced the fiscal, monetary, trade and other economic liberalization policies of the government.

In the environment and natural resources sector, the opening of public lands (particularly those in Mindanao) to commercial, capital-intensive plantation type operation has further aggravated the already inequitable distribution of the nation's wealth, resulting in landlessness and displacement of indigenous cultural communities. The sectoral priorities and bias for large infrastructure of multilateral funding institutions like the IMF/WB destroyed some rich forestlands and important watersheds to give way to dam construction (e.g., the Chico River Dam) for irrigation and energy production. Along with environmental degradation, the Filipinos also suffered the loss of valuable endemic wildlife species and ecosystems, the erosion of traditional cultures and practices, and the increased number of urban and upland squatters. To many of the first local environmentalists (e.g., the Bontocs and Kalingas in the Cordilleras who fought against the Chico River Dam Project, the Tinggians in Abra against Cellophil Resource Corporation, and the San Fernando residents in Bukidnon against the Caridad C. Almendras Logging Enterprises), the grassroots' problems have not been confined to the attainment of a balance between development and environment but have also placed at risk their survival and human rights.

While austerity measures in government operations as incorporated in the SAL conditionalities have supposedly reduced the burden on the country's national treasury, pro-poor programs of government have generally failed to deliver better services, alleviate poverty, and address human rights violations and survival needs. Government policies governing resource use have until the early 1970s been anti-poor, where upland settlers have been considered "illegal occupants" or "squatters" banned from entering, residing on or cultivating lands in the forests. Normally considered the main destroyer of the country's forests, the government enforced harsh punishments for those who would be caught squatting in public lands or collecting forest resources through

imprisonment and eviction from the public domain. At that time, the primary concerns in resource management were focused on expansion of revenue base and areas of investment. The early failures of government to cope with external pressures, and to vigorously pursue pro-poor and environmentally sustainable development policies and programs have resulted in small pockets of grassroots environmental movements' protest actions carried out either by local settlers themselves, or by the NGOs and local people.

From the early 1970s to mid-1980s, under an authoritarian government, many third-sector organizations evolved to take on some normal government environmental functions such as the development of local expertise (e.g., barefoot technicians, organizers, parateachers, paramedics and paralegal officers), and the provision of technical assistance in small-scale upland farm development, backyard gardening and livestock raising, community resource management, and organizational development. Some NGOs intensified their advocacy work to create greater public awareness on the extent of environmental problems, to mobilize civil society for collective protest action, and to elicit humanitarian and political support from other national private groups and international donor organizations aimed at pressuring the government to undertake the necessary institutional reforms. The effectiveness of third sector involvement in environmental concerns, however, was severely hindered by the form of government during the period. Protest actions related to environmental issues, as elsewhere, were then narrowly viewed as acts of subversion and indiscriminately crushed by the use of military forces. The political situation proved to be difficult and risky for most third-sector organizations to meet coastal and upland resource-dependent communities' increasing needs for social and technical services. Inevitably, the sector's organizational growth also suffered a setback by the difficulty of pursuing a reasonable level of public visibility of their field operations and conducting a sustained staff development program without being suspected by the government of expanding mass base support for the communist movement. Forced by such unavoidable circumstances, many third sector organizations undertook environmental advocacy and the integration of their main concerns with community development in a somewhat disjointed manner. Alliance formation or networking among NGOs, mostly informal, conceals their missions.

The EDSA revolution renewed hopes of greater freedom and safer political climate conducive to the third sector's work in upland and coastal communities. The Aquino government officially accorded "recognition to the contribution of NGOs to development and responded to pressures ... to improve NGO-GO relations" (Micalat-Teves and Lewis 1993: 231). Initial government actions showed its desire to encourage participation from wider sections of the civil society in development and environment. The concretization of state's basic policy on participation and people empowerment in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) under the Aquino (1987-1992) and

Ramos (1993-1998) administrations is an example of such actions. This document avers that the third sector, among other popular movements, would now be involved in decisionmaking, planning and implementation of programs and projects of national significance.

In the area of environmental management, three interrelated events propelled the growth in third sector participation which could be primarily attributed to the neglect by government of environmental protection and upland development over time, especially during martial law. These events were (1) the displacement of indigenous cultural communities (ICCs) and other local communities coupled with human rights violations as cited earlier; (2) the growing international donor support to third sector projects; and (3) the change in the mandate of the DENR. The last two events deserve elaboration on how the external, as well as internal, environmental conditions influence the organizational characteristics and resources of both the third sector and the DENR. This information is an important input to the assessment of the dimensions, patterns and limits of interdependence between the two sectors.

Direct International Donor Support to Environmental Third Sector Organizations

With the political landscape during martial law unfavorable for participatory development, and littered with bureaucratic red-tapism, graft and corruption, unresponsive institutional reform, and insignificant social impact of public programs, donor countries and organizations decided to develop or tap alternative delivery mechanisms. The direct linkage of many environmental third-sector organizations to the grassroots has made them more logical and effective institutions to channel the development funds so that the target communities would directly benefit from the programs to be supported by such vital resource. From the 1970s to the present, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and USAID have increased their financial support to third-sector environmental-cum-developmental programs and projects.

In the past eight years, two major environmental programs amounting to about \$44.0 million (i.e., the Debt-for-Nature Swap and Integrated Protected Areas Conservation and Management) have been placed under the direct management of the third sector. The Debt-for-Nature scheme for biodiversity conservation is being supported by USAID in the amount of \$25.0 million, and is managed by the Foundation for Philippine Environment (FPE), a conservation-oriented NGO. The FPE takes responsibility for reallocating the funds to projects of other NGOs engaged in biodiversity conservation and management. Earlier in 1988, Haribon Foundation administered the \$2.0 million released by USAID in coordination with the DENR for the same

program to finance conservation activities in Palawan, particularly at St. Paul National Park and El Nido Marine Sanctuary. About \$17.0 million from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) fund administered by World Bank is now in the hands of a consortium of 18 third-sector organizations called the NGOs for Integrated Protected Areas, Inc. (NIPA) which is responsible for the implementation of protected areas conservation in ten sites in the country.

Apart from direct financing of third sector's environmental programs, foreign donors have also made the involvement of NGOs as a condition in the approval of many new government programs on environment and natural resources sector. Over the last decade, close to \$600.0 million worth of DENR programs have been provided for third sector participation either in community organizing; surveying, mapping and planning; comprehensive site development facilitation; monitoring and evaluation; information dissemination; training; or a combination of them.

The increased confidence of donor organizations in the third sector resulted from the recorded successes of many NGO projects like those of the Kalahan Education Foundation in Nueva Vizcaya (Rice 1981; Dolinen 1995), the Cebu soil and water conservation program of the Mag-uugmad Foundation, Inc. (MFI) (Cerna and Miclat-Teves 1993), and the sloping agricultural land technology developed by the Mindanao Baptist Rural Life Center (MBRLC) in Davao del Norte (Watson and Laquihon 1993). The careful, but deliberate, integration of environmental protection with community development of these latter programs further enhanced the particular strengths of the third sector in poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Moreover, many locally-based NGOs have shown exceptional dedication and initiative to advance the interests and rights of the ICCs and other local communities against environmentally-destructive development programs of government. All these factors, along with the growing number of professionals (e.g., lawyers, doctors, teachers, agriculturists) in the third sector, convinced many donors of the high likelihood of success if support would be channeled through them, or at least if they would be involved in externally funded government environmental programs. Farrington, Lewis *et al.* (1993: 6) add more specific characteristics of the third sector "which have led to such substantial increases in funding." In contrast, many government environmental programs in the past two decades failed not only in meeting their objectives but, more importantly, in sustaining their efforts after the withdrawal of external support.

In recent years, the United Nations (UN) and international organizations (IOs) have begun to "adopt structures and modes of operations" that allow meaningful interaction with NGOs, grassroots organizations and local communities (Uvin 1995: 506)—evidently in response to the changes desired by NGO coalitions from both the North and the South. These initiatives signified the international community's acceptance of the need for greater grassroots

participation in development processes. Uvin (1995: 506) calls this process of structural and operational adjustments as the "scaling down of the summit," involving the "development of structures and practices that are geared ... towards beneficiary scaling up and autonomy." Three main elements of scaling down have been identified, and are now being considered by the UN and the IOs in their policy and operational guidelines. These elements, as Uvin suggests, include:

- *Changes in the project cycle.* Given the fact that most "project cycles are too short, take too long to start, and are too rigid and large" (Uvin 1995: 507), strengthening the capability of the grassroots has proven to be difficult. A new mode of financing is required to provide a reasonable degree of flexibility in planning and implementation aspects, and more participatory development support that builds on the existing grassroots' efforts and strengthens them. The programs and institutional development modes are now increasingly introduced in developing countries, like the Philippines, to replace the project cycle approach. Consequently, these new modes would entail (a) adoption of a *learning process* instead of the conventional *blueprint model*, and (b) a decrease in the financial size of programs as well as the administrative conditions associated with them.
- *Changes in the profile of staff of IOs.* This particular element calls for an increase in the number of IOs staff *with knowledge of the sociocultural aspects of development and an experience in participatory development* to ensure their commitment to community involvement and NGO scaling up. In support of this change, staff promotion and performance appraisal should then be focused on the "degree of successful community involvement" and "long-term ... sustainability" (Uvin 1995: 507) instead of the usual quantity of resources inputted to programs.
- *Changes in the structure of accountability of IOs.* This calls for "decentralization of decisionmaking to the country level ..., particularly in regional and local planning, (to) offer opportunities both to governments and NGOs for 'appropriate administration' " (Uvin 1995: 507), together with supportive administrative mechanisms for community participation.

In the Philippines, donors in environment and natural resources sectors have begun to adopt the program and institutional development approaches, and decentralized mode of program planning and management at the LGUs' level (e.g., the Governance and Local Development or GOLD Program being coordinated by the Department of the Interior and Local Government, and the

DENR's Natural Resources Management Program, both financed by USAID), which necessitate third sector's support in the facilitation of community capability-building and organizational development.

Change in the DENR Mandate

The reorganization of DENR in 1987 served as another occasion for the expansion of third sector participation in environmental management. The new mandate of DENR would shift its plan from purely regulatory work to principally developmental activities in order to address the root causes of poverty and environmental degradation in resource-dependent communities by acknowledging the vital role of community settlers or local resource users in the sustainable development of the nation's environment and natural resources. In this context DENR taps the services of the third sector—recognizing the latter's direct link to the local communities, their high commitment and initiative, and their ability to act quickly to meet people's needs—for effective delivery of goods and services to its clientele. These sector characteristics, vital resources not inherent in government agencies like the DENR, enable the third sector to work with communities easily and effectively on such tasks as community organizing, advocacy/lobbying, training, and information dissemination campaigns (Ragrario 1993).

The new mandate has caught the DENR management not fully prepared to pursue community-based approaches to environmental management and natural resources development due to lack of community and regional development planners and managers within the organization. Most of its planners and managers, especially the frontline personnel, have been trained in highly specialized fields such as forestry, wildlife and parks management, mining engineering, geodetic engineering and environmental science. Dr. Celso Roque, former undersecretary of DENR observed: "This government has shown it cannot reafforest" (Hurst 1991: 192). This simple statement reflected both the DENR's limited resources (i.e., personnel and other materials) and the low level of preparedness and willingness of its personnel to live and work full-time with local communities to prepare the latter for the long-term responsibility of managing the appropriate development initiated by government.

Attempts to reorient and retrain the DENR field personnel (i.e., social forestry officers/technicians) in methods and techniques of development management, including basic knowledge in community organizing, were undertaken in 1989 with the help of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños. About a hundred field technicians attended the 45-day retooling-trainings, but the application of their newly acquired skills did not fully materialize with the devolution of certain DENR functions, properties and personnel to the local government units (LGUs) arising from the 1991 Local

Government Code (LGC). Consequently, most of the technicians were transferred to the LGUs, who are now doing more than social forestry-related activities like manning check points and issuing resource use licenses or permits. With reduced field personnel, the DENR has to elicit and mobilize support from different sectors such as the NGOs in the planning, implementation, monitoring and assessment of community-based environmental management programs, particularly those externally funded which remain within its jurisdiction under the LGC. The national retrenchment policy with regard to personnel recruitment also pointed up the need for government to increase the role of the third sector in such environmental management and sustainable development aspects as policy formulation and analysis, and law enforcement and compliance monitoring.

For effective government-third sector collaboration, the DENR has established an NGO Desk both at the national and regional levels to coordinate the participation of third sector organizations in its major programs. Further discussion on the NGO Desk's work will be pursued in the next section. The agency's program management offices (PMOs) and field units (i.e., the regional, provincial and community offices) are also directly coordinating with different environmental NGOs with respect to their specific functions or activities requiring the latter's cooperation and support. However, both the accreditation and selection of NGOs (which signify to participate in DENR programs) are being done primarily at the central and regional offices. The relatively centralized nature of these activities results more frequently in the selection of urban-based (mostly from Metro Manila) NGOs rather than those based in rural areas with detailed knowledge of the poor's cultures and needs. The mechanisms of these activities, as will be elaborated below, also tend to undermine the spirit of genuine participation or partnership being espoused by the national government, particularly the DENR. They reflect, in general, the government's intent to increase administrative oversight over third sector's operations. The serious doubts on these mechanisms, among others, raise a parallel question of whether the shift in the DENR mandate (focusing on development) is really geared towards people empowerment and grassroots development through community-based management of the country's environment and natural resources. A commitment to these principles, therefore, underpins clear and effective mechanisms through which the so-called "partner" third sector (and the rural poor) can express their views on appropriate policies, plans and programs for improved and sustainable environmental management.

Administrative Mechanisms for Government-Third Sector Cooperation in Environmental Management

Internal mechanisms of intersectoral cooperation normally expose the level of preparedness and willingness of an organization to pursue them through a successful conclusion. Hence, this section inquires on this issue by

briefly looking at the DENR's administrative mechanisms put in place since 1988 (i.e., when the agency began the full implementation of the reorganization plan).

Establishment of NGO Desk

The NGO Desk in the DENR central office was created in 1989 to institutionalize partnership with the third sector on various environmental concerns. This unit is responsible for the accreditation of third sector organizations which signify their intention to work with DENR in its different key functions and programs. It is also involved in establishing and maintaining working arrangements with individual, or group of, NGOs through consultations or dialogues and information dissemination and exchange. In addition, it provides assistance to specific DENR program/project management offices in undertaking investigation of NGOs' backgrounds and qualifications.

An assessment of the DENR's national NGO Desk's role indicates it is effective as a channel for NGOs' requests for support and for making their complaints over DENR's actions, as well as for identifying fly-by-night organizations. Miclat-Teves and Lewis (1993: 234) have attributed its effectiveness to the fact "that all of those in the NGO Desk, ... came from a strong NGO background or at least possessed a strong belief in the importance of NGO participation." As the nature and extent of third sector participation in environmental concerns considerably expanded from 1989 to the present, the NGO Desk saw itself increasingly tied up with accreditation, background investigation, and monitoring of the performance of selected organizations. This has placed the NGO Desk in a difficult situation with only a handful of staff, making it hardly able to document experiences on the joint DENR-NGO collaboration and to formulate workable policies and guidelines on effective third sector participation.

In the early 1990s, the national NGO Desk initiated the establishment of regional NGO Desks to decentralize its mandated functions, and facilitate effective functional coordination and resources complementation between DENR and NGOs. The accreditation or re-accreditation of locally based environmental NGOs thus became the responsibility of regional NGO Desks. Many of the regional coordinators of NGO Desks, however, have been in the agency for some years and/or have no actual working experience with NGOs. Orientations and trainings of regional NGO Desk coordinators to properly discharge their roles and responsibilities, and work with NGOs closely, seemed to have yielded varied results. For inherent lack of social awareness and sensibilities, some have not been able to establish good rapport with locally based NGOs, particularly those who have already acquired the culture of a

Weberian-type of bureaucratic organization. Most NGOs have shown their doubts about the commitment and sincerity of some regional coordinators because of their past or present records with local communities.

With both national and regional NGO Desks directly involved in accreditation work, the systematic collection, collation and recording of relevant data have become a major problem. Some regional Desks have included people's organizations (POs) and other local groups with different purposes such as Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Associations (ARBAs) and multipurpose agricultural cooperatives as NGOs. Many of the reported organizations have no complete information especially on their date of establishment, present status of operations and date of accreditation. Table 1 shows the geographical distribution, service area and key activities of environmental NGOs. Of over a thousand local organizations listed in the NGOs directory obtained from DENR NGO Desk in March 1996, only 426 could be considered NGOs.

It can be reasonably argued that the confidence of the third sector in the national NGO Desk may soon diminish with the gradual resignation of its key personnel who have rejoined the NGOs. The real challenge for DENR is to build up a critical mass within the organization which understands the philosophies and dynamics of the third sector, acquires a high credibility among the third sector organizations, and can make major decisions at the time of the dialogues and meetings with them. After all, the refocused mandate of DENR requires it to apply adaptive and participatory policy, program and strategy development and implementation processes in a comprehensive mode.

Mechanism for NGO Accreditation

In 1989, the DENR instituted an accreditation mechanism which comprises the requirements and procedures for interested NGOs to become eligible partners in environmental programs. Under DAO 120, issued in October of the same year, interested NGOs need to submit the following documents or information as bases for accreditation:

- accomplished NGO data sheet with organizational setup;
- duplicate but duly certified copy of the registration certificate from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC);
- audited financial statement, if applicable; and
- certificate of good community standing, usually secured from Barangay Councils, Municipal Governments or recognized non-elected community leaders.

Table 1. Geographical Distribution, Service Area and Key Environmental Activities of 426 NGOs Based on the Records of the DENR-NGO Desk as of March 1996

| Geographical Distribution Service Area | Total Number | Specific Environmental Activities | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|------------|------------|-----|----|----|----|------------|
| | | SLP | CO | CR | CF | SM | ME | Ad/ Net | Re/ Dis | IPs | Le | BC | WI | RT/ IEC |
| CAR | 29 | 7 | 6 | 1 | | | 5 | 2 | | | | | | 2 |
| 1 | 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 14 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | | | 2 | | | | | | 1 |
| 3 | 29 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | | | 1 | |
| 4 | 30 | 1 | 3 | 2 | | 5 | 15 | 1 | | 1 | | | | 2 |
| 5 | 64 | 1 | 1 | | 12 | 9 | 20 | | | | | | | |
| 6 | 26 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | | | |
| 7 | 31 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| 8 | 15 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | 1 | |
| 9 | 23 | | 6 | | 1 | 1 | 10 | | | | | | | |
| 10 | 7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | 56 | | 1 | 2 | | 2 | 2 | | | 1 | | 1 | | 2 |
| 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| National | 64 | 7 | 5 | | 3 | | 1 | 21 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 37 |
| International | 6 | | | | | | | 3 | | | | 1 | | 3 |
| Total | 426 | 28 | 32 | 26 | 20 | 20 | 57 | 33 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 49 |

Notes: The acronyms used to define the environmental activities are as follows:

| | |
|---|--|
| SLP - community-based socioeconomic/ livelihood projects | CO - community organizing and community development |
| CR - contract reforestation/forest management | CF - community forestry/farming |
| SM - survey, mapping and planning | ME - monitoring and evaluation |
| Ad/Net- advocacy and networking | Re/Dis - relief and disaster assistance |
| IPs - assistance to indigenous people's rights | Le - provision of legal services and paralegal officers' training |
| BC - biodiversity/wildlife conservation | WI - women in development |
| Rt/IEC- research, training and/or information, education and communication | |

Most of the individual NGO files have no complete information particularly on year founded, present status of operations and date of accreditation; hence, the above information are incomplete and should be interpreted with caution.

Source: DENR-NGO Desk, Special Concerns Office.

A fifth requirement was added in 1992 through DAO 52, which partly amended DAO 120, necessitating the submission to the DENR NGO Desk of documented track record of similar environmental work (e.g., advocacy, project implementation) undertaken by third sector organizations. The incorporation of this particular accreditation condition is apparently a result of the agency's assessment of the poor performance of some NGOs selected to carry out reforestation (based largely on physical achievements and delays in implementation of planned activities) three years after the beginning of the NFP. As such, it is used as a means to prevent or discourage the involvement of fly-by-night and ill-prepared NGOs from taking part in government environmental programs.

This mechanism is considered by the DENR as highly necessary to classify and form a pool of legitimate and eligible NGOs which can take specific environmental management functions or activities that precisely match the latter's expertise and experience. Consequently, it provides the DENR a ready reference for the selection of qualified NGOs for different types of environmental programs, projects or activities. However, it also violates certain basic principles of government-third sector collaboration especially the much needed "respect for NGO autonomy and independence" (Fernandez and del Rosario 1993: 256). When the third sector is dispossessed of its inherent behavioral attributes such as autonomy and independence, it simultaneously loses integrity and the ability to respond swiftly to local communities' needs. These characteristics, as a whole, obviously constitute a critical organizational resource of the third sector, which the government certainly requires to gain popular involvement and regain public trust. The aforementioned principle is, unfortunately, not yet legally established at present.

The accreditation process became even more cumbersome in 1993 when the DENR issued Memorandum Circular (MC) 2 requiring the *annual re-accreditation of NGOs* involved in its programs. As requisites for re-accreditation, NGOs must submit annual accomplishment report, annual financial statement, and changes in the list of officers, if applicable. This information serves as basis for assessing specific third sector organization's capabilities for both existing and future environmental programs. Unless an NGO possesses an updated certificate of accreditation issued by the DENR-NGO Desk, it loses a chance to continue working with any DENR program. The main rationale of this circular is to ensure that only technically competent, financially capable and administratively prepared NGOs could participate in the programs of the agency. This new requirement is a clear indication of direct and increasing government intervention into the affairs of the third sector (Lipsky and Smith 1989-90), which threatens to erode the latter's distinct behavioral and structural characteristics that make them effective organizations of the civil society.¹

However, the accreditation requirements attempt to establish or expand the application of government standard operating procedures (SOPs) in the third sector. For instance, there is an imposition of standard report formats and contents that seek to achieve simplicity, uniformity and regularity of information generation. Inasmuch as the information needed for NGO re-accreditation is mostly available in the DENR program management and field offices, the improvement of its management information systems that permit quick and systematic intra-departmental information exchange on a sustained basis is the first imperative.

Application of Competitive Bidding as a Mode of Selecting "Partners"

DAO 39 and MC 11, both issued in 1988, prescribe competitive bidding as the basic mode of selecting NGOs and contracting their services. The same administrative edicts define the procedures and requirements of the bidding process. The procedures generally resemble the contemporary bidding methods for government programs and projects participated in by the private (i.e., for-profit) organizations. Any third sector organization that intends to participate in different DENR programs, projects and activities² would have to submit five major sets of information on:

- *Legal matters* including SEC registration certificate, articles of incorporation and by-laws, and description and background of current directors/officers of the organization;
- *Technical matters* including experiences in reforestation and related projects, organizational chart and a complete qualification/experience data sheet of the key personnel, and conditional employment contract to employ duly qualified operations manager with experience in supervision of reforestation or plantation development projects;
- *Equipment and facilities* pledged to be used for the reforestation work;
- *Financial matters* consisting of audited financial statements for three years; and
- *Other administrative matters* including an authorization letter allowing a DENR representative to verify the accuracy of the submitted information.

These requirements do not only put into question the legitimacy of the existence and operation of the third sector, they also tend to structure its

behavior to resemble that of the DENR. Not surprisingly, therefore, some NGOs act like the agency's "alter ego" in the field. Ironically, both the bidding procedures and requirements do not guarantee that the third sector's *integrity and commitment* towards environmental and social development issues could really be captured and ranked. These organizational traits constitute the main arguments advanced by the DENR in securing NGOs' support and services in environmental management. But the evaluation criteria undermine the value of these traits as they place higher premium on the technical capability of NGOs than on their advantageous behavioral and structural attributes. The biased preference for technical knowledge and skills in the bidding process reflects to a large extent the bureaucratic character (i.e., technocracy, rule orientation and impersonality) of the government.

In particular, the peculiarities of NGOs' historical and ideological dimensions which influence to a great extent their behavior, perceptions and activities are seldom considered in the evaluation process. Neglect of these dimensions increases the likelihood of misjudging the capabilities and traits of the NGOs and, hence, of selecting inappropriate groups in terms of their commitment and voluntary zeal.

Another weakness of competitive bidding is its discriminatory tendency against small, locally based and poorly staffed NGOs. Experience points to a high percentage of urban-based NGOs which win in the bidding, compared with the former types of organizations, because of their greater access to information, technology and other resources. Moreover, urban-based NGOs are normally staffed with a large number of professionals. As such, they are better able to produce good quality proposals and reports than those in the rural areas. Such high quality of documents, however, does not fully measure or ensure the quality of field work—including commitment and initiative—which the NGOs are capable of. An in-depth assessment of the appropriateness of competitive bidding as a basis for NGO selection deserves earnest attention.

Contract and Program Requirements

Root (1995) suggests that third sector participation in service contracting for the delivery of environmental programs and services is an effective "...way to ensure the accountability of government." It increases opportunities for government programs and actors to serve the "public rather than their own interests" (Root 1995: 13). However, the government also wants to make sure that the NGOs are accountable for the program resources they utilize to carry out specific functions and activities. At present, the DENR implements four administrative measures to address the issue of third sector accountability:

- requiring the third sector to establish and maintain a separate book of accounts for each DENR program, project or service contract;
- subjecting financial reports of the NGOs to an annual audit by independent, private accountants, prior to submission of the same to the DENR;
- requiring the third sector to issue a performance bond equivalent to 10-15 percent of the total contract/project cost; and
- making the third sector's documents and records pertaining to DENR programs and projects available for review or verification by an authorized representative of the agency.

In addition, billing requests are practically required to be accompanied by official receipts detailing the types, quality and quantity of all the items procured by the NGOs charged against the program funds. While these measures are essentially pursued in compliance with the rules and regulations of the Commission on Audit (COA) and other oversight government agencies, they are largely viewed by the third sector as inconsistent with the principles of partnership such as mutual trust and confidence. All these measures have been formulated without participation of the third sector.

Most DENR program management offices (PMOs) also require contracted NGOs to submit work and financial plans, progress reports, and statements of financial utilization based on prescribed standard forms generally designed by the PMOs. This does not consider the diverse orientations and characteristics of the NGOs. The standardization of reports preparation, therefore, misses out on the opportunity to learn substantially from the unique strategies, experiences and lessons of the contracted NGOs. It also treats the types of NGOs and their respective capabilities as somewhat organizationally homogeneous and technically equal. Finally, it espouses too much formalism and red tapism in the work of the third sector, depriving the latter of the chance to exercise a reasonable degree of flexibility as well as to ensure responsiveness to clients' basic needs in their daily operations. This can be exemplified by the experience of an almost eight-year old NGO in the Southern Tagalog Region at the time it participated in a DENR foreign-funded project in the early 1990s. After a year, the NGO found itself highly pressured by the different administrative and technical requirements employed by the DENR project, to the extent that attention was divided between the project requirements and the community's needs. When both intra- and inter-organizational problems worsened, the NGO decided to cut its relationship with the project. But, the problems did not stop there. The NGO also lost its credibility with the local communities and even its existence as an organization, after only one year of working with the government. Of course,

the causes of the sad ending of the NGO could not be totally blamed on the DENR project. The NGO itself had a part in its own demise.

Early Attempts and Problems on Environmental Cooperation

Since 1989, the potential roles of NGOs in environmental management have expanded to include the following activities (pursuant to DAO 129 s. 1989, DAO 123 s. 1989, MC 24 s. 1989 and DAO 52 s. 1992):

- resource inventory;
- planning and policy formulation;
- project implementation;
- monitoring and evaluation;
- information, education and communication;
- law enforcement;
- community organizing;
- training; and
- facilitation in the development of additional livelihood opportunities.

The roles of the third sector vary with the nature and scale of environmental programs and related initiatives both at the national and sectoral levels. The establishment of the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) in 1992 provides an opportunity for building up capabilities in government-third sector cooperation on broad environmental and development concerns at the national level, while the DENR's NGO Desk and various foreign-funded programs like the Environment and Natural Resources Sectoral Adjustment Program (ENR-SECAL), National Forestation Program (NFP), Natural Resources Management Program (NRMP) and Community Forestry Program (CFP) are avenues to develop and enhance such cooperation on sector- or site-specific environmental management problems. Most of the activities mentioned above are components of these programs.

Nature and Mode of Cooperation

Government-third sector cooperation in environmental concerns can be classified into (1) policy formulation, (2) planning, (3) program/project implementation, (4) monitoring and evaluation, (5) advocacy, and (6) networking. Each major category implicitly specifies a particular mode and level of cooperation. The most commonly observed modes include consultation, collaboration, incorporation/integration, and information sharing.

The Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) is a multisectoral body entrusted to set national "directions in the form of policy

reforms, programs and new legislations that respond to the continuing and emerging issues and charting future actions related to environment and development" (paragraph 3, Section 2 of Executive Order No. 15 issued in September 1992). The nongovernment sector is represented in the PCSD, where seven of the 21 council members have come from this sector. Over the past four years, government agencies in the PCSD have constantly consulted the NGO representatives in the review of national and sectoral plans, policies and programs which may affect the environment prior to their submission to the President for approval, as well as in drawing up country statements and Philippine positions on the relevant agenda items of various international meetings on environment and development (or sustainable development). Among the different committees and subcommittees of the PCSD, NGOs' participation has been remarkably high in environment and natural resources sector. This exceptional performance by NGOs is not due to government's consultative action, however, but because of their social commitment to advance the cause of a balanced ecosystem. Consequently, many substantive concerns of the NGOs have been incorporated in various administrative orders issued by the President which prescribe the guidelines on the collection, utilization and processing of biological resources, including their exportation to other countries in order to conserve the nation's biodiversity, protect intellectual property rights and ancestral domains of the indigenous peoples, and provide the local communities with an equitable share of the benefits derived from the use of their resources. The consultative nature of the government-NGO relations in the PCSD casts serious doubts on government's sincerity to establish a genuine partnership.

In policy formulation, NGOs are now represented in various national and local policymaking and coordinating bodies of government such as the PCSD, special Local Environmental Council (LEC), and Protected Area Management Board (PAMB). By virtue of Executive Order No. 15, issued in September 1992, seven of the 21 members of PCSD have been allocated to the nongovernment sector. The same order grants nongovernment sector representatives "counterpart" status in determining the country's compliance with Agenda 21 (one of the three main international agreements reached during the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Brazil the same year).

Cooperation Problems and Challenges

The formal guarantees for third sector participation in environmental management expressed in constitutional provisions, laws, policies and administrative orders have yet to transcend certain behavioral and structural barriers inherent in a government bureaucracy to evolve genuine collaboration between the government and the third sector. The pervasive occurrences of these barriers in the actual practice of participation suggest that (1) the existing institutional mechanisms for collaboration remain inappropriate and

inadequate, and (2) both government and NGOs lack a basic understanding of each other's roles and resources. Consequently, both sectors develop adversarial attitudes toward each other that undermine meaningful collaboration and cooperation on various environmental programs. Reversing mutual distrust and animosity to full cooperation and active partnership (Quizon and Reyes 1989) demands a refocusing of the basis of collaboration towards an integrative exchange theory (Emerson 1962) grounded on "mutual dependence" (Lipsky and Smith 1989-90), away from the conventional "pay-for-services" conditions of government action such as service contracting.

Resource Dependence Relations: Theoretical Basis and Empirical Evidence

Emerson (1962) provides the theoretical basis for examining inter-organizational or interpersonal relations by virtue of mutual dependence. He postulates that the dependence of one party upon another is determined by the latter's power to maintain its control over the "things" the former values — which may range from funds and information to technical support depending on the relation in question. Emerson's theory of reciprocal power-dependence relations can be expressed as a pair of equations:

$$\begin{aligned} P_{ab} &= D_{ba} \\ P_{ba} &= D_{ab} \end{aligned}$$

This set of equations implies that "the Power of A over B is equal to, and based upon, the Dependence of B upon A" (emphasis added) (Emerson 1962: 33). Saidel applies this theory to analyze the relationship between public sector agencies and nonprofit organizations in New York as noted earlier. The term "things" in Emerson's concept of dependence is clarified by Saidel (1991) to mean the "resources" exchanged or shared in a relationship. Her reformulation of Emerson's equations takes the following form:

$$\begin{aligned} P_{sn} &= D_{ns} \\ P_{ns} &= D_{sn} \end{aligned}$$

where *s* refers to state agencies, and *n* to nonprofit organizations.

D_{ns} and D_{sn} yield "two measures of resource dependence that ... delineate a current picture of resource interdependence" (Saidel 1991: 543) between the two parties.

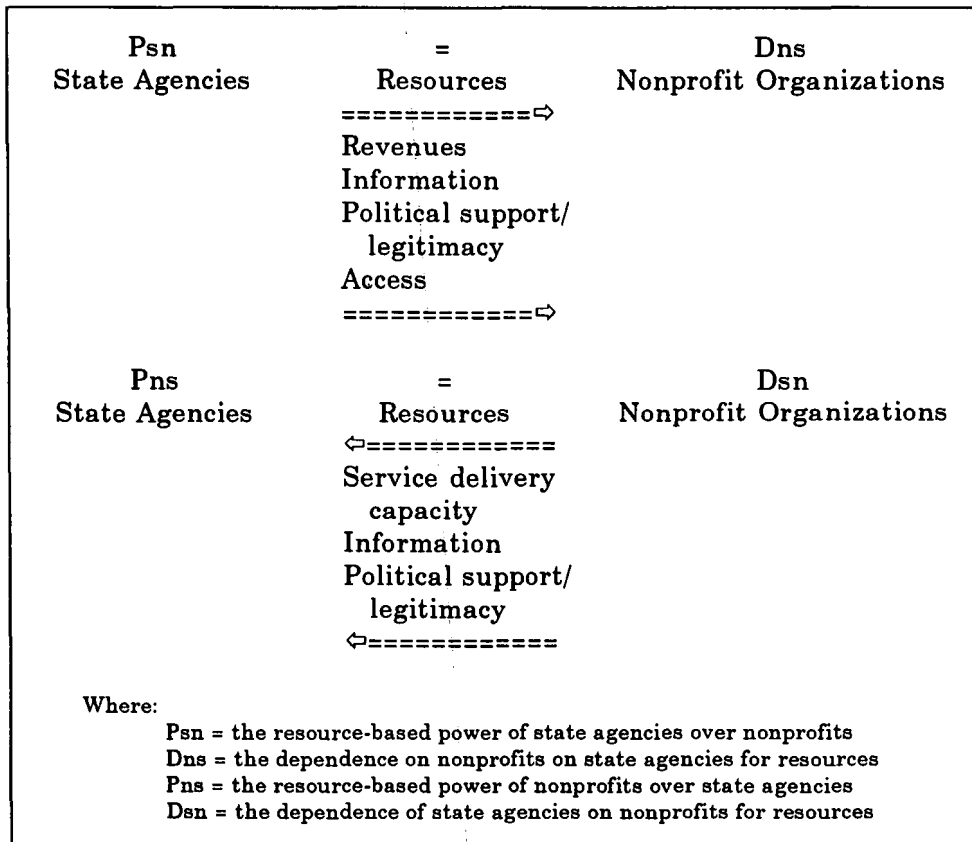
Saidel's study suggests a "strong and symmetrical interdependence across sectors and service areas." Thus, she contends that "nonprofit organizations do not appear to be at the margin ... but rather at the center of public services" (Saidel 1991: 319). A critique of Saidel's resource dependence equations is

presented in the next section with a view to extending them to reflect the distinct characteristics of environmental third sector organizations in developing countries like the Philippines.

*Saidel's Resource Dependence Framework:
A Critique and a Proposed Extension*

In the resource-dependence equations, the power of state agencies over nonprofit organizations resides in the dependence of the latter on the former's resources such as revenues; information, including expertise and technical assistance; political support and legitimacy, in the sense of external validation; and access to the nonlegislative policy process. These resources, common across service areas considered by Saidel, flow from state agencies to nonprofit organizations, as reflected by the arrows in Figure 1.

Figure 1. State Agency-Nonprofit Organization Resource Dependence Equations



Source: Saidel 1991: 545.

Nonprofit organizations supply to state agencies their service-delivery capacity, information, and political support and legitimacy. The inclusion of political support and legitimacy as a resource of nonprofit organizations recognizes their ability to influence legislature or other policymaking bodies on behalf of the interests of state agencies through advocacy and lobbying.

In formulations of both Saidel and Emerson, the behavioral attributes of state agencies and nonprofit organizations are presumed to be similar. However, the historical backgrounds of most third sector organizations in developing countries such as the Philippines suggest that such implicit assumption is inappropriate and unrealistic. Quite fundamental among third sector organizations in developing countries are their generally high level of volunteerism, commitment and credibility which do not exist, to a large degree, in most state agencies. The DENR, for instance, relies on the NGOs for many of its programs primarily because of such unique attributes, in addition to their special skills in community organizing. While the DENR considers them effective in improving/rebuilding government image in resource-dependent communities, the NGOs themselves value the same attributes for their continued existence and growth. This point is illustrated by the untimely demise of an NGO in Southern Tagalog Region after its pullout from a DENR project, as cited above.

While Emerson (1962: 32) might have some valid reasons for excluding "particular features of the persons or groups engaged in (such) relations, ... [p]ersonal traits, skills or possessions ... in a general theory," are critical in a relationship when one party can use them to influence or control the other's action. Such similar unique features of third sector organizations are, in fact, considered by state agencies like the DENR as vital resources for making the delivery of public goods and services more effective, efficient and sustainable.

In addition, the aggregation of the resources of nonprofit organizations across service areas also indicates that they possess the same level of service-delivery capacity, social/organizing skills and/or commitment/credibility. This particular assumption fails to recognize the different attributes among third sector organizations, even within a service area, which may lead to imprecise characterization of the sector if they are simply taken together. The results of the resource-dependence equations favor "not-so-good" or "fly-by-night" organizations at the expense of highly committed and experienced ones. Charlton (1995) advances two major reasons in support of this argument:

- There are some third sector organizations which normally seek accommodation with government agency, such as those government-induced organizations that look and behave like their creator; and

- There are newly emerging organizations in the third sector with little development experience, which tend to pattern themselves after the development models they know best — those of the state.

More specifically, in the Philippines, most NGOs dealing with the environment sector have emerged from three (3) main streams. Gutierrez (1989), Soriano *et al.* (1995) and Teehankee (1993), among others, describe the beginnings and characteristics of each stream — a summary of their attributes is presented in the Annex. Hence, it is important that the third sector organizations involved in DENR's environmental management programs should be classified first according to their historical roots and institutional missions, before their resources are aggregated (based on the same classification) for the estimation of the resource-dependence equations.

In Saidel's study, the stronger expertise and technical assistance of state agencies are subsumed under the resource "information." This appears to be a very strong (or strict) assumption! Some agencies may have enough financial and manpower resources so that relevant information can be provided the third sector both in the form of hard data (i.e., published materials) and through extension services, while others with resource constraints can only disseminate information either through published materials or periodic dispatch of extension officers. This latter situation seems to be a rule rather an exception in many developing countries. Thus, there is a need to distinguish the "information" supplied by state agencies to nonprofit organizations that come in the form of "hard data," from those directly transmitted by government personnel through technical assistance (trainings, home visits, focused group discussions, expert's advice, etc.).

Key Organizational Resources in the Resource-Dependence Equations

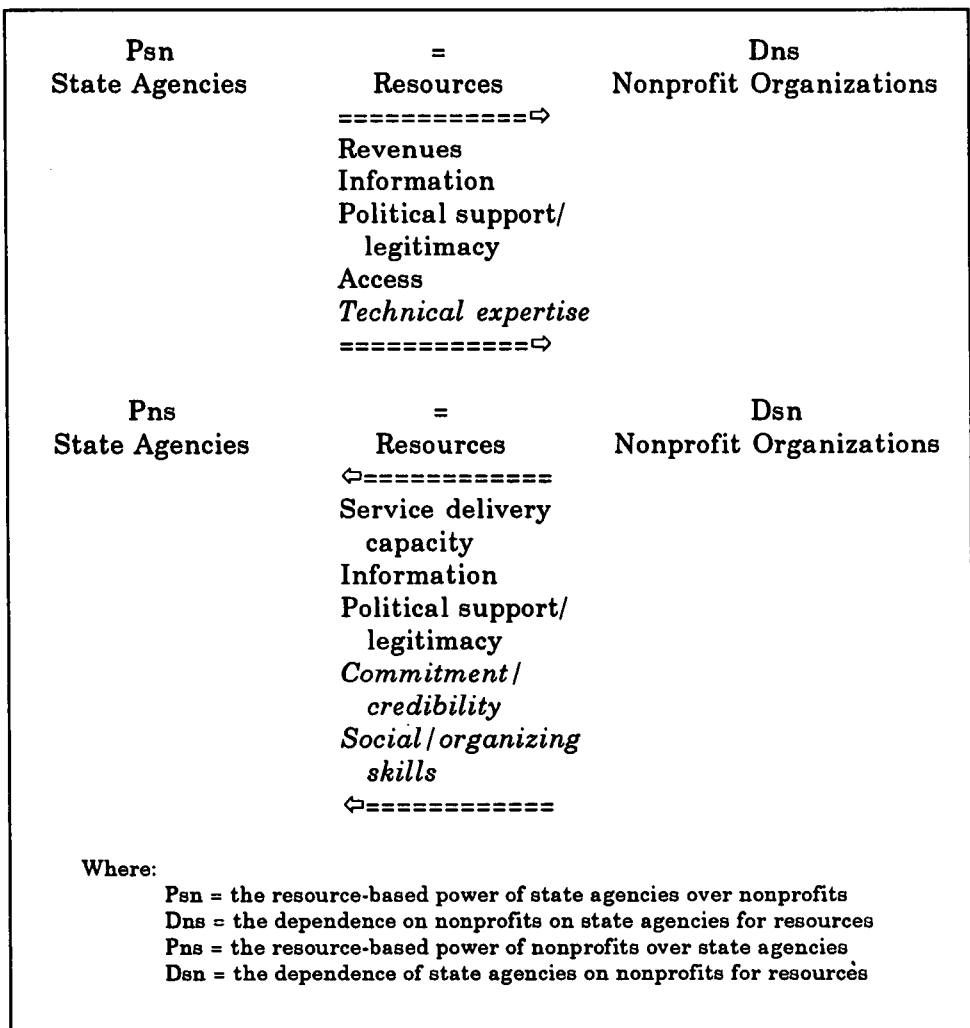
In the case of DENR-third sector collaboration in environmental management, the incorporation of social/organizing skills and personnel commitment/credibility as key resources of the NGOs in the resource-dependence equations is deemed necessary. These resources highlight two vital points raised earlier: (1) that not all environmental NGOs have the same beginnings and organizing capabilities, and (2) that some environmental NGOs are more of "pay-for-services" rather than service-oriented organizations. Their inclusion in the equations will therefore ensure the aggregation of resources of those NGOs which have similar historical roots, institutional missions and organizing capabilities.

On the side of the DENR, it is imperative to segregate the "technical expertise/assistance" of its personnel from "information" normally disseminated through printed/published materials and broadcast media, since the former resource is not readily available in the DENR regional, provincial

and community offices. This will sharpen the analysis of the organizational strengths and weaknesses of the DENR in relation to its readiness for participatory management of the country's environment and natural resources.

Figure 2 presents the proposed resource dependence equations for DENR-third sector relations in environmental management to incorporate the additional resources of both parties.

Figure 2. Proposed State Agency-Nonprofit Organization Resource Dependence Equations in Environmental Management



Source: Sidel 1991: 545.

These resources are used to analyze the dimensions, patterns and limits of interdependence between the DENR and the third sector. However, due to time and data constraints, this study focuses mainly on qualitative aspects based on data sources mentioned earlier. The limited number of DENR and NGO staff consulted also makes the results of the study mostly preliminary in nature.

Dimensions of Resource Dependence

Following Saidel's three resource-dependence criteria or dimensions, the DENR and the third sector offer both similar and different views. Each dimension is briefly examined below.

Importance of the Resources to the Organization in Order to Function, Operate or Deliver Programs or Services

Both parties acknowledge that collaboration between them is necessary to address the basic concerns of natural resource-dependent communities. Each sector sees itself as dependent for resources on the other at about the same level: the DENR identifies two critical resources from the NGOs; the latter identifies three resources they feel very important that should be provided by the DENR.

The DENR views that collaboration hinges on the third sector's high credibility and social/organizing skills, which are critical for the delivery of DENR programs or services. There is also a general perception that the NGOs' ability to become more flexible in their approach and scale of operations builds up their credibility/reputation among local communities. This is a particular NGO resource which the DENR cannot easily acquire (through the process of substitution using its own resources) to enable it to forego such resource and still continue getting the high level of people's involvement/support. Thus, while community organizers/development facilitators could be hired or trained within the organization, the DENR will find it more advantageous to tap the NGO services for such task. Even if the local people's trust and confidence is presumably fully regained by the DENR, it may not be able to match the inherent flexibility and high volunteerism among the NGOs in view of the government's bureaucratic systems.

From the point of view of the third sector, the DENR resources which are critical to environmental management include revenues (i.e., availability of financial resources), legitimacy (in the sense of external validation), and access to nonlegislative policymaking process. The growth in the number of NGOs increases the competition among them in securing financial assistance from

both the sector's traditional supporters and the new funding sources. Apart from this, the competition between the NGOs and government for development support from local and international financing institutions becomes even more stiff today than ten years ago or so, in the light of the shift in global development focus on former member-states of the Soviet Union and the poverty-stricken African nations. Along with this new development, the problems of global environmental destruction particularly the tropical forest and coastal ecosystems also lead to an increase in financial and technical support for environmental management in the country. Even with the expected reduction in the level of foreign support, the DENR is still viewed as a major channel of such assistance which the NGOs would like to tap in order to ensure its proper use and to support their own environmental management initiatives.

Despite the restoration of democratic government, many environmental NGOs still feel the threat of military or political harassment and intervention in their operations in the field. With so much of environmental programs located in upland areas, they see the importance of DENR's support to introduce them to other government/political units for the legitimization of their stay in the program areas. Their clamor for greater access to nonlegislative policymaking process partly arises from the non-involvement of the NGOs in the past that led to the government policies and procedures not supportive of genuine participatory and sustainable environmental management. The creation of the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) in 1992 grants the NGOs "counterpart" status with government agencies in determining the principles, policies, strategies and programs of the country's Agenda 21. Apart from the PCSD at the national level, there are still very few effective and permanent structures for building up capabilities in government-NGOs cooperation in environmental management at the sectoral and project level, where the NGOs can directly influence the development of operational policies and guidelines for specific local conditions and needs. Through these lower policymaking structures, the NGOs see a greater chance of integrating field experiences and local capabilities and cultures in environmental planning and policymaking.

Availability of Alternatives for Resources in Question

The availability of critical resources from other organizations is also acknowledged by both sectors. As a dimension of dependence, Cook (1977: 545, cited in Sidel, 1991) points out that if "alternative sources are available to an organization in an exchange network, dependence is less." From the limited information gathered, the DENR seems to have less alternative sources than the NGOs with respect to the critical resources they require from each other. The most common sources of critical resources for the DENR are the people's

organizations (POs), academic institutions, and LGUs. Among these sources, significant reservations about LGUs' credibility to local communities, and their ability to undertake honest-to-goodness community organizing are noted. The capacity of academic institutions to dispatch sufficient number of manpower in the field for an extended period of time also presents a limitation of this source. Finally, most of the POs are constrained to supply the critical resources because of the lack of actual experience and exposure to social, economic and environmental situations other than theirs. There are also very few POs with adequate members who can work in other communities without adversely affecting the ongoing development activities in their own respective areas.

For as long as community organizing work is highly dependent on the credibility and commitment of the organization doing it, the DENR will find itself in a difficult situation to forego these two interlinked resources of the NGOs in most of its community-based environmental projects.

For the NGOs, private donations, foreign donors, LGUs and POs are considered alternative sources of revenues and legitimacy. The increase in direct international donor support to environmental third sector organizations lessens their reliance on DENR programs/projects. Some rich private individuals and business groups (e.g., Shell Foundation and Philippine Business for Social Progress) also contribute finances and technical inputs to certain aspects of community development (such as capability building programs and marketing assistance). Some NGOs work directly with LGUs to assist in determining the use of LGUs' resources and the appropriate delivery systems. In the process of this collaboration, the NGOs acquire the local political support for their work. Of course, the NGOs still consider the POs and communities as the major source of their legitimacy. The wide sources of critical resources needed by the NGOs indicate their relative advantage in maintaining their operations with no or little support from the DENR. This attests to the fact that the NGOs, by nature, are independent and innovative.

Ability to Compel Provision of Resources

Both the DENR and the NGOs point to their distinct organizational attributes to compel or pressure each other to provide the needed resources for effective environmental management. The DENR uses the project resources (particularly, finances) and command and control mechanisms (rules and regulations) as means to influence and compel the NGOs to deliver their critical resources. At present, efforts are being made by the DENR to study and develop appropriate market-based instruments (incentives) to encourage environmental users and stakeholders, including the NGOs, to use environment-friendly technologies. The agency hopes to complement or alter

regulations with incentives to change its former "compelling" tactics from force to motivation. Again, the financial resources of the DENR's programs and projects are considered by the NGOs as the agency's chief incentive for them to comply with its (program/contract) requirements.

In contrast, the NGOs point to the growing coalitions and networks of national and international NGOs as effective mechanisms for advocacy and lobbying work which, in turn, help them to compel the government agencies (such as the DENR) to deliver the critical resources. The participation of the NGOs in the PCSD and the adoption of indirect delivery system (via the NGOs/POs) by the DENR, among others, are some evidences of the results of NGOs' advocacy/lobbying. However, the NGOs feel the strong internal opposition of many in government to allowing them to actively participate in policymaking and project planning and management involving the country's development and environment.

As a whole, each sector seems not to be able to fully exert pressure for resources on the other, because of its perceived alternative sources of such resources. While the resource dependence of both sectors on each other signifies considerable intersectoral dependence in the task of environmental management, it also suggests that each sector views itself to have retained a reasonable level of resource autonomy relative to the other.

The Patterns of Dependence

This section briefly discusses the nature of intersectoral arrangements or roles between the DENR and its assisting NGOs over time, in response to two changing conditions in internal and external organizational environments as defined by DeHoog (1990) and elaborated earlier. The intersectoral arrangements or roles are treated here as indirect (though crude) measures of resource dependence between the two sectors over time. In environmental management, such changes in organizational roles can be traced in three time periods: before 1981, between 1981 and 1985, and since 1986 (after the EDSA revolution). See Figure 3.

Before 1981

During this time, most of the present-day environmental NGOs existed under different names such as "human rights advocates," "conservation groups," and "rural reconstruction movements," and were generally not officially recognized by the government. Consequently, they assisted resource-dependent communities in relief work, small-scale livelihood projects, and advocacy and community mobilization with minimal or no coordination with

Figure 3. Patterns of Government-Third Sector Roles in Environmental Management

| <i>Before 1981</i> | <i>1981-1985</i> | <i>Since 1986</i> |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - policymaking - sectoral/program planning - program/project implementation - monitoring and assessment - service delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - policymaking - sectoral/program planning - program/project implementation - monitoring and assessment - service delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - policymaking - sectoral/program planning - program/project supervision/coordination - implementation of "special" projects |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Government Intervention</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;"> <p>Third Sector Initiative</p> </div> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Government Intervention</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;"> <p>Third Sector Initiative</p> </div> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Government Intervention</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;"> <p>Third Sector Initiative</p> </div> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relief work - small scale livelihood projects - area-based advocacy work (community mobilization) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participation in government-organized upland development group as innovator or demonstrator of better technologies - relief work - small scale livelihood development and environmental conservation projects - advocacy work (mobilization and lobbying for policy reform) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participation in policymaking through PCSD, PAMB* and other local environmental councils** - social preparation and information, education (IEC) components of environmental projects - monitoring and assessment of reforestation projects, including process documentation - facilitation of area-based development planning and management - applied research - advocacy and networking |

*PAMB refers to Protected Areas Management Board.

**Local environmental councils refer to special bodies created under the Local Government Code such as the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development and the Batangas Bay Council for Integrated Coastal Management.

the DENR. Martial Law limited any possible substantial interaction or resource exchange between the NGOs and the DENR, as stressed earlier.

The DENR, then, operated mainly as a regulatory agency that prohibited, evicted and penalized illegal and destructive users of the environment and natural resources, and undertook largely rehabilitation activities on degraded landscapes and seascapes which legally belong to the state. Environmental

policies, plans and projects were prepared primarily by the DENR in consultation with its field offices and, sometimes, local communities, without any conscious effort to coordinate with various support groups like the NGOs. All environmental management and natural resources development projects were correspondingly implemented "by administration" (i.e., using the DENR's organizational machinery). With practically no collaboration existing between the DENR and the NGOs, most plan and project designs and approaches were centered on the conservation and protection of the environment and natural resources rather than on the local people (or communities) who depended on them for their survival and development. Thus, the same policies, plans and projects were then branded as "anti-people" or "anti-poor" for they prosecuted upland settlers and indigenous peoples who fought to protect their local resources from all sorts of commercial and industrial developments, while they encouraged private companies to exploit the country's natural resources for short-term gains.

The only avenue to raise environmental issues with the government was the site-specific protests lodged by local communities with the support of the NGOs. But even in this case, the government merely reacted to specific problems or issues put forward by the communities and the NGOs, and any mitigating measures put in place focussed more on environmental protection, rather than on the human rights, survival and development of the communities.

Between 1981 and 1985

After decades of regulatory activities, the DENR witnessed the continued environmental degradation and destruction, despite its vigorous enforcement of environmental laws, rules and regulations. In 1981, the DENR launched the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP) through Letter of Instruction 1260 which recognized the potentials of upland settlers as partners in forest development and management. The ISFP also legitimized the forest occupation of upland settlers through a land tenure instrument. Because of its lack of knowledge and experience in participatory upland development, the DENR created a multisectoral Upland Development Working Group consisting of representatives from its organization, the academe (University of the Philippines at Los Baños, Ateneo de Manila University and De La Salle University), and the NGOs (e.g., Philippine Association for Intercultural Development). For the first time, the NGOs were accorded proper recognition in the development and demonstration of participatory approaches in upland development. This Working Group documented field experiences and generated manuals on participatory rural appraisal, farm planning and management, etc.

The NGO representatives in the Working Group acted as innovator, facilitator and demonstrator not only of participatory development approaches but also of better upland development technologies in close collaboration with the DENR field personnel. The assignment of dual roles to the NGOs, however, undermined their primary concern to institutionalize the adoption of participatory approaches in all environmental projects of the DENR. In fact, those same dual roles of the NGOs were explicitly or implicitly created in the minds of some DENR personnel that the former were expected to play in subsequent projects of the agency based on the Working Group's initial experiences and recommendations (as contained in relevant manuals, and administrative orders and circulars).

Outside the Working Group, the DENR and the NGOs worked almost independently on their own areas of concern (Figure 3). But, the advocacy work of the NGOs moved up from local-level protests to organizing national-level symposia and forming networks/linkages in order to seek general public support and eventually pressure the government/DENR to undertake necessary policy and structural reforms.

Since 1986 (After the EDSA Revolution)

The DENR and the NGOs began to collaborate and exchange resources on various environmental programs and projects after the EDSA revolution which reestablished democracy in the country. The formalization of such partnership by the 1987 Constitution and the 1991 Local Government Code added impetus to their struggle for greater and genuine participation in nonlegislative policymaking process (such as membership in the PCSD on "equal status" with government agencies, the PAMB and local environmental councils), and project planning and management. Subsequent administrative mechanisms of the DENR, as elaborated earlier, defined the specific roles of, and the requirements for, the NGOs' participation in environmental management. As a result, many of the NGOs become implementors or facilitators of environmental projects, such as Debt-for-Nature Swap and Coordinating Council on Philippine Assistance Program (CCPAP), which normally are assumed by the DENR.

The dimensions of resource-dependence discussed above partly reflect the nature of collaboration between the DENR and the NGOs during this period. Evidently, the NGOs are no longer limited to advocacy, relief work and small-scale livelihood projects, but are also engaged in social preparation and information, education and communication (IEC) activities of the DENR as well as in the facilitation, monitoring and evaluation of community-based environmental management projects. It seems that the roles taken by the NGOs are expanding quite rapidly both in scope and scale that they may go

beyond their organizational capabilities and technical competence. Whatever their developmental experience, the question of scope and scale become a central challenge to the NGOs since most of them are more familiar with small-scale rather than the capital-intensive, large-scale projects of the DENR. Moreover, very few of them are technically prepared to undertake both the community organizing and the reforestation and watershed rehabilitation activities required for achieving the "add-on" type of greater development impact. Several observers of the NGOs' involvement with the DENR raise this question about the NGOs' ability to "scale up." Some of the NGOs which work with a number of DENR projects acknowledge that both these challenges to their competence really cause them major problems.

As the scope of the NGOs' involvement in the DENR's projects increases, the rift between these sectors correspondingly widens. The pullout of five assisting NGOs from ADB-assisted Low-Income Upland Communities Project (LIUCP), a DENR project, between December 1993 and April 1994 after almost three years of working together in Mindoro Island provides a glaring example. The roots of this rift are attributed to project management structure, management style, and the bureaucratic system of government which are not supportive of the participatory approach to development adopted by the project.

The DENR sees its long-term role to be that of a provider of financial resources (revenues) and technical expertise to the NGOs and/or directly to the POs and communities. Central office personnel of the DENR accept the challenge to increasingly involve the NGOs in policymaking and project development processes, but are unclear and uncertain on how to set up the proper mechanisms. While the NGOs are perceived to continue their growing participation or initiatives in environmental management, the DENR is bent on intensifying the enforcement of environmental regulations to prevent costly damage of industrial, commercial and residential developments on both human life and the environmental health. In the near future, the DENR expects to entice resource users to sustainably manage and utilize the environment and natural resources by means of incentives.

At present, the preparation of the Philippine Agenda 21 is a government initiative that paves the way for closer collaboration between the DENR and other government agencies and the NGOs and other popular movements. These two sectors, among others, take active part in the debates and regional consultations conducted to define the principles, the sustainable development framework, and major programs of the Philippine Agenda 21. However, despite the fact that both sectors see the value of their resource-dependence between each other, they also present certain structural, administrative and behavioral factors that limit resource-interdependence.

The Limits to Interdependence

The information on perspectives of the government/DENR and the third sector regarding the limits to interdependence are based partly on interviews with key informants and partly on literature.

Government's Perspectives

At least six major factors hinder the government/DENR from depending on the NGOs' resources/services:

- As government funding of environmental projects executed or facilitated by the third sector grows, the pressures on government officials to maintain accountability for public funds increase as well;
- It is difficult to make the third sector accountable for the public resources they use in the delivery of public goods and services;
- Very few locally based third sector organizations have sufficient knowledge/skills on integrated environmental management;
- Mobilization work of some third sector organizations promotes social and political instability;
- Increased implementation of government environmental projects by the third sector further weakens government mandate and credibility; and
- Third sector competes with government for donor's funds.

The DENR addresses these concerns through various administrative measures, as cited earlier, to ensure that the accountability over public resources is properly shared with the NGOs. For instance, the requirement for the NGOs to issue a performance bond for every service contract awarded to them is a DENR security measure against possible failure in their performance. But, in some cases, the DENR complains that the social and environmental costs of NGOs' failures in carrying out specific functions and activities are much greater than the amount of the performance bond, so that the total loss to the government—in terms of work delays, revenues and credibility—is considerably larger after the “ties” between them are removed in the middle of a project. Many project managers of the DENR also complain about their reduced ability to compel the NGOs to follow certain implementation schemes that will hasten the achievement of project objectives,

thereby resulting in frequent memoranda from top management and oversight agencies requiring them to explain the causes of the delays in implementation. Those managers who have pending administrative and/or criminal cases (e.g., graft and corruption) question the present justice system which does not make the assisting NGOs concerned accountable as well.

The relatively small number of technically prepared locally based NGOs poses a big problem for the DENR, resulting in the tapping of resources and services of those located in more urban areas such as Metro Manila. Once dispatched to the project areas, some urban-based NGOs are found, however, to be inexperienced in community organizing or less committed in comparison to their counterparts based in rural areas. The replacement of non-performing NGOs with other groups causes tremendous delays in project implementation. The costs of delays are seldom recovered by the DENR. What causes more harm is the fact that for every delay in a project, the DENR is always blamed by the local communities, normally attributing the problem to its bureaucratic system. In order to address this particular concern, the DENR requires its contracted NGOs to recruit a professional forester or agriculturist who can spearhead the technical work related to environmental management. In some DENR projects (e.g., the LIUCP), community organizers should at least be college graduates. Both of these requirements, however, are criticized by the NGOs for what they offer to the DENR are their commitment and experience in community organizing and community development. As clearly specified in the proposed resource-dependence equations, the "technical expertise" is expected by the NGOs to be supplied by the DENR. Otherwise, if this resource is still possessed by the NGOs, the DENR's role in environmental management will eventually cease over time (which is unlikely though). In the early 1990s, orientation seminars and trainings for NGOs on the project elements, management structures, and development approaches including some technical aspects become necessary pre-implementation activities by the DENR to properly equip its partners with basic knowledge and tools for managing integrated environmental projects.

While some NGOs have been proven to be good in community organizing work, the DENR finds it hard to tap their services because of reports from local government agencies that they are concerned more with "indoctrination" of the local people for certain ideological, religious or personal motives, rather than the community's socioeconomic development and environmental management. There are fears among some DENR personnel that the involvement of these NGOs in environmental projects will only boost their original intentions with the infusion of public resources. Moreover, others also feel that their involvement will promote social and political instability in the communities where the DENR projects are located. The experience of the DENR indicates that some of its project managers are pressured by the LGU Executives (Governors or Mayors) to replace those NGOs which are reported to

be pursuing different development agenda. As such, the DENR investigates the backgrounds and field experiences of all the NGOs which signify interest to work with the agency's projects in order to prevent the participation of those with different mission.

Some DENR personnel, particularly the field officers, resist the existing collaboration with the NGOs because they see that their primary regulatory function is gradually being reduced, together with their staff, as the NGOs take over in the communities. This fear manifests itself in a common argument usually posed by these personnel: that too much dependence on the NGOs for environmental projects will lead to the weakening of the DENR's mandate and credibility; thus, the NGOs now compete with the government for financial support from donor institutions. To some staff, this fear evolves from their concern about the capabilities of the NGOs to manage the environment and natural resources. This group of DENR staff is very critical to the NGOs' participation as that they strictly monitor and often criticize the quality of work of the latter, particularly the technical competence to carry out the reforestation activities.

A deeper assessment of the above concerns indicates that the real major constraints to DENR-NGOs collaboration lie in the government's administrative, management and accounting systems or procedures which remain unsupportive of the fundamental requirements for effective partnership or participatory development. Many DENR staff are also unprepared, if not unwilling, to pursue a genuine partnership with the NGOs because their traditional orientations, paradigms and attitudes have not changed with the new mandate of the agency. The lack of development planners and managers in the DENR further aggravates this attitudinal/capability problem.

Third Sector's Perspectives

The NGOs are also constrained to fully cooperate with the government/DENR for several reasons. Among the most serious ones are the following:

- Government contracts create difficult administrative and organizational dilemmas for the third sector, primarily due to increasing administrative oversight, fund disbursement requirements, staff qualifications, client selection/referrals, etc.;
- Contract requirements also endanger the third sector's autonomy/independence and voluntary zeal which may be compromised for greater financial support;

- The application of standard approaches/solutions to community's environmental and development problems, reduces the sector's ability to respond effectively and quickly to the specific needs of the communities;
- The government takes credit for third sector's achievements, but blames mainly the third sector for its administrative/bureaucratic deficiencies (e.g., inflexible budgeting system); and
- The third sector losses credibility among local people due to inconsistent government pronouncements in the project areas.

The earlier discussions illustrate how the contract and program requirements of the DENR impinge on the operations and structures of the NGOs, which transform some of them to become the "alter ego" of the DENR in rural areas. Again, the experience of LIUCP in Mindoro presents a classic example of the adverse effects of government's management structure and style and bureaucratic system on NGOs. Such requirements endanger not only the independence and autonomy of the NGOs, but also their responsiveness to the specific needs of the local communities. Thus, the imposition of standard operating procedures (SOPs) and the adoption of almost uniform solutions to upland development problems (in conformity with program components or administrative orders) are in conflict with the NGOs' pragmatic approach to solving community problems. In the LIUCP, for instance, while the NGOs inform the project management that the local people need assistance to increase food production and resolve land conflicts in their communities, the management still insists that reforestation should be given priority because it is the main component of the project. When the NGOs pay less attention to reforestation to focus on the primary needs of the people, the partnership collapses.

The NGOs particularly note the government's attitude of taking credit for their achievements, but blaming them mainly for any delays or failures of a project. Generally, the DENR prepares reports of project accomplishments as if they were solely implemented "by administration," when the truth is that the NGOs facilitate most of the field-level project activities. Highlighting mainly the outputs of the project, without the inclusion of the processes pursued, is another irritant between the two sectors because the reports do not serve the NGOs' purpose of informing and influencing the policymakers, administrators and planners on the more appropriate participatory approaches for the integration of environmental management concerns into community development plans and projects. The LIUCP experience, once again, illustrates the effect of shifting the responsibility for project failures/delays from the DENR to the NGOs.

The most serious problem which this collaboration creates, from the NGOs' perspective, is the confusion among the local people arising from the inconsistent DENR personnel's pronouncements, and the frequent contradictions between the statements made by these staff and those of the NGOs' in the project areas. On several occasions, the NGOs' credibility was questioned by the local people after some DENR personnel announced they had released enough funds to the former, particularly if some scheduled works were not started on time. While the announcement was correct, the problem lay in the failure of the DENR personnel to clarify that the funds released were for the NGOs' services, not the required funds for actual development activities. In some cases, while projects promoted integrated environmental management for self-reliance and sustainable development, the DENR field personnel emphasized the use of external inputs and fast-growing species that needed to be purchased outside of the communities to hasten project outputs. Some of them even created an impression that the projects had adequate resources (especially funds) to address the problems of the communities. All these incautious statements contributed to the loss of the NGOs' credibility among the local people. In one DENR project, the contradicting pronouncements by both parties resulted in the division of "loyalty" of the POs and, later on, the disintegration of the PO itself.

Finally, the NGOs consider the government's bidding process an inappropriate mechanism for promoting collaboration and partnership because it perpetuates the "contractor-contractee" (or superior-subordinate) relationship. As a selection process, bidding also is not really able to measure the integrity and commitment of the specific NGOs towards environmental and development issues. It only sows competition and disunity among the NGOs, so that some of them put "cosmetics" on the presentation of their expertise and experience in order to impress the DENR officials and get the service contracts.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the dimensions and patterns of intersectoral resource dependence reported in this study, the DENR-NGOs relationship is critical in the success and sustainability of environmental management in the country. The NGOs' initiatives in the integration of environmental concerns with community development, and the networking they make at the international level exemplified by the 1992 NGOs' summit in Brazil that coincided with the United Nations Convention on Environment and Development in the same place, signify their readiness to enter into the mainstream of environmental management and public services in general. Existing administrative mechanisms and institutional arrangements need to be subjected to an extensive policy discussion and research to identify and incorporate salient

elements of partnership such as the provision of a structure for the free exchange of ideas and solutions between the two sectors. The government's financial accounting and auditing systems also require modifications to enable joint DENR-NGOs undertakings in environmental projects to respond more effectively and quickly to varying needs and conditions of the local communities. Unless these administrative concerns are properly addressed, the ongoing efforts to forge a genuine partnership or collaboration between the DENR and the NGOs will be an exercise in futility. The accumulated experiences in DENR-NGOs collaboration for the past eight to nine years in different environmental projects will certainly shed light on the relevant institutional relationships. The ability to distill the right elements of partnership from those experiences, and the willingness to incorporate them into the present mechanisms are two major challenges to the government/DENR.

The key limiting factors to resource interdependence, cited above, also point out the fundamental constraints in the DENR-NGOs relationships. In the process of resource exchanges, certain requirements or conditions need to be observed or followed that contribute to the loss of the NGOs/DENR's autonomy. Based on earlier experiences, some autonomy is necessarily lost by both parties in their attempt to comply even with their mutually agreed development agenda, implementation strategies, monitoring and evaluation system, etc. The question is whether both parties are prepared for the partial loss of their autonomy; if not, what alternative mechanisms are necessary to maintain their autonomy? The NGOs experience the extension of the DENR's administrative oversight into their operations with the various documentary requisites, the standardization of report formats, etc. The DENR also experiences reduced autonomy when there are very few NGOs which undertake effective and successful environmental projects in remote areas.

Apart from autonomy, the other more pressing issue associated with DENR-NGOs relationships is accountability. The DENR today finds it more difficult to maintain or pinpoint public accountability because of the participation of the NGOs as co-implementors of environmental projects. The best approach here is to define the specific authorities and responsibilities of both parties, and then identify the corresponding accountabilities of each. The administrative measures of the DENR will not be effective unless each party's authorities and accountabilities are clearly spelled out and mutually agreed upon. The question is whether the DENR is willing to share some governmental authority with the NGOs. The final answer, therefore, rests with the DENR.

Endnotes

¹For example, client orientation; emphasis on learning process approach; generally with flat hierarchical structure; a high degree of flexibility in decisionmaking in program planning and implementation; small-scale operation based largely on membership contributions and donations; and independence.

²See DAOs 120 and 123, and MC 24 all issued in 1989; and DAO 52 issued in 1992.

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Annex

Key Attributes and Suggested Roles for Three Main Streams of Third Sector Organizations in Environmental Management

| <i>Types of Environmental Third Sector Organizations</i> | <i>Key Attributes of the Organizations</i> | <i>Suggested Roles in Environmental Management</i> |
|--|--|--|
| Conservationist Groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist largely of professionals, researchers and students • Place high premium on aesthetic value of the environment and its associated resources • Undertake <i>in situ</i> and <i>ex situ</i> conservation measures for specific species | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature preservation • Wildlife protection • Coastal and marine conservation • Protected areas management facilitation • Researches on certain wildlife species and ecosystems • Advocacy (policy and strategy making on biodiversity conservation) |
| Advocacy-Based Environmental Groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist largely of human rights advocates • Question the social and environmental costs of development projects that often lead to displacement of rural communities • Undertake community mobilization and organizing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community organizing • Socioeconomic profiling • Community assessment • Advocacy (policy and strategy making on increasing access and rights of local people to development and environmental resources) • Networking, including IEC • Training on community organizing, organizational development, conflict resolution and bargaining |
| Rural Development Groups/ NGOs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist largely of community development workers interested in improving the socioeconomic conditions of rural communities • Many promote self-reliance of local communities; recently, integrate the environmental concerns with development processes • Some engage in strengthening and promoting the indigenous upland farming practices, as possible basis of sustainable development • Undertake community organizing, small-scale livelihood projects, trainings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community organizing • Resource inventory • Community assessment • Agroforestry and plantation development • Livelihood projects • Documentation of indigenous upland resource management practices • Community development planning and implementation facilitation • Networking, including IEC • Training |