

# Uma Politics

An ethnography of  
democratization in  
West Sumba, Indonesia,  
1986-2006

Jacqueline A.C. Vel

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JACQUELINE A.C. VEL

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## Preface

Democracy cannot be implemented overnight. Democratization is more than 'just' the introduction of a series of policy measures or new laws in countries previously ruled by authoritarian regimes. Instead, it is a lengthy, contextualized and often unpredictable process in which elements of democratic regime according to plan or theory articulate with long-established patterns of governance and politics in a specific society. This book describes that process in West Sumba, in Eastern Indonesia and asks the central question of how local leaders exploit the opportunities created by changes in the national political context and how these changes are reflected in the specific stylistic nature of Sumbanese politics.

In Indonesia, on 21 May 1998 President Suharto stepped down from office, marking the start of a new period in Indonesian history in which the country would be transformed quickly into a democracy. Studies that describe the political history of this period show a sequence of the most salient features of what was first called 'a transition to democracy'. The first studies centred on the financial crisis in 1998 and Reformasi (Budiman, Hatley and Kingsbury 1999) and concentrated on the end of the New Order and hopes for the future.

The reorganization of the regime caused uncertainty regarding not only who would be in charge nationally, but also in each region or district. Governors and district heads, unsure of support from the centre and local forces, used their new freedoms of speech and organization to voice their interests and grievances. Moreover, the economic crisis had impoverished many families and had forced the state to restrict the number of civil servants, resulting in intensified job competition and changes in the rules governing that competition.

The first three years after the demise of the New Order sadly became a period of widespread violence in Indonesia. Many instances of 'small town wars' (Van Klinken 2007) were described by researchers who had engaged in long-term studies of particular areas and now witnessed peaceful coexistence transform into inter-group violence. One general conclusion of these collected studies is that local elite had a large role in producing the violence and mobilized mass support by emphasizing religion and ethnicity. This type of political violence occurred in West Sumba's capital town Waikabubak in

*Preface*

November 1998. There, Christians fought each other when ethnic sentiments were manipulated during a district power struggle.

Violence not only destroyed lives and homes, but also initial optimism about democratization. Scholars dropped the term transition and focused on the actual practices of local politics in different regions. In 2000, the political discourse focused on a new development: decentralization, as it was called from a central perspective, or regional autonomy, the current term employed in Indonesian districts. The devolution of decision-making power in many domains of governance and the creation of autonomous district budgets brought a radical change for politicians and bureaucrats at the district level. Studies about the initial reactions in these districts were published in several volumes. These cases reveal an array of opportunities for local leaders, including the creation of new districts, a process that occurred in West Sumba.

The academic volumes mentioned here are all thematically focussed and gather empirical data about various regions in Indonesia. Such comparative analysis enables thematic conclusions, but it does not connect the sequence of events in one context. From the perspective of local politics, declining authority of the New Order state, political violence, creating new districts and free elections are not separate subjects. This book describes this sequence and its main actors in West Sumba, presenting an ethnography of democratization. Watching the events of the last decade in West Sumba, one can see continuity in the persons who dominate the district political arena and in the image of the state as the main provider of salaried employment and the route to upward mobility. Conversely, changes appear in the style and direction of district politics, the increasing role of new actors like businessmen and political party board members, increased status of the office of *bupati* and growing public participation in politics.

When I was in Sumba in 2002, I decided to write this monograph. I have advanced the subjects and arguments that I present in chapters of this book in earlier papers and articles (Vel 1992, 2001, 2007, forthcoming), but they tell much more about politics in Sumba when analysed together, in a sequence, over a longer period of time and with more background than can be included in academic articles. This was my first reason to write this book.

My second motivation to write this book is presenting Sumba in academic literature differently from the image created by well known anthropological literature about this island. This book presents an analysis of local political tensions at the level of island-wide politics, rather than within the smaller world of the domain or linguistically defined ethnic group as was the case for most anthropologists who wrote about Sumba. This study, on the other hand, focuses on the interface between Indonesian national politics and modern Sumbanese political arenas, where the main players speak Bahasa

Indonesia, are relatively well-educated, have travelled to other areas and are usually proud being both Indonesian and Sumbanese. It is this mixture or articulation used in contemporary political practice that I try to grasp and that makes this book a different study about Eastern Indonesia.

I came to Sumba for the first time in July 1984. My husband and I were assigned to work for a development organization of the Christian Church of Sumba, and came to stay at least four years. As graduates of Wageningen Agricultural University we were both trained to be development experts, yet as soon as we arrived in our new home village Lawonda, we found that we were the ones in need of advice. Living in a place without facilities such as electricity, running water or wells, fuel, shops or a marketplace, we had to learn and participate in the local means of survival. Our neighbours taught us about reciprocity and the tricks of a barter economy. Meanwhile, the staff members of Propelmas, our development organization, discussed with us how our program activities could contribute to permanently improving the lives of the people in the area of central Sumba, where Propelmas was located. Much later, I wrote my dissertation about this experience and about the subjects that were most important for me at that time: *The Uma-economy: indigenous economics and development work in Lawonda, Sumba (Eastern Indonesia)* (Vel 1994). The chapter in this book about village politics is based on field data from the 1980s. It includes a case study and reconsiders arguments I advanced in an article published in 1992 (Vel 1992).

Six years later in 1990, we left Sumba after a week-long farewell party organized by the people of Lawonda, who had divided themselves into all kinds of practical committees for fetching water, cutting meat, receiving guests, pounding coffee, serving drinks, et cetera, with half of the village staying in our house day and night. After such a definite farewell – with many promises to meet each other in heaven – I felt I could not come back for a long time. It took until 1998. Two major events brought me back to Sumba at that time: the end of Suharto's rule and my new position at the University of Amsterdam. My new colleagues, Willem van Schendel, Leo Douw and Henk Schulte Nordholt, motivated me to take up research in Indonesia in the field of modern Asian history, given that in May 1998, the month in which president Suharto stepped down, a new period in Indonesian history had begun. I was deeply curious to see what had changed lasting the previous eight years on Sumba and to assess how the changes at national level affected Sumba. I returned to Sumba in November 1998, when the Asian financial crisis engrossed mass attention, but in Waikabubak, political changes, rather than the economic emergency, caused feelings of upheaval and led to mass violence in the streets of this capital town.

Political changes were not the only developments that affected life in

Sumba. Between 1990 and 1998 the network of electricity was expanded in West Sumba, and from then on people outside the capital town could watch television. The TV programmes became increasingly informative, and after 1998, during the period of Reformasi, they included open, public discussions about local and national events and politics. Two senior staff members of Propelmas had started their own NGO and in November 1998 they organized for the first time ever on Sumba a day of protest against domestic violence. These events exemplify the amazing transformation in the political climate of Anakalang, the small town close to Lawonda.

In 1999, the national parliament passed the law of decentralization in Indonesia, a new political configuration of the state that would greatly influence events in Sumba. From 2001 onwards, districts like West and East Sumba would be autonomous regions, with district budgets provided by Jakarta that the district government could spend according to its own wishes. In Sumba this meant a three to fourfold increase in the local government's budget. Two chapters in this book discuss the new opportunities provided by decentralization and their consequences. One such opportunity was the ability to create new districts. For example, a number of Sumbanese in Jakarta, Kupang and Sumba started a movement to create Central Sumba, and they dreamed about for their future kingdom. Yet, after three years of campaigning that did not bring direct success, attention flawed because the Minister of Domestic Affairs decided that all activities and decisions regarding new districts would be postponed until after the elections. From early 2004 until the end of 2005 local politics concentrated on the elections.

Every time I visited Sumba, my friends in Anakalang, Waikabubak and Waingapu immediately updated me on these new developments. Local politics had become much more exciting since the 1980s. During the New Order period, there were extremely localized politics in neighbourhoods or villages that were conducted mostly in traditional style; for example, conflicts were settled by ceremonial exchange and land issues fell in the realm of adat elders. Also during the New Order, the state was, overall, a top-down bureaucracy with flows of funds that would reach Sumba according to decisions made in Jakarta or Kupang. Since 1998, and even more since regional autonomy was effectuated and complemented by direct elections, the state has become localized and embedded in everyday society. The local elite – landed aristocracy, higher state officials and church leaders – of the New Order has now expanded into a larger political class. It consists of about 10 percent of the population in Sumba who earn their livelihood from state resources, through salaries or through assignments they get from government institutions, and their relatives who share their households. They have a high standard of living, and build new houses and facilities in the capital town and along the main roads of the island. The majority of the population is excluded from this

class that controls the state's resources, and as a result they have only very limited access to the benefits of regional autonomy.

With decentralization, government policies have the potential to be adapted to local circumstances. A published example of such an effort with regard to Sumba is the study by experts of the National Statistics Service to identify contextualized poverty indicators (Betke and Ritonga 2004). Eight years after my dissertation was published, the book suddenly became popular in Sumba since it was one of the only academic books about the island that was potentially useful for policy makers hoping to situation their policies within a localized framework. In Waingapu, the growing number of students at the Wira Wacana Christian School of Economics (STIE Kriswina) – a branch of the Satya Wacana University in Salatiga – convinced me that the audience for books about culture, economics and politics on Sumba is increasing. This was the third reason to write this book, although I realize that the academic and foreign language will limit Sumbanese readership.

The last reason is a personal debt owed to my best teacher of Sumbanese politics, Gany Wulang. He was our oldest colleague during the years in Lawonda, and had over 25 years of NGO activist experience. When I was in Anakalang in February 2003, he challenged me to start writing about what he called 'the black economy of Sumba'. Convinced that events on Sumba could only be understood by analyzing the dynamics of the black economy, he had started to collect data and write about illegal logging, deals between police, traders and state officials, and corruption. In March 2003, he passed away and imparted the mission to write about back-stage Sumbanese politics to others, including me. I hope this book begins to fulfil that mission and inspires foreign and Sumbanese scholars, state officials and activists to take up this subject and look beyond the normative, using a contextualized approach to understand and respect Sumbanese culture.



## Acknowledgements

This book has been over 20 years in the making, if I start counting from my first field notes about power struggles and elections. So many people have contributed through their stories, comments, and conversations that it is impossible to acknowledge them all properly by name. I want to thank all who shared their thoughts and knowledge about Sumba with me during the period we lived in Lawonda, and afterwards, from 1998 until 2007.

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In Sumba, so many people helped me to create this book by telling their stories about local politics, inviting me to their homes and offices, discussing the issues for hours and preparing food and drinks for me and my companions, and I would like to thank all who are not mentioned by name here. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Ibu Dorkas M. Riwa, Wiyati ws. and Gany Wulang, Jonas Siahainenia, I.G. Made Raspita and Sofia A. Djuli, Pak Ande, Manasse Malo, and last but certainly not least to Pak Siliwoloe Djoeroemana, his daughter Dhani and her husband Stepanus Makambombu.



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<sup>1</sup> Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen (Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences) Scientific Programme Netherlands-Indonesia.

Laurens was my best friend in discussing anything about Sumba. Whenever I could not remember why I was working on and writing this book, he reminded me and encouraged me to do so, and created the domestic sphere in which writing this book was a joy. When we all went together to Sumba in 2002, our sons stimulated us by asking many open and often critical questions which made us rethink many issues concerning Sumba and to explain them to a next generation audience. Their comments make my work stronger.

Some parts of this book were part of articles that have been published previously. I thank the editors and publishers of the articles listed below for permission to include a revised version in this book:

- 1992 'Umbu Hapi versus Umbu Vincent; Legal pluralism as an arsenal in village combats', in: F. von Benda Beckmann and M. van der Velde (eds), *Law as a resource in agrarian struggles*, pp. 23-44. Wageningen: Agricultural University. [Wageningen Studies in Sociology 33].
- 2001 'Tribal battle in a remote island; Crisis and violence in Sumba (Eastern Indonesia)', *Indonesia* 72:141-58.
- 2005 'Pilkada in East Sumba; An old rivalry in a new democratic setting', *Indonesia* 80:81-107.
- 2007 'Creating a new district in West Sumba' in: Henk Schulte Nordholt and Gerry van Klinken (eds), *Renegotiating boundaries; Local politics in post Soeharto Indonesia*, pp. 91-120. Leiden: KITLV Press. [Verhandelingen 238.]



## CHAPTER I

# Introduction

### *Sumbanese election campaign*

It was a month before the official beginning of the campaigns for the April 2004 parliamentary elections in Indonesia. I had just attended a session of election-lessons (*sosialisasi pemilu*) presented by the KPUD (Komisi Pemilihan Umum Daerah, Regional General Election Committee) in one of the rural districts of East Sumba. The KPUD chairman discussed the various rules of the election, such as, no campaigning outside the permitted period, no rallies in churches or government buildings (to demonstrate the lack of involvement of the clergy or local government), and no buying votes by political parties. He also explained why these were necessary for a truly democratic process.

On the same day, Lukas Kaborang who was a former Golkar district head and the current chairman and primary candidate of the PDK (Partai Persatuan Demokrasi Kebangsaan, Party for Democracy and Welfare) organized a large meeting on the field next to Waingapu's largest Protestant Church. The banner over the podium called the meeting '*sosialisasi*', suggesting that this meeting was similar to the one I attended, which was organized by the General Election Committee to explain the electoral procedures. A band playing popular music opened the programme. Then Lukas Kaborang gave a brilliant speech to explain his party's positions and why PDK was the best choice. He emphasized that PDK stood for 'Partai Dengan Kristus' ('The Party with Christ') and, as if he were a professional Protestant minister, he preached about the farmer who sowed seeds (Luke 8:1-15) and used other Biblical parables.<sup>1</sup> The conclusion of each parable was that voting for PDK was the right thing to do for every good Christian, and therefore for every modern Sumbanese. After Kaborang's speech the whole audience was invited to share a meal of rice and meat in order to stress the idea that 'we are one big PDK family'.

This event combined elements of traditional rituals, Christian rhetoric

<sup>1</sup> See the Bible: Mathew 13:1-9.

and New Order style and jargon to create an extremely successful campaign strategy in the contemporary Sumba, a region which is very much part of Indonesia, with a population educated for centuries in Christian schools and churches who are united by traditions and ceremonial gatherings. Lukas Kaborang<sup>2</sup> appealed to the rural contingent of his audience by recounting the parable about the farmer and sowing seeds, and stressing that he regarded agriculture as the main economic sector of Sumba. He also appealed to the urban youth by having the band open the programme. He had no reservations about using Christ's name for party politics and about breaking KPU campaign rules. He was confident that his status as former *bupati* provided him with sufficient impunity. He had no reservation about representing a new political party either; he started his political career with the Christian political party Parkindo in the 1960s, was forced to switch to the ruling party Golkar in the 1970s because of his status as a government official, and he then retired as *bupati* in 2000. The new party PDK offered him its top position in East Sumba and the opportunity to compete with his main rival, the present *bupati* of East Sumba who was the first candidate on the Golkar list for the April 2004 elections.

The banquet at the end of the gathering was particularly effective in persuading those who might have doubts about Lukas Kaborang's affections for Sumba, since he had lived most of his life in Kupang on Timor. A shared meal creates unity and appeals to norms of reciprocity. On the 5 April 2004 Kaborang was elected as a member of the district parliament in East Sumba. His party, which participated in the election for the first time, received six seats out of the 25 total, beating the party of incumbent president Megawati, the PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, Democratic Party of Struggle). It became the second strongest party after Golkar. The PDK victory, however, was not a national phenomenon, since the party did not reach the necessary electoral threshold for the national parliament. The victory in East Sumba instead seemed more a personal success for Lukas Kaborang than a victory for the political party that put him at the top of its list.

This description illustrates how a very experienced politician in Sumba can 'translate' elements of democratization in local ways and symbols in order to make his efforts in trying to gain a powerful position in the district more effective. It also shows how democracy works in practice depends on how democratic institutions and elements are incorporated in local political culture.

<sup>2</sup> I thank Johan Bokdam who interviewed Lukas Kaborang on 7 July 2004, and was willing to share this information with me.

*Making democracy work*

Since the end of the Cold War, democracy has been widely advocated all over the world. Democracy literally means 'rule by the people', and freedom and equality are its essential values.<sup>3</sup> In the early 1990s there was considerable optimism that democratization would become a world wide phenomenon and bring to end all authoritarian regimes. According to Freedom House,<sup>4</sup> between 1990 and 1995, the number of electoral democracies (defined as countries that choose their leaders in relatively free and fair elections) rose from 76 to 117 (Plattner 2005:5). Then, a period of global stagnation in democratization began. This was designated in scholarly debate by Larry Diamond (1996:20) as 'the end of the Third Wave', in reference to Samuel Huntington's term for the rapid post-Cold War proliferation of democracies. Still, today democratization remains high on the agenda of international institutions like World Bank and IMF, as part of the ideology of neo-liberalism, which maintains that a market-driven economy with less state involvement would create new opportunities for citizens and more prosperity for countries as a whole. International institutions were actively involved in promoting democracy, convinced that it was the best possible system of governance and useful as a universal blueprint for good governance and that it could be applied to any country, from Cambodia, to East Timor to Afghanistan. Such an approach seems to be based on a modern version of the colonial model of the world in which new territories are seen as blank areas on the map in accordance with the myth of emptiness (Blaut 1993:15), as if there is no local tradition of governance at all. It reflects the optimism that leads diplomats and governance consultants to believe democracy can viably succeed all over the world.

In East Timor, which is not far from Sumba, installing democracy turned out to be not as easy as the United Nations had hoped. The East Timorese had been struggling for independence from Indonesian control and occupation for 24 years, and gained self-determination in 1999. The questions about what form of government should the new nation have prompted the UN to send a large apparatus of staff to East Timor in order to establish democratic institutions and train locals in their operation. These outside experts introduced a completely new political system and did not pay much attention to the existing patterns of traditional leadership and governance, which has subsequently led to a clash of paradigms (Hohe 2002).

As a whole, Indonesia is also experimenting with a domestic process

<sup>3</sup> In a democracy 'political power is authorized and controlled by the people over whom it is exercised, and this in such a way as to give these persons roughly equal political influence' (Pogge 2002:146).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw/FIWAAllScores.xls> (accessed 10-8-2007).

of 'installing democracy'. The activists, who in 1998 demonstrated against Suharto's regime and demanded his resignation from the presidency, called for the end of the New Order regime and putting democratic reform at the top of the political agenda. Yet, as many other countries whose authoritarian regimes were replaced by democratic systems in the 1990s have found out, 'toppling dictatorships is an easier task than building functioning democracies' (Plattner 2005:6). What emerged in many instances of democratic transition was a wide range of democracies that differ on a qualitative scale, forming a grey zone of 'pseudodemocracy, semidemocracy, electoral (or competitive) authoritarianism and illiberal democracy' (Plattner 2005:6). Each country in democratic transition apparently has its own path of democratization, quick or slow, partial or more complete; the relevant question for these cases, therefore, is what factors shape that specific path? Historical, cultural and political factors have to be taken into account in answering this question. Thomas Carothers (2002) even argues that we have reached the end of the transition paradigm, questioning its basic assumptions. His critique argues against the assumption that the underlying conditions in transitional countries, such as, their economic level, political history, institutional legacies, ethnic make-up, socio-cultural conditions, or other 'structural features,' are not major factors in either the onset or the outcome of the transition process (Carothers 2002:8). Searching for a way to incorporate these structural features, he argues:

Aid practitioners and policy makers looking at politics in a country that has recently moved away from authoritarianism should not start by asking 'How is its democratic transition going?' They should instead formulate a more open-ended query 'What is happening politically?' (Carothers 2002:18.)

This book focuses that general question for one region of Indonesia, West Sumba. Since 1998 there has been many legal changes in Indonesia promoting democratization. Decentralization, which has brought about regional autonomy, and democratic elections are the most important changes that have been enacted through the end of the period covered in this book, January 2006. A single, national, legal process of democratization was installed in over 400 different districts (*kabupaten*) across the country. Each of these districts has its own local history of governance, its own cultural characteristics pertaining to notions of power and leadership, and its own wealth (or poverty) in natural resources. These all have a large influence on political interests. Indonesian districts also share a history of state intervention, first by the Dutch colonial state, and since independence, by the national Indonesian state, including the Suharto regime's attempt to unify the governance structures throughout the country. With the enactment of law 5 of 1974 regarding regional government and law 5 of 1979 regarding village government, both district and village

administration have been turned into uniform agents of the central government (Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken 2007:11). One of the main demands of the reform movement in 1998 was to reverse this process and let people have local political participation.

The student demonstrations in 1998 which called for democracy took place in the national centre in Jakarta. In peripheral regions of the country, where there was no opposition movement against the central government as there was in Aceh or Papua, traditional local leadership had found a way to coexist peacefully with the national government, whatever the characteristics of successive regimes were. In the province Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), to which Sumba belongs, there was no grass-roots movement for democratic reform. Yet now, in this province, as in all the other parts of Indonesia, democracy is installed, as part of the new national and legal policies.

This book describes how people in Sumba have dealt with this new system of governance, by adapting it to their own existing political culture. How can democratic institutions, such as, elections, parliaments, and procedures, be moulded to fit the local political arenas? The following chapters emphasize the agency of the receiving population which is the counter point to the myth of emptiness. The neo-Marxist literature of the 1970s spoke of articulation of modes of production.<sup>5</sup> Here we modify this idea into the articulation of political cultures. The central questions addressed throughout the book are: how do local leaders use the opportunities created by changes in the national political context of Indonesia, and how are these changes reflected in the style of local politics. More generally, this book is concerned with the questions of how local elites at the periphery of a large nation respond to the influences of national politics and globalization in their territory, and how is democracy incorporated into a local political culture. Moreover, how are new, democratic institutions used in neo-patrimonial politics?

It is extremely important to recognize the processes of articulation of political cultures for those involved in programmes of strengthening local governance or capacity building for good governance. Creating a democratic system is not only about providing basic information to local populations and their leaders on what democracy entails, but it also requires the visualization and discussion of the articulation of democratic procedures with the local politics. Installing, for example, a village parliament is one thing, but in order to make it function, one needs to consider on what grounds people will elect a representative and how this person will carry out his political agenda.

<sup>5</sup> Articulation of modes of production involves 'the connection between the capitalistic mode of production and the mode of production which it encounters in a specific local context' (Raatgever 1988:24). See also Meillasoux (1983) and Wolpe (1980).





What will democratization bring for the people on Sumba?

### *Outline and arguments*

This book presents an ethnography of democratization through the analysis of themes which developed out of a series of chronological events that occurred over a period of twenty years. It describes village level politics under the New Order (Chapter IV), the political violence which emerged as the New Order's authority clapsed in 1998 (Chapter VI), the leadership styles that developed amidst the new electoral democracy that followed (Chapters VIII and IX), societal changes that occurred alongside the democratization process (Chapter VII) and the politics of decentralization. These historical chapters are preceded by context-setting chapters. Chapter II provides background information on Sumba and elaborates on the intertwined history of Christian missions and state formation in Sumba. Chapter III introduces traditional Sumbanese political culture. Interspersed among these more substantive chapters there are three vignettes about life in a village, a small town and the capital town.

In the following sections of this introductory chapter, I will describe the main thrust of the arguments of the book and elaborate on some of the central theoretical concepts that I have applied. When considered thematically and theoretically the chapters of this book can be read as case studies of more general developments that occur not only in West Sumba, but also in other parts of Indonesia and even in other parts of the world.

*Sumba in Indonesian context*

Sumba is part of the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) in Eastern Indonesia, and consists of two districts, West and East Sumba, with Waikabubak and Waingapu as their respective capitals. With 610,000 inhabitants in 2005 and an area of 11,000 km<sup>2</sup>, it is only sparsely populated. Economic indicators show that Sumba and the entire province NTT are a very poor area of Indonesia. Two-thirds of the population is Christian, Protestant or Catholic, while the number of Muslims on the island is very low, less than three percent. Viewed from outside, Sumba is inhabited by essentially one ethnic group: the Sumbanese. Internally there are many differences between Sumbanese that influence the way they define their identities; particular occasions or situations, including political ones, determines which part of their identities are most relevant.

Before the colonial rule became effective in the second part of the nineteenth century, there was no central government in Sumba. In pre-colonial times Sumba was divided in geographical domains, each ruled by a major clan. The domain boundaries were not fixed, a clan's area of influence could grow through warfare and marriage alliance.

Compared to other areas in Indonesia, where social scientists study local political developments within the framework of national political change, Sumba is in some ways what economists would call a 'without case'. National developments do reverberate in Sumba, but many of the factors analysts use to explain the causes of social and political events in other parts of Indonesia are not applicable to this island. There are no natural resources of which the ownership is so contested that it could be a major explanation for secession movements in Sumba. There is, however, a movement for creating new districts. There are hardly any Muslims, which means that Muslim-Christian tension cannot explain political violence as it may in other Indonesian provinces, yet there was mass violence in West Sumba's capital Waikabubak in November 1998. The case of Sumba challenges many conclusions about 'Indonesia in general'. The analysis of recent political events in Sumba demonstrates the need to understand what happens in Indonesia in a way that goes beyond superficial or overly simplistic explanations.

*Neo-patrimonialism in a democratic state*

After 1998, national political changes in Indonesia spread throughout the country's regions and entered local political arenas. Sulaiman and Van Klinken (2007:226) stated that 'when government is run along the lines of personalized elite favouritism the resulting nepotism clashes so fundamentally with what

people have a right to expect from the modern state that protest is almost unavoidable'. (In Indonesia, a group of political thinkers, of whom Harold Crouch (1979) and Donald Emerson (1983) were the main representatives, analysed elite favouritism in Indonesian national politics during the New Order in terms of neo-patrimonialism. David Brown (1994:112) wrote about neo-patrimonialism from a regional perspective, using Aceh as a case study to examine the emergence of neo-patrimonialism during the New Order in his book *The state and ethnic politics in Southeast Asia*. The case of Sumba which is discussed in this book is considered a new dimension of neo-patrimonialism: as it is transformed from neo-patrimonialism in an authoritarian state to neo-patrimonialism in a democratic state.

Patrimonialism refers to the type of governance characterized by strong leaders who owe their position to specific cultural attributes, including local concepts of power, traditional religion and links with the past. Their ability to govern rests on the support of their clients. The system is stabilized by a normative order that legitimizes the chief's leadership and the appointments of assistants, and draws the border of clientele. Colonial states employed patrimonial leaders at the regional level to implement their authority and to create a local foundation for national governance. In turn, regional patrons have created linkages with the centre to strengthen their own positions.

After independence local leaders whose authority had become partly based on positions provided by the national state had to find new ways to connect to the national centre. Traditional leadership is no longer sufficient to remain in power locally. The introduction of new and non-traditional elements that affect the criteria for leadership is an indication of the change to neo-patrimonialism. The modern elements that enter the local arena refer first of all to new normative orders that weaken the traditional base which formerly legitimized patrimonial leaders. It is not easy to determine who the clientele is, once the base of power shifts from sources external to the leaders, such as gods, colonial state, inherited attributes, to internal sources, such as the abilities that they actively have to acquire. When it is no longer self-evident who the leader is, competitions within the elite emerge, both in the centre and in the region. Potential leaders need to engage in active rhetoric, and to create a new content for this rhetoric to maintain their constituencies. A potential leader must also establish new communal groups when the old markers of difference are no longer suitable to convey political identities (Tilly 2003:32). In this new situation, material services become more important in the patron-client relationship: only patrons who succeed in bringing material gains to the clients can survive as leaders.

During the New Order, district heads (*bupati*) were primarily representatives of the central government. In Sumba, people would judge a *bupati's* performance by his ability to implement projects backed by the central

government which would bring benefits to their own area, such as new schools, roads and bridges, food aid in times of trouble, and employment of more local group members in government service. The district government's accountability was to higher levels of the administration, not to the local population. National programs, like the family planning program that encouraged only two children per couple, were forced upon the Sumbanese population without ever asking the people's opinions. New Order regional leaders needed support from their networks outside Sumba, from the provincial capital Kupang to the national capital Jakarta. The district government was powerful in terms of local administration because they offered employment and channelled the government funds locally. With this power they could maintain patrimonial patterns of rule at the local level. Until 1995, all of West Sumba's *bupati* were sons of former rulers (*raja*), and they had been educated in Christian missionary schools. They could enjoy traditional patrimonial leadership with supportive powers of the state.

May 1998 is the landmark date for the contemporary political history of Indonesia. When Suharto's government fell on the 21 May 1998, a new legal and political process of democratization began. Lifting the bans on freedom of speech and of press created a new political climate, in which people could voice their opinions and interests unreservedly, often for the first time in their life. They could gather and demonstrate. The most striking changes in regional governments were the devolution of authority in many policy fields (see Chapter V) to the autonomous district, and the increase in their district state budget; in West Sumba the budget was increased about 300 per cent. The electoral law regarding regional government was changed again in 2004 and since that year the regional government, namely the parliament and the *bupati*, were directly elected. From the perspective of local leaders, the change entailed a transition from neo-patrimonialism under an authoritarian regime to neo-patrimonialism under a democratic regime. Currently, the challenge for the local population is holding election and finding new links to the centre that would support local power positions. Links through the network of national political parties seemed to provide a way to accomplish this and get support.

Democratization offered a legal restructuring of the state and its state institutions. How were these new democratic institutions utilized in neo-patrimonial politics? The key questions for local leaders were: how could they keep a clientele or create a constituency under the new circumstances, and how could they secure their elite positions. Since new ways of creating links with the centre emerged to help the local leaders achieve these goals, democratization made competition among them more complicated.

*Widening world of the local elite*

The consequence of the change from traditional rule, through patrimonialism, to neo-patrimonialism in a democratic state, is the widening of the arena in which local leaders operate, and in which their sources of power are located. Traditional patrimonial leaders rule in their own territory, and the sources of power on which they rely are internal. According to Max Weber, a traditional patrimonial system was one in which 'the object of obedience is the personal authority of the individual which he enjoys by virtue of his traditional status' (Weber 1964:341). With the incorporation of the traditional domain of a patrimonial ruler into the national state, the position of the leader within the state hierarchy becomes an indicator of power. As the traditional domain is transformed and becomes larger, the variables that constitute the criteria for leadership increase. For example, a traditional domain could be turned into an area of Christian congregation by missionaries, connecting that area and its people to the island-wide Church organization and to the Churches in the homeland of the missionaries.

In neo-patrimonial politics within a democratic framework, the patrons have lost their firm connection to a traditional leadership domain and instead aim to become rulers of regions of the state's territory, where the sources of local power are mostly derived from the state. In his study of local aristocracies in the Outer Islands of Indonesia, Burhan Magenda (1989:61-2) argued that they have endured all of these changes in national politics but still remain in power locally. This would imply that they are very skilful in transforming themselves from traditional patrimonial rulers into neo-patrimonial leaders. The case of Sumba which is presented in this book questions that thesis, and reveals changes in the criteria for local leadership.

Forth (1981) and Kapita (1976a) emphasize that noble rank is the main prerequisite for local leadership. In 1989, Magenda defined the local elite in an 'inland state' like Sumba as the landed aristocracy, which provokes a rather static and singular definition of local elite that focuses on internal sources of power and disregards ties to other parts of Indonesia and influential connections within other spheres of society. This book will explore which networks of influence and what sources of power and status are used by twenty-first century leaders on Sumba?

*State, power and the forms of capital*

The main answer to this question is that in Sumba at present, the state is a more important source of power than rank which comes from landownership or being a member of nobility. Political disputes are about state offices

and funds. A district head has the means, supplied by the state, to employ hundreds of relatives and to access funds for buying support. Local aristocracy can only survive as modern leaders if they acquire additional qualities including a good education and a professional career, preferably a good position in the state bureaucracy.

What is 'the state' in Sumba? If we define the state in such a way to include everything that is referred to with the Indonesian word *negara*, then it will include a long list of properties like government buildings, *plat merah* (red licence plate) and vehicles, institutions like *hukum negara* and *SD Negara* (state law and public primary schools), positions like *pegawai sipil Negara* (civil servants), and services like *rumah sakit Negara* (public hospitals) or *bantuan Negara* (social services), and so on. If the object of research is the nation-state, 'Indonesia' would be the best reference term on Sumba: Bahasa Indonesia (the Indonesian language), '*secara Indonesia*' ('in an Indonesian way') as opposite to traditional Sumbanese ways, or *orang Indonesia* (an Indonesian), meaning national citizen as opposed to members of (Sumbanese) ethnic groups. Sumbanese view the state as the center of national politics and refer to government with the word *Jakarta*.<sup>6</sup> Village heads embody a very concrete form of the state within the local government. School teachers are employees of the state who teach the ideas, the language, the logistics and the history of the state. In other words, the state is very prominent and important in Sumba. The state can be analysed both at the level of every day practices of its officials and at the level of discursive analysis, through its 'image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory' (Migdal 2001:15-6).

In Chapter II, I will discuss the image of the state in Sumba, and also elaborate on the practical meaning of state. This chapter includes the history of state formation, which in Sumba is linked to the introduction of Christianity. In Sumba, the state as an idea does not refer to images of nation-state, but it is associated rather vaguely with general opportunities for upward mobility, and more concretely it is viewed as a vast complex of secure employment and additional material benefits. Sumbanese want to become part of this complex system. According to Bourdieu (1986), the way to achieve this is to accumulate cultural, social and economic capital and to use this capital to move upwards towards positions which control the state's resources. In Chapter II, the life history of a retired *ex-bupati* is used to exemplify this pattern. A person can only reach a powerful position in Sumba when he has acquired a sufficient amount and a good combination of the various forms of capital. This includes cultural capital such as education or specific skills and

<sup>6</sup> Printed in italics *Jakarta* is the emic term for the national centre of power, vague and far-away, not associated with a real city of streets, buildings and people.

knowledge, or experience with other cultures, cultural capital such as titles and traditional high social rank, economic capital such as horses, buffaloes, woven cloth and pigs which are considered as traditional capital, and labor and money, a private enterprise or a state office as new capital, and social capital such as membership in all kinds of networks. A focus on processes of accumulation of the various forms of capital helps to shed light on political activities on Sumba and reveals how the state is embedded in Sumba society. It also clarifies why some Sumbanese are more successful than others in realizing upward mobility, and why activities that at first glance seem to be 'just cultural' manifestations are so important for politics in Sumba. The accumulation of 'capital' is a way of addressing various sources of power, and linking culture, politics and economy.

### *Tradition and authority*

Sumba is well known as an island with a very traditional society. Tourist brochures promote this image by advertising ritual warfare or *pasola* as the main event that makes a visit to Sumba worthwhile. Jakarta-based discourse stresses the traditional, backward and exotic character of Eastern Indonesian islands, marginalising the population as the Other,<sup>7</sup> or a cherished species who perform their cultural arts in Taman Mini, the 'Miniature Park of Beautiful Indonesia' close to Jakarta.<sup>8</sup> Anthropological literature on Sumba present a similar image when using village populations in rural areas as research subjects, because their villages are the sites where traditional rituals are performed in ways that seem to be least disturbed by modernity.

This study is more about contemporary Sumbanese who live close to the main road and embrace a contemporary Indonesian identity and watch TV. They also dominate local politics. For them, Sumba is not isolated at all, it is very much part of Indonesia. These modern Sumbanese create their own version of 'local culture' and constantly adapt it to modern times. Nevertheless, they simultaneously keep their traditions alive, and often participate in adat ceremonies. Even in town, tradition informs the main discourse and practices related to adat are a way of accommodating social relations.

Chapter III discusses how important tradition is for understanding contemporary politics in Sumba. Social hierarchies were formed in the past according to traditional rules. The indigenous religion created symbols that have not lost their meaning even after many Sumbanese became Christians.

<sup>7</sup> As in Garin Nugroho's film 'Letter for an angel' (1993) which Hoskins calls 'An Indonesian film on the ironies of modernity in marginal areas' in *Visual Anthropology Review* (1996), pp. 67-73.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.jakweb.com/tmii/> (accessed on 1-10-2007).

Cultural heritage is part of cultural capital: it includes the houses and ranks into which one is born and also ethnic identity which can easily be transformed into a political one. The realm of tradition includes indigenous concepts of power, authority and charisma. It also includes adat, a concept used daily in Sumba to refer to practices of ceremonial exchange. The term adat is extensively discussed in literature due to of the multiple meanings associated with it (Li 2007). I assert that adat in Sumba carries the same meaning as in Bahasa Indonesia, and refers to the laws and rules of a community pertaining to all aspects of community life, including marriages, funerals, division of land and the rights to cultivate it, inheritance, rules of proper conduct, indications on how to celebrate and the ways disputes in the community are settled. The rules, the procedures and the communities to which adat pertains are not fixed and thus open for negotiation, resulting in a process full of tactics and trickery. Adat ceremonies function as a place for traditional political deal-making and negotiation between parties with different interests. Adat negotiations also concern exchanges (for example how many horses or pigs have to be given in exchange for something else). Links between people and families, namely social capital, are created through material exchanges which deal with economic capital. The best adat priests are accomplished performers of ritual speech and due to these skills which are a form of cultural capital, they can achieve better results in negotiations about material exchanges. Adat specialists are experts in accumulation of the various forms of capital.

### *Space and time*

From Chapter IV onwards, this book presents a history of Sumbanese politics through major events. In earlier articles, I described these events within their thematic context: legal pluralism, political violence, decentralization and democratic elections. However, it is possible to describe the long term developments and deeper characteristics of Sumbanese political culture in a chronological sequence. The time period considered spans the 1980s to January 2006, beginning with a story about a village power struggle in the 1980s under the rules of the New Order regime, and culminating, in Chapter IX, with the direct district head elections in 2005. In between, the main political events are connected by description of major changes in Sumba during this period.

The case studies in Chapters IV to IX cover different levels of Sumbanese politics: village, sub-district (*kecamatan*) and district (*kabupaten*). All examples are from West Sumba. To be more precise: the first stories, in Chapter IV, happened in Lawonda, the village in the east part of West Sumba, where I lived from 1984 until 1990. Waikabubak, West Sumba's capital town, where there



was an outbreak of violence known as 'Bloody Thursday' in 1998, is the site of events in Chapter VI. Outside Sumba, Jakarta and Kupang are the most important political centres that affect Sumba, where not only the national and provincial governments reside, but also where the national and provincial branches of other networks are concentrated. National political changes are discussed in Chapter V, in as much as they directly had consequences for Sumba. Chapter VIII concentrates on the area around Anakalang, the geographical domain where the centre of the *kecamatan* is located. It is proposed as the new *kabupaten* Central Sumba. Sumbanese politics in this case include lobbying in Jakarta. In Chapter IX, the district elections are discussed from the perspective of Anakalang, focussing on the candidate originating from that area. Figures and data from East Sumba are used for comparison.

### *Individuals and networks*

Sumbanese politics is about individuals. Political parties, conflicts, interests, parliaments and programmes do play a role, but an analysis solely in terms of these institutions could not explain the current social and political changes. One reason for the significance of specific individuals in Sumbanese politics is that political leaders in Sumba owe their position and authority to various normative spheres. The case study in Chapter IV illustrates how such normative pluralism works in Sumba. It focuses on two different types of leaders in Lawonda who ran in elections against each other using their political positions and, alternatively, arguments in the spheres of religion, state and tradition. Positions from these different spheres can be combined, leading to accumulation of legitimacy and, in turn, constituency. Leaders pragmatically use different normative spheres in dispute settlement by seeking solutions in a second normative sphere if they are unhappy with the first sphere's result.

The tension between two other political rivals, the *bupati* and the chairman of the district parliament, was one of the factors which led to mass violence in Waikabubak in 1998. In Chapter VI this case of 'post-Suharto violence in Indonesia' is analysed. An exploration of the various interpretations that are given afterwards suggest that 'Bloody Thursday' was not just a criminal incident, but a carefully planned act of violence. It only partly fits into the long series of endemic riots known on Sumba as *perang suku* (war between clans), as it also suited the interests of the two main political rivals at that time.

The democratization process in Indonesia was practically applied to its various regions after January 2001, when the law on regional autonomy was effectuated. Chapter VII discusses the changes in Sumba during the Reformasi, the period between Suharto's resignation and the effectuation of the decentralization laws. This was a period of ideals and new initiatives.

New democratic laws were introduced, but they could only lead to democracy if citizens and state officials in question made use of the laws in ways presupposed by democratic theory. The rise of NGOs in civil society on Sumba during the Reformasi period was a positive development related to such processes. Chapter VII tells story of two people who worked first for a Sumbanese Church foundation, then started their own organization in the mid-1990s and became very successful in 1999-2000. This chain of events is exemplary for what is usually called the development of 'civil society', but I refer to it as 'the growing political public' and elaborate on it in Chapter VII. This process also has a technological component. Communication, transport facilities and access to electricity increased in late-1990s. Since 2000, there has been many new local newspapers and independent radio stations which inform Sumbanese audiences about the current events both on their island and in the nation at large. Political leaders have to take these changes on Sumba into account when composing their strategies in conflict situations or in elections. For example, mobile phone text messages have a different effect than literal word-of-mouth dissemination of rumours, which, means that conditions for inciting mass violence in the capital towns (where mobile phones can be used) were very different in 2005 than they had been in 1998.

The effectuation of regional autonomy in 2001 made the *kabupaten* much more powerful than before, and made the position of *bupati* more attractive for some Sumbanese individuals. The largest improvement from the perspective of the elite on Sumba was the increase in funds from *Jakarta* combined with the autonomy in spending this budget. It provoked many members of the elite to dream about their own new kingdom, an autonomous *kabupaten*, where they would have a key government position. Chapter VIII explains one such project, the campaign to create the new district called 'Central Sumba'. The leaders of that campaign were people from Anakalang (and its neighbouring villages) who were not in particularly powerful positions in West Sumba in 2000, and saw an opportunity for improving their positions. In 2006, when their campaign did not achieve the desired result, the 'Central Sumba' activists remained optimistic, and always qualify that they have 'not yet' achieved their goal. In this lobbying process, Sumbanese who reside outside Sumba have been very important. They are the ones who are able to lobby at higher levels of government, in Kupang and Jakarta. They also act as financial sponsors. Successful and rich 'overseas' Sumbanese even entered the arena of the District Head elections in 2005. In Chapter VII and VIII, their relationship with their Sumbanese home land is analysed.

*Political class*

One overall conclusion at the end of this book concerns class formation as a result of regional autonomy. Analysis of Sumbanese politics in terms of networks connecting personal cliques around powerful individuals, suggest the conclusion that the members of these networks increasingly compose a separate social class. This will be discussed in Chapter X. The top layer of Sumbanese society consists of people who derive their revenues and income primarily from the state, through formal salaries from the offices they occupy, or through (commercial or infrastructure-) projects they implement as commissioned by the government, or through informal means connected to public office, such as, bribery, mark up, rent, and corruption. In analytical terms this top layer is a class, because of its identity and its revenues and sources of income (Von Beyme 1996:77). I refer to it as the *political* class because it is connected to the resources of the state.

The political class is not the same as the political elite. The political elite is the relatively small and wealthy group of people sharing similar values and interests that 'can effectively dictate the main goals (if not always the practical means and details) of all important government policies (they also dominate the activities of the major mass media and educational/cultural organizations in society) by virtue of their control over the economic resources of the major business and financial organizations in the country' (Johnson 2005). The political elite is defined in relation to its steering capacity and it is motivated by power interests, whereas the political class is defined as part of social stratification, and is motivated by of its own economic and social security (Von Beyme 1996:71-2). It is therefore more appropriate to address the whole top layer of society as the political class. Used in this way political class is broader than political elite, because political class also covers people without formal positions who nevertheless have the capacity to appropriate state resources, including businessmen, (some) retired officials, and wives, mothers, sisters and children of men who hold the key positions in the network.

Magenda (1989:59) analysed the strategies of local powerful groups in the Outer Islands of Indonesia using the concept of 'local aristocracies'. In inland states the aristocracies have based their ruling position on their power over land which they 'acquired principally through gift or inheritance from a long line of similarly privileged and cultivated ancestors' (Johnson 2005). In this book I argue that powerful local positions in an Outer Island like Sumba are no longer based on inherited capacities, but depend on the specific combinations of forms of capital individuals possess.

The 'political class' model is different from the more common distinction found in academic writing on Sumba, which makes a social division in terms of class between nobility, free men and slaves (Forth 1981:214). When

the intention is to describe the social system in Sumba 'in such a way as to show its relation to other aspects of their social and conceptual order', Forth (1981:461, note) argued that the class differentiation according to traditional ranks is the most appropriate grouping. In that approach there is no room for the role of the state in class formation. The traditional stratification is still most relevant in the private sphere of life where norms of kinship and marriage affiliation control conduct. Yet, this sphere is only part of life, and the economy, the bureaucracy, politics and other fields that connect Sumbanese to people outside their ethnic-kinship realm also determine power, success, wealth and career. Keane, Kuipers and Hoskins included the role of the state in their analysis of various segments of Sumbanese society.<sup>9</sup> For example, Kuipers (1998:90-1) has shown how state ceremonies in West Sumba are used as occasions where local leaders reestablish their authority. Hoskins (1998:100) analysed how a common young man from Kodi became raja due to decisions of the colonial government and thus owed his power in local society to the state. Keane (1997:40) has argued that people in Anakalang during the 1980s 'experience the state either as a distant, potentially benign patron or as a distinct language and discursive style (Indonesian and certain kinds of bureaucratic speech associated with it)'. Although many state officials mentioned in academic studies on Sumba are Sumbanese themselves, the state seems to remain external to Sumbanese society. By contrast, in this book I will show many examples of how the state is internalized and appropriated by a 'political class'.

Those outside the political class on Sumba compose the largest and lowest class that I call the *tani*-class, and there is a small intermediate class that I call 'political public'. The latter term is from Herbert Feith (1962:108) who used a political model of stratification that focused on the role of individuals in the political process, viewing them as participants in a leader-followers unit. This model sees the distribution of power outside the elite as series of concentric circles, with power diminishing as one's political distance from the elite increases. The middle circle around the elite consists of people of lesser political influence. In the words of Feith (1962:109-10):

the political public may be defined as consisting of persons of a middle range of political effectiveness, persons outside the political elite who nevertheless saw themselves as capable of taking action which could affect national (district) government or politics. [...] What determines membership of this political public is 'the state of mind' which requires a man to communicate with those others than those to whom he is tied within his traditional society.

<sup>9</sup> Here I selected only single examples of how these authors write about the state on Sumba, which is not sufficient to present a full acknowledgement of their approach to the state. The latter would require an article by itself.

What Feith calls the masses, which are positioned in the outer circle, are people who consider themselves to have too low of status to be politically active. There are no statistics about the size of these classes. If we take the figure from Table 2.1 (Chapter II) of those employed in agriculture as an approximation of the size of those excluded from the political class, it would consist of 87 per cent of West Sumba's population. This large majority of the population 'with agriculture as main economic activity' could be called the productive class, the class that earns its livelihood locally through agriculture in the widest sense, including animal husbandry, forestry, and fishery. Yet, in Sumba being '*tani*' is an emic category. Apart from those who actually are farmers, it includes everyone who does not have a salaried job, or a more appropriate answer to the census question about occupation. Unemployed people would rather call themselves '*tani*' (farmer) than 'unemployed', and a person referring to himself as '*tani*' implicitly admits he was not (yet) very successful in life. Therefore, *tani*-class is an appropriate name for those who consider themselves excluded from the classes that can appropriate the resources of the state.

Looking closely at the history of West Sumba, as described in the following chapters, will make clear how democratization in general, and administrative decentralization in particular, facilitated the growth of the political class.

### *Uma economy and Uma politics*

As the final point in this introduction, I would like to explain the title of this book. First of all, this book is written as the sequel to my dissertation, which was called *The Uma economy; Indigenous economics and development work in Lawonda, Sumba (Eastern Indonesia)* (Vel 1994). It described the economic system of Sumba's rural areas, where barter was still very common in the 1980s. The Uma economy<sup>10</sup> was characterized by its embeddedness in social structure and its morality of exchange. Terms of transactions depended on the type of relationship between those making the transactions. Brothers should share their possessions, whereas at the other end of the spectrum of reciprocity, there is no objection to stealing from strangers who are potential enemies. The smallest unit in Sumbanese traditional social system is the *Uma*, which means 'house'. Uma is the Sumbanese word for house as a physical structure and for the group of people that is connected to that house. I use Uma – with a capital – for the social group.

<sup>10</sup> 'Uma economy' or 'Uma politics' in this book does not refer to Um(m)a as the community of Muslims, but to the Sumbanese Uma (House).

Identification with a specific house connects people to the biographies of these houses and related objects, such as, heirlooms, bones, and graves, through which they trace their connections to each other and to the landscape (Gillespie 2000:16). Uma members do not necessarily reside in the house, but they will always come back and perform their rituals there, especially those marking the transitional stages of life (marriage, funeral). The members of an Uma share a relationship of general reciprocity, which means that they can always ask each other for help (both moral support and material assistance), stay and feel free to eat at each other's houses. Outsiders can be incorporated in an Uma, as fictive kin, after performing the necessary rituals and demonstrating their willingness to obey the rules of reciprocity. Reciprocity is crucial in the Sumbanese way of thinking.

In my book *The Uma economy*, I analysed how the traditional economy was subject to change as a result of incorporation into the nation-state, integration of the local economy into the wider market economy, and the introduction and spread of Christianity. My analysis of the changes in the Uma economy were partly based on the theory of articulation of modes of production (Rey 1973; Wolpe 1983; Raatgever 1988), which expresses how a traditional economy in a specific local context is gradually integrated into the capitalist mode of production, but yet preserves its own characteristics. From the point of view of the rural Sumbanese population, the process of articulation manifests itself as the presence of different modes of exchange (reciprocity, barter or market exchange), different media of exchange (services, food, livestock, women, money), different ultimate goals of economic activities, different units of economic organization, and different ways of thinking and legitimizing behaviour. A very characteristic example of the latter is the Sumbanese concept of debt. Whereas the whole idea of credit and bank loans is based on the notion that debts are temporary and have to be repaid, or even that having debt is a bad thing, in Lawonda, people would be reluctant to repay debts. Instead, in the traditional framework, having many debts is something to boast about, since it is the obvious sign of having many good social relations. A truly poor person would have no debts at all, since no one would be willing to lend him anything. In Bourdieu's terms, traditional Sumbanese would say that poverty is lack of social capital.

There are many parallels between my analysis of Uma economy and Uma politics. The articulation of modes of production in the sphere of economy is similar to the articulation of political cultures. Similarly, democratization and local forms of governance and leadership are intertwined with specifically Sumbanese styles of politics. Thinking and acting in terms of reciprocity is also very crucial in Sumbanese politics. Reciprocal obligations can be turned into votes during elections. Solidarity and support is still very much connected to kinship relations. Marriage affiliation is an old strategy to convert enemies

into friends. The following chapters will provide many examples of reciprocity used in political strategies. The centres of the small kingdoms envisaged by local elite members, which are now the districts with regional autonomy, comprise a small group of close relatives and protégées. The pattern of loyalties within this group resembles the social relations between members of one Uma. Yet, the members of this group are not necessarily related. With the Uma economy in mind, I see Sumbanese politics as a process of negotiating private interests and reciprocal obligations of the leaders and their Uma, rather than viewing them only through the lens of political parties or programmes they propagate. *Uma politics* is therefore the sequel to *The Uma economy*, and it refers to the uniquely Sumbanese way in which Sumbanese leaders use all available resources to acquire and remain in power.

## CHAPTER II

# Sumba and the state

Writing about politics, means writing about the state. What 'the state' actually is, however, is a matter of ample academic debate. In that debate, Max Weber's original explanation is usually taken as the point of departure for discussion. He defined a state as 'a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory' (Weber 1946:1). The legal connection of state to a territory, its monopoly of violence, and the coherence of the organization, have all been debated and questioned in light of actual practices (Van Klinken and Barker, forthcoming). Sumba is part of the Indonesian nation-state, and the state officials who govern this island are both part of the bureaucratic hierarchy on Sumba, and subordinates within a nation-wide state organization with its centre in Jakarta. The state connects Sumba to other parts of Indonesia. The state's monopoly of violence does not make much sense on Sumba, where the armed forces and police are small in number and where private violence is a traditionally common way to deal with disputes, thieves, and murderers. Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta (2006:5) argue for an anthropological approach to studying the state 'focusing on two aspects for analytical clarity: (a) the practices [of the state officials], and (b) the representations of the state'. Such an approach leads to 'understanding the state as a multilayered, contradictory, trans-local ensemble of institutions, practices and people in a globalized context' (Sharma and Gupta 2006:6). With this abstract model in mind, I will describe the state on Sumba, in a much more concrete way.

Most readers have probably never been to Sumba, but they may be familiar with other islands in Indonesia, or with other places in the world where processes of democratization are underway. Comparisons within the national framework of Indonesia designate Sumba (or the whole province Nusa Tenggara Timur) as poor, isolated, backward, predominantly Christian, traditional, and lacking resources with low agricultural and economic potential (Corner 1989:197). Indicators that show per capita averages are very useful for comparison with general levels in other regions of Indonesia. Yet, local politics are focused on local differences and interests, and these are not solely explained by island-wide characterizations. The first part of this chapter will



provide a more sophisticated characterization that differentiates between areas in Sumba, between life in rural areas and life in town, and between poor and wealthy. What are the social and economic interests on which Sumbanese politics are based and how are they utilized?

The physical, social and economic characteristics of Sumba generate the context in which the state was formed and still operates. The image of the state depends on the historical forces that shaped it, which are specific to each particular period. In the second part of this chapter, I will explain about the connection between state formation, Christianity and modernity in Sumba. The state as an idea was composed in the past, but at present on Sumba it does not refer to images of nation-state; instead it is associated rather vaguely with general opportunities for upward mobility, and more concretely imagined as a vast complex system (or institution) of secure employment and additional material benefits. Sumbanese want to become part of this complex system. The way to achieve this is to accumulate capital, in the sense Pierre Bourdieu used the concept (1986), namely, cultural, social and economic capital, and use these to move upward toward positions from which the state's resources can be managed. Umbu Djima's life history in this chapter will explain and illustrate this. As a son of nobility he was selected for the Dutch Christian missionaries' school. His family's wealth enabled him to further his education. His career in the bureaucracy started with a successful period in the provincial capital Kupang. He moved to Jakarta to be member of the national parliament representing Golkar. From 1985 to 1995 he was West Sumba's *bupati*, and after retirement from state service he started a new career in the Protestant Christian Church. This biography demonstrates how the state can be utilized as a medium for personal career.

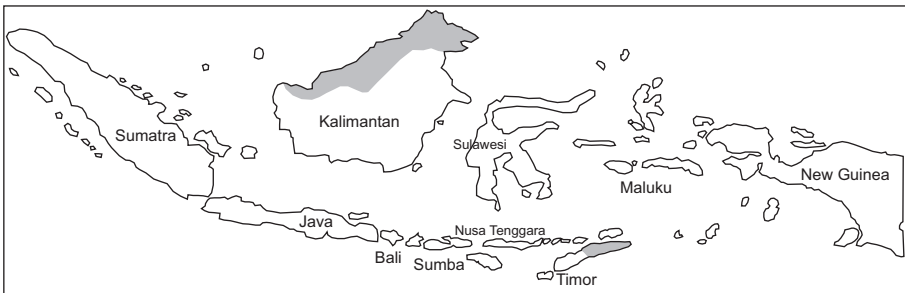
At the present, the state is the most important source of salaried employment on Sumba and a main sector of the island's economy. Local politics are about distribution of the state's resources and strategies to obtain government positions. Yet, the state is more than just jobs and budgets. Looking closely at everyday practices of state officials show what the state is and how it operates. For many people the state appears most prominently in many bureaucratic procedures, in salaried employment, and as a flow of funds that finances building and infrastructure projects. In the last part of the chapter, I describe the state on Sumba as a system of bureaucratic procedures and as an economic sector.

The chapter ends with a section on social cleavage in Sumba, between those who control the resources of the state – jobs, funds, decision power, legislation and legitimized violence – and those who have little or no access to those resources. In that last part of the chapter I introduce the term 'political class' to refer to the former group and '*tani-class*' to refer to all those who are excluded and who refer to themselves when asked about their occupation as

'just farmer' (*tani*). In between these two classes, there is a category of people who want and try to be part of the political class, but who remain excluded. They may be well educated, or wealthy or of high social rank, but they lack the minimum combination of social, cultural and economic capital that is required to enter the political class.

### *Sumba: geography and subsistence*

Sumba is an island, located 400 km east of Bali, south of Flores and northwest of Australia (see map). It is part of the outer arc of the Lesser Sundas. Sumba is a relatively large island of 11,500 square km, 200 kilometres long and from 36 to 75 km wide. There are two airports: Tambolaka in West Sumba in the northern coastal zone west of Karuni, and Mau Hau close to Waingapu. Between three and five times a week there are flights to and from Bali and Kupang. The flight in a forty-passenger aircraft takes about one and a half hours to Bali and a one-way fare is equivalent to half a local schoolteacher's monthly salary. Travelling by sea is cheaper. There are ferries to Kupang on Timor and to Ende on Flores. The main harbour of the island is in Waingapu, the capital of East Sumba. The second harbour is Waikelo, north of West Sumba's capital Waikabubak.

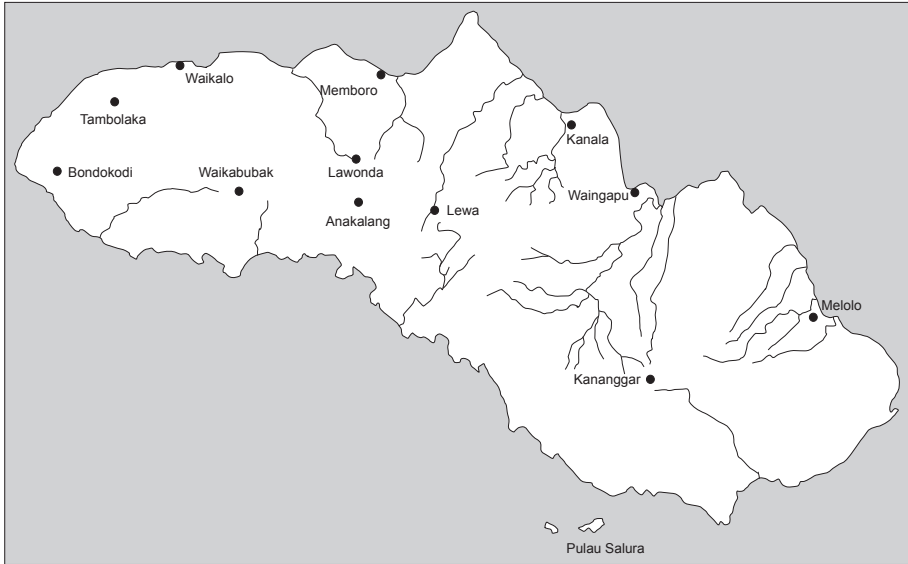


Map 2.1 Sumba's location in Indonesia

Most Sumbanese never travel to other islands: their life is on Sumba, and the cost of travelling is too high. For the wealthiest fraction of the tourists, Sumba's isolation is an asset that can be enjoyed in the luxurious resort of Nihi Watu.<sup>1</sup> The lowest room rate per night is equivalent to three months

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nihiwatu.com/sumba/resort.html> (accessed on 25-1-2006).

salary of a local teacher. Nihi Watu tourists can embark on an excursion to a 'traditional village' and leave their completely closed resort for fifty dollar per hour. Sumba is 'far and isolated' from a foreign or Jakarta-perspective, but those who can afford the journey can go there fairly easily.



Map 2.2 Sumba

Sumba is not as fertile as the volcanic islands of Indonesia. The island is a fragment of the Australian continent that separated from the main continental mass 20 million years ago (Fowler 1999:107). The soil is composed of various types of limestone and uplifted coral reefs. Eastern Sumba consists of hilly and low-lying grassland, coastal terraces and limestone plateaus. When travelling westward from Waingapu, one climbs up to the hills, and in the dry season the view from these hills over East Sumba resembles images of the Grand Canyon in America.

The central part of the island consists of limestone plateaus, undulating hills and deep river valleys. The western region features terrain from forested uplands crisscrossed by seasonal creeks to coastal lowland terraces (Fowler 1999:108). The coastal zone is only a few kilometres wide, with a hot and dry climate. The eastern part of the island is also hot and dry, due to the southeast trade winds blowing off the Australian continent. This part of Sumba has a long, dry season, between April and November. In November the northwest monsoon brings rain to the island. Rainfall varies over the island, with the

lowest amount in East Sumba and the coastal zone, and the highest amount in the mountainous areas of West Sumba. In Lawonda, Central Sumba, where the village described below and in chapter IV is located, rainfall was about 1500 mm annually, with a dry season from May to October.

Between the two plains of Lewa and Anakalang, a wildlife sanctuary surrounds Wanggameti Mountain, with its highest peak at 1,125 metres above sea level. It is famous for its bird life, including nine endemic species, of which the Citron-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea citrinocristata*) is best known.<sup>2</sup>

Differences in landscape and rainfall determine the type of subsistence activity in agricultural societies. East Sumba – outside the capital Waingapu – is sparsely populated. Traditionally it was the area for keeping livestock in addition to practicing subsistence agriculture. The nobility owned large herds of horses, water buffaloes and cattle, whereas the lower ranks would herd the animals and work on the land to cultivate food crops. In West Sumba population density is much higher. The landscape and climate there make possible a more intensive type of agriculture in which cash crops have become increasingly important.

Sumbanese love their island, but life there has always been hard. Land is plenty, but the soil is not very fertile. Growing crops on the hillsides is hard work with only very modest yields. The wet paddy fields in the valleys provide at better living, but only the wealthier inhabitants have access to this type of agriculture. Parts of the cultivated fields are not close to a main road, preventing the use of hand tractors or other machines. Nonetheless, agriculture has always been the main source of living on Sumba. It comprises all the activities that support subsistence in the rural areas of the island: growing food crops for consumption, keeping small livestock around the house for meat and eggs, keeping cattle and buffaloes for ceremonial purposes and for tilling the land, keeping horses as a means of transport and because they are the most important part of bride's dowery. Sumbanese subsistence also involves gathering activities: fishing, cutting grass for thatching roofs, chopping trees in the forest for building material, gathering firewood, digging wild roots and tubers when food is on short supply, catching or hunting wild animals for sport, pest control and additional protein rich food. All these activities require significant labour, and sadly the return on labour is low. Natural phenomena like droughts or flooding and pests, especially locusts in the last decade, have made life in the rural areas even more difficult.

When Sumba was incorporated into the colonial state of the Dutch East

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/national/indonesia/> (accessed on 26-1-2006).



Uumbu Djima gave a speech at Propelmas in 1988

Indies at the end of the nineteenth century, the government started to levy taxes on the island's population. Since then, the need for money has continuously increased: to buy products that can not be obtained through barter exchange (for example kerosene, sugar, soap), to pay school fees, to pay for transport, to buy luxury goods, to pay for medical treatment and so forth. In my book *The Uma economy* (Vel 1994) I elaborated on the strategies adopted by the rural population in Sumba to meet their monetary needs. The most salient of those strategies was to get a close relative employed in a wage earning position and to share the monetary income with a larger group in return for food, labour and ceremonial services. These informal networks between rural and urban Sumbanese, between younger and older generations, bring food and domestic labour to town and return money and luxury goods to the villages. The urban professionals and their families can rely on their village-partners for organising ceremonies such as weddings and funerals in the ancestral village, whereas the villagers have a basis in town where their children can go to school and they can stay if they need medical care.

Compared to the other areas of Indonesia the province of East Nusa Tenggara (Nusa Tenggara Timur, NTT), of which Sumba is a part, is considered a poor,

Table 2.1 Sumba in figures and quantitative comparison\*

Indicator	West Sumba	East Sumba	Nusa Tenggara Timur	Indonesia
Population 2005 x 1000	404	206	4,260	219,205
Gross Domestic Product Per Capita 2005 in US \$**	239 2,150,231	368 3,315,688	360 3,235,699	1320 11,876,000
Surface area in km <sup>2</sup>	4,051	7,000	49,880	1,919,317
Human Development Index ranking in (scale 1 (best)-341(worst)) in 2002	339	329	Lowest of all Indonesia's provinces in 2002 (ranking 30)	Ranking 108 out of 177 countries world-wide
Human Poverty Index ranking in 2002 (scale 1 (best)-341(worst) for districts)	329	209	Ranking 24 out of 30 provinces in total	Ranking 41 among 102 developing countries for which the index has been calculated
Percentage working population with agriculture as main economic activity in 2002	87	84	78 (in 2005)***	44 (in 2005)****

\* Source: BPS Statistics Indonesia at <http://www.bps.go.id/> and <http://ntt.bps.go.id>, *UNDP Human Development Report* as published on <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/countries.cfm?c=IDN>, [http://origin-hdr.undp.org/reports/detail\\_reports.cfm?view=803](http://origin-hdr.undp.org/reports/detail_reports.cfm?view=803) page 102, and *World fact book of the CIA* on <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>.

\*\* For comparative purposes the income figures are given in US \$, using an exchange rate of 1 US \$ = 9.000 Rupiah the convert the BPS income data.

\*\*\* <http://ntt.bps.go.id/mploy/mp02.htm> (accessed 13-8-2007)

\*\*\*\* <http://www.bps.go.id/sector/employ/table2.shtml> (accessed 13-8-2007)

backward and isolated area (Corner 1989:197). Economic indicators, like the Gross Regional Domestic Product per capita, which are used to make this inter-regional comparison, show a very low value for NTT.

These official statistics show that per capita income in 2005 in West Sumba was only 18 per cent and in East Sumba 28 per cent of the national average. It

is hard to find data about income distribution, but in 1993 Ann Booth wrote that in NTT only 5 per cent of the population had a monthly expenditure that exceeded the national poverty line whereas in Java and Bali this is about 25 per cent (Booth 1993:53-83). In December 2005, Kompas newspaper reported that 59 per cent of the households in NTT were statistically registered as 'poor' (*keluarga miskin*).<sup>3</sup> Yet, the macro economic indicators include only what is measured in terms of money, and many household requirements in the rural area of Sumba used to be met, and to some extent can still be met, without using cash, either through direct production, or through exchange of goods. Traditionally, wealth and poverty are measured in terms of houses, land, graves, livestock, food, and social relations (Vel 1994b:150-7).

There is no attempt to extract natural resources such as oil and gas and only little mining on Sumba, and the climate and soil are not very well suited for large-scale cash crop farms. This implies that, at least up to 2006, there are very few initiatives for investment on this island from outside. The local newspapers often report on new initiatives for industrial investments or estates, but West Sumba's district statistics on industries in 2002 show nearly blank tables.<sup>4</sup>

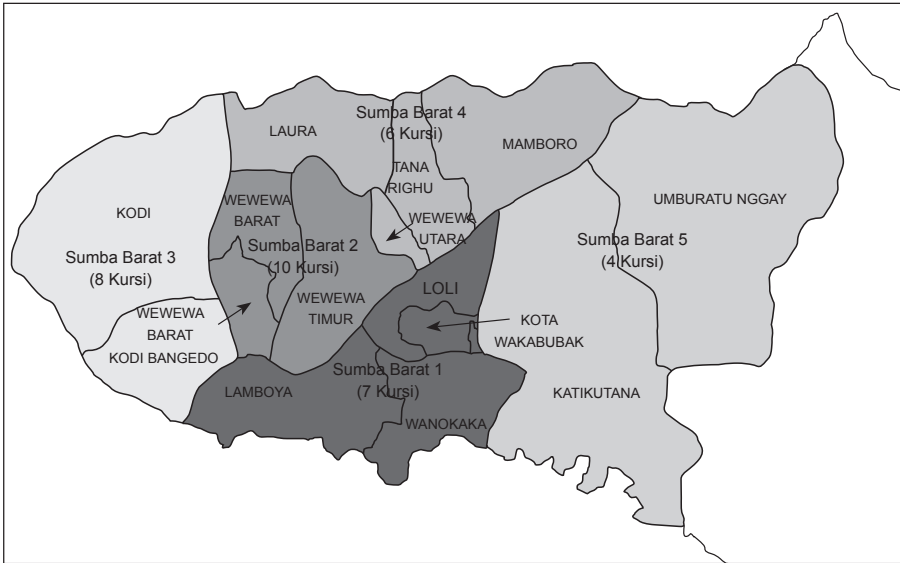
### Population

In 2005 the total population of Sumba was 610,000, two-thirds of which live in West Sumba. An outsider perceives the population as 'Sumbanese', and whenever people from Sumba travel to other islands in Indonesia they present themselves as Sumbanese. On Sumba, however, there are many distinctions within the category of 'Sumbanese'. People who originally migrated from other islands – even if it was generations ago – are not regarded as Sumbanese. The largest group among these is the Savunese, from the neighbouring island Savu, who mostly live in East Sumba and make up 12 per cent of the population in that district.

The distinctions within the category 'Sumbanese' follow the division of traditional domains (elaborated on in Chapter III). These domains are vague geographical areas, 16 in West Sumba and 8 in East Sumba (Goh 1991:xii). They were autonomous 'kingdoms' in the pre-colonial era. At present, the quick answer to the question 'where do you come from' refers to these domains: *orang Loli*, *orang Anakalang* etcetera. There is a historical rivalry among

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0512/16/daerah/2293247.htm>(accessed 14-8-2007).

<sup>4</sup> Badan Pusat Statistik Sumba Barat (2004), *Sumba Barat dalam angka*, Waikabubak: BPS, pp. 193-202.



Map 2.3 Election areas for the 2004 General Elections in West Sumba.  
 Source: Komisi Pemilihan Umum : [http://www.kpu.go.id/peta/peta\\_dprd\\_kota2.php?propinsi=Nusa%20Tenggara%20Timur&prop\\_id=18&peta=Daerah](http://www.kpu.go.id/peta/peta_dprd_kota2.php?propinsi=Nusa%20Tenggara%20Timur&prop_id=18&peta=Daerah) (accessed on 26-6-2006).

the various groups who identify with these domains because once they fought each other in internal wars and headhunting raids. The stories about the heroic acts of the past and the triumphs in warfare strengthen the politics of identity on Sumba. Chapter VI describes how the politics of identity inflamed the ethnic emotions of two opposing groups in 1998, which led to large-scale violence in Waikabubak. Chapter VIII presents a case of identity politics used to create new borders and unify the population within those borders. Chapter IX reveals how district head candidates try to use the internal ethnic distinctions as opportunistically as possible in their election campaigns. Such cases demonstrate how traditional domains remain politically relevant on Sumba; for example, the administrative division in sub-districts (*kecamatan*) follows roughly the borders of the traditional domains, and the election areas, created for the general elections in 2004, also resemble the traditional domains.

Installing democracy on Sumba introduced the direct election of District Heads. For the first time in history it was important how many people made up the constituency of each candidate. Although constituencies were based on other criteria as well, all candidates relied heavily on their ethnic back-



ground to garner votes. Therefore, in the present democratic regime, the division in election areas is one of the most effective ways of discerning a historical background related to current population data on West Sumba, and in turn to understanding its district politics. Map 2.3 shows these areas with the number of seats in the district parliament that each area is allocated. This division is based on the number of voters in each area. Many leaders in the past came from election area five, covering the area where I did most field work, but now they are allocated only four parliament members out of the total of 35.

The urban area, the capital town Waikabubak, is the only multi-ethnic community in West Sumba. It used to be part of the domain Loli, but as it became the administrative and economic centre of the district, many people from other areas migrated there.

#### *History of state formation on Sumba*

State and Christianity are closely linked on Sumba. The Dutch colonial government brought a centralized state to Sumba, and European missionaries were the ones to introduce and spread the Christian religion. Education and health care are usually regarded as state services, yet on Sumba these services were part of missionaries work. How did the introduction and spread of Christianity and the incorporation into the national State affect local leadership on Sumba? In this section state formation is discussed first in general terms, then in terms of the colonial background of contemporary leaders in Central Sumba. The subsequent section tells the history of the introduction of Christianity, which provides a basis for legal pluralism and the creation of Christian elite, and thus a Christian Sumbanese state.

Sumba has a relatively short colonial history. Commercial interest in Sumba was minimal. During the era of the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) there were reports of trading opportunities on Sumba, especially for commerce in (sandal) wood, slaves and cotton, but the general lack of security on the island convinced traders not to establish permanent exchange activities there. The main interests of the Dutch Indies government in the eighteenth century were to keep the island out of the hands of other colonial powers (Wielenga 1949:9). After reports reached Batavia that a British ship was wrecked and raided off the coast of Sumba in 1838, the central Dutch Indies government ordered Resident Van den Dungen Grovinius in Kupang to go to Sumba in order to investigate how the island could be made safe and governable (Kapita 1976b:25). Subsequently he delegated this task to one of his staff members, Sjarif Abdoelrachman bin Aboebakar Alqadri, a relative of the sultan of Pontianak, who carried out the investigations and settled on

Sumba in 1843 (De Roo van Alderwerelt 1906:247). He started profitable horse trade and became a very influential person. To the Sumbanese he represented the Dutch Indies government as he carried out his investigatory initiative and levied taxes on every horse exported (De Roo van Alderwerelt 1906:256-7). His settlement at the north coast of Sumba later grew to become the capital of the island, Waingapu.

In 1866, the first government official was instated on Sumba, *Kontroleur* S. Roos. He had four different tasks: 1. to receive reimbursements for the load of raided shipwrecks, paid in horses; 2. to study the situation and habits of the people on Sumba (in order to find out which method of indirect government rule would be legitimate, in other words compatible with Sumbanese adat); 3. to prevent slave trading; and, unofficially, 4. to keep an eye on the activities of Sjarif Abdoelrachman (Kapita 1976b:28). The latter person's influence had become a problem, since he encouraged internal warfare due to his profitable involvement in slave trade. According to De Roo van Alderwerelt, who was *civiel gezaghebber* which is the highest colonial government position on Sumba from 1885 until 1888 (Van den End 1987:684), the *kontroleur* was supposed to be a political agent of the Dutch Indies government, not the ruler of Sumba, and he was to act as advisor to the Sumbanese raja while leaving them to govern their own areas. This advising role was always firmly bolstered by the colonial government's ability to use force.

To understand the relationship between the colonial government and the Sumbanese leaders, we must take into account different perspectives. From the perspective of the colonial government, the contract which some raja of Sumba as signed in 1845 limited the sovereignty of the Sumbanese especially with regard to trade and alliances with foreigners other than the Dutch (De Roo van Alderwerelt 1906:299-316). De Roo's comments suggest that the Sumbanese raja just signed the contract as a ritual without understanding its content (De Roo van Alderwerelt 1906:276), and that the rajas did not have the authority, according their own customary law, to sign such contracts (De Roo van Alderwerelt 1906:272).

In 1877, Sjarif Abdoelrachman went to Kupang to account for his activities related to warfare on Sumba and involvement in slave trade (Kapita 1976b:38). A few months later he died in Kupang, ending a 34-year period in which he had been the broker between the colonial government and local leaders on Sumba. His activities had created involvement of colonial government in internal warfare to such an extent that Waingapu had become a hostile settlement for various ethnic groups on Sumba. When, in 1901, the rumour was spread that Waingapu would be captured by the raja of Lewa-Kambera, the Dutch colonial government decided to defend its inhabitants. The former policy of non-interference with internal affairs was put on hold and the Dutch Indies Government's authority was established through a violent campaign

of 'pacification' of the island, which was completed in 1912.

The pacification included four major policy measures: (1) the release of slaves and prohibition of slave trade, (2) prohibition of internal warfare, and the declaration that all guns and arms must be handed over to the government, which in turn instituted its own monopoly of violence, (3) abeyance by the people of other government orders, such as to assist in road construction, and (4) compliance with taxes levied by the government. Local government officials were appointed, and in fact, the same system of indirect government rule remained in place, with the only difference being that the rajas now were subordinate to the central colonial government. The raja had lost warfare as a means to demonstrate and consolidate power, but taxation was a new source of suppression used to benefit the raja and his family. Traditionally, leaders on Sumba were only leaders within their own domain (Couvreur 1917:217). This changed with colonial rule. The colonial government appointed some of the *maramba* as raja or assistant raja, placing them into a larger structure and creating a new hierarchy.

While the Dutch colonial government was increasing its influence on Sumba, Protestant Christian missions began their activities on this island. The first Christians on Sumba were immigrants from the island Savu. At the request of two Sumbanese raja, four hundred Savunese were transferred by the colonial government from Savu to Sumba in 1860. Their migration was part of the Sumbanese raja's warfare strategies, which necessitated more people to protect their territory from the Endenese who raided Sumba and exported their captives as slaves (De Roo van Alderwerelt 1906:263-4). When in the 1860s Christianity became rooted on Savu, the Savunese on Sumba also started Christian congregations (Fox 1977:170). The first Dutch missionary Van Alphen arrived on Sumba in September 1881. In the first two decades of Dutch Protestant Christian missionary activity, the missionaries worked mostly with the Savunese in eastern Sumba, and their contact with Sumbanese population was limited to visits to the raja and supplying medical services to the missionary post's neighbours (Van den End 1987:5-6)

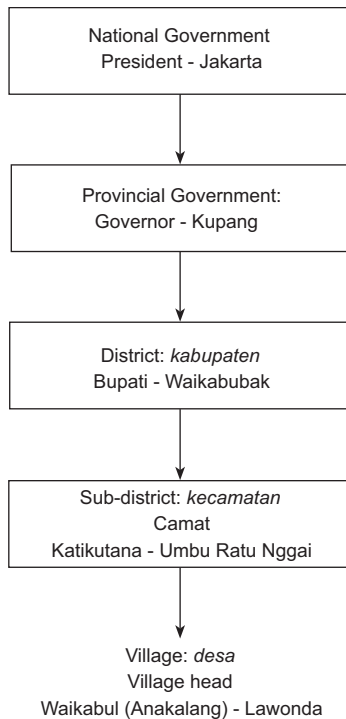
'Pacification' made Sumba more accessible for the missionaries. Their schools were the first on Sumba and through the education in both schools and church they created a new intellectual elite. The educated Sumbanese became the local government officials. The traditional elite's children were the first to become educated. So after losing warfare as a means of establishing authority, the local rulers not only had taxation as a new means of power but they also had access to the governing institutions through their educated children, who gradually were appointed to leadership offices. The missions ran schools on Sumba and they also provided scholarships for Sumbanese students to attend universities in other parts of Indonesia, in Kupang, Ujung Pandang (Makassar) and Salatiga. Janet Hoskins described how raja Horo,

the father of a candidate for deputy district Head in the 2005 elections discussed in chapter IX, was made into a local ruler by joint efforts of the missions and colonial government:

In the 1920s he [Rangga Horo,] became the only student from Kodi to attend a small theological seminary in Karuni that would train village evangelists (*guru injil*). [...] [The Dutch] found in Rangga Horo, now baptized 'Hermanus', their most diligent student. Of all the native administrators he was the only one capable of writing reports in the appropriate style, and the one most skilled in record keeping. He adopted Western dress, and after independence in 1950 decided that one of the best ways to 'modernize' Kodi was to require that men should cut their hair and women wear blouses or *kabayas* at all public occasions. His enthusiastic embrace of all the trappings of Dutch *beschaving* ('civilization') provoked criticism from some quarters in his own society, but allowed him to rise to the very top of the island administration during the colonial period. (Hoskins 1998:93.)

After the declaration of independence of the Republic of Indonesia, changes

Figure 2.1 Government administrative structure since 1979, with Heads of government and examples of administrative units from West Sumba



in the running of the government on Sumba were not as dramatic as national changes. In fact, the same way of indirect rule remained in place, with the difference that the local rules were now subordinate to the national Indonesian government. The missions still maintained a leading role in education, social services, and health care. With Suharto's New Order, after 1965, Sumba experienced for the first time in its history the rule of the bureaucracy as it was organized and instructed from the national centre, Jakarta. The New Order government invested large amounts of money in schools so that every child would be able to attend basic education in a *sekolah inpres* (public primary school) and also in roads, healthcare, electricity, etc. In financial terms the flow of money from 'Java' to Sumba was much larger than the return flow. Suharto's administration also had influence on the religious developments in Sumba, as anyone who tried to take an exam or to become appointed in government service was required to be a registered member of one of the five officially recognized religions. The traditional Sumbanese religion is not included in the five and therefore the easiest solution on Sumba was to register as member of the Protestant Christian Church. Compelled by this political pressure more than half of the population of Sumba is officially Protestant Christian.

The specific relationship between the state and social groups on Sumba ('society') is crucial in understanding local politics. 'The state' is more complicated than a monolith governing the nation from the centre. Migdal (1994:16) argued that in order to understand states and political change, one should disaggregate the state, paying special attention to its parts far from what is usually considered the pinnacle of power. A second claim in this theory is that states and other social forces may be mutually empowering. Disaggregating the state from a regional perspective in Indonesia first of all means following the hierarchy from the top, the president, down to the very lowest governing offices at village level. The second way of disaggregating is to distinguish the various types of institutions or offices that can be included in 'the state' in Indonesia. The state comprises the governing officials, but also includes the army, police and during the New Order period, Golkar (Smith Kipp 1993:87). In the local context, as for example in Waikabubak, the state presents itself especially through these local officials. They are the brokers between central policies and local interests. They are also involved in local society, and their identity comes from sources that are relevant on Sumba.

In the political history of Sumba, the members of the local Sumbanese elite have always tried to use the state for furthering their own interests. Since there has never been a local ruler of Sumba who has been accepted by every group, there has always been a struggle between social groups and their leaders on Sumba for access to the resources of the state. First the fights were for who got military support by the colonial government for internal warfare, then there was struggle for the positions that gave the right to levy taxes. The

broadest and most recent competition is about who gets access to government offices, opening the way to influence and steady sources of income.

### *State and Sumbanese Christianity*

Christian missions supported the colonial rule by educating local elite to be colonial administrators. In addition to this direct link, Christianization influenced many other aspects of Sumbanese society. It was the introduction of a universalizing religion that enabled Sumbanese to imagine themselves as part of larger totalities, and not see themselves as just Sumbanese. It also brought alternative ideas and ways of seeing things to the island's population.

Before there were contacts with people from other areas, Sumbanese worshipped their ancestors and practiced their traditional *marapu*<sup>5</sup> beliefs. This belief system provided guidelines for social behaviour, explained the features of nature and every-day life, and provided a sense of belonging for every individual by linking him or her to venerated ancestors in the spiritual world (Wielenga 1949:71-7). The past defined the position of those living in the present. The past itself was regarded, in the words of Janet Hoskins, as heritage, that is 'an array of established sequences, like the stages of a ritual, which can be instantiated in various forms' (Hoskins 1993:308).

Catholicism was introduced in Southeast Asia in the sixteenth century; Protestant Christian missionaries entered the area only in the nineteenth century in association with the high colonial period (Keyes 1996:280).

Protestant missionaries who came from Europe and America to Southeast Asia in the early nineteenth century were impelled by a strong belief that they had a moral obligation to bring the truth of the Gospel to those who had not yet heard it. Many became missionaries because of a conversion experience they had themselves gone through. Even without the conversion experience, the act of becoming a missionary, which at the time entailed leaving home perhaps forever, working among people of wholly alien cultures, and undergoing hardships of physical discomfort and disease, gave most missionaries a charismatic aura. They would draw on their charismatic qualities to invest their religious work with immediate authority. As legatees of the Reformation, however, Protestant missionaries saw their authority as rooted ultimately not in their personal charisma but in the sacred texts. They believed that through study of the Bible, or more precisely, the translated Bible, they had gained a

<sup>5</sup> *Marapu* is defined by Louis Onvlee as 'mythical ancestors of a genealogical group (*kabihu*, clan) who belong to those who according oral accounts arrived on Sumba first' (Onvlee 1984: 279); D.K. Wielenga extends this definition to 'all who exert power in the invisible world' and this invisible world is where the spirits of the deceased forefathers reside (Wielenga 1949:71).

rational understanding of God's way that would prove superior to the teachings of any other religion (Keyes 1996:282).

Missionaries settled on Sumba only by the end of the nineteenth century, and presented the natives with their first confrontation with a totally different type of belief. European missionaries found that 'both a cosmology and a theodicy seemed to be absent' because they could not recognize similarities between such concepts and the elaborate narratives of Sumbanese about voyages of the ancestors or the history of a particular sacred object. When asked about issues that were familiar themes in Western religious discourse, such as the ultimate destination of the soul, the origin of the human race, and the underlying reasons for suffering (beyond case-by-case instances of a given spirit's anger), most Kodi simply confessed that they did not know (Hoskins 1993:280). During *marapu* rituals the *ratu* (traditional Sumbanese priests) would narrate in ritual speech stories about the past and the ancestors.

A particular partisan version of the past was passed down a descent line or transmitted along with certain valuables, but no more all-encompassing questions were asked. [...] Explanations were undertaken piecemeal in terms of the context at hand, instead of being formulated in the abstract language of religious doctrine or dogma. A primary concern was for ritual correctness rather than cosmological speculation. (Hoskins 1993:280.)

Hoskins (1993), Keane (2007) and Kuipers (1998), have studied the politics of narratives in the local context. Their argument is that the cosmological myths and traditional narratives are used as a 'language of argument rather than a chorus of agreement' (Hoskins 1993:88). Those who can tell the narrative in the most correct and fluent way will be able to convey to the audience that their link to the most powerful *marapu* is strong. Consequently they gain the authority to dominate in the present and visible world. This style of ritual speech is used by Sumbanese politicians, maintaining the tradition that the form of speech expresses the extent of authority.

When Christianity<sup>6</sup> came to Sumba, its first confrontation with traditional religion was over differences in ritual practices. Going to church on a fixed moment in time – without any particular reason in the local context and doing this every seventh day, was a main characteristic of the new religion and introduced the concept of the 'week' on Sumba.

Christian missionaries also introduced school education. In the last decade

<sup>6</sup> With the term 'Christianity' I refer to the world religion in general, brought to Sumba by European missionaries, including both the Protestant Christian Church and the Catholic Church. Only when the context on Sumba requires more specificity do I use terms 'Protestant', 'Catholic' or the names of the churches.



The new Christian church in Anakalang, September 2006

of the nineteenth century the Jesuit mission in north-west Sumba started a school. After ten years it was closed again due to lack of success: the pupils all went home and were not converted to Catholicism. In 1907 Reverend Wielenga reopened the school in Karuni. It was consistent with Dutch colonial policy at that time to train future colonial administrators, and admission was confined to boys and girls who claimed to be of noble rank (Hoskins 1993:282). With the 'Flores-Sumba Contract' of 1913 the colonial government tried to prevent further competition between Catholic and Protestant missionaries, and delegating Flores to the Catholics and Sumba to the Protestants. The Protestant school on Sumba received government subsidies and official approval. From this time onwards the traditional Sumbanese elites' children were educated in Christian schools. The connection of Christianity with schools also led to literacy being regarded as an attribute of Christianity. Some of the elementary school's pupils were selected to pursue further studies, and enter boarding school at the house of the missionary. There they were expected to convert to Christianity. Hoskins wrote that 'two things marked the new Christian community: the respect accorded to the written word, which was treated as



sacred, and the requirement to attend church service on Sundays' (Hoskins 1993:284). She also stated that in the late colonial period Kodinese made a distinction between their own social and geographic sphere of the ancestral village where they worshipped their spirits, whereas everything beyond the island and those things pertaining to government offices, hospitals and schools belonged to the realm of the foreigners and the Christian religion (Hoskins 1993:287). Christianity was seen as an entrance to the wider world.

European missionaries did not only bring a new religion, but along came many elements of Western European culture. The Protestant and the Catholic Churches were the churches of foreigners, whose dogma and liturgy were so fixed that, although in theory the Protestant Church was open to local cultural influences, there were no adjusted forms of ritual in the Christian services before 1940 (Van den End 1988:181). As of 2005, being Christian is part of Sumbanese identity for many of the island's inhabitants. What turned this foreign religion into something Sumbanese? I argue that due to growing membership in the Christian Church, the character and content of the services and the type of ceremonies held outside the Church building have gradually changed from the prescribed forms set by European missionaries, to a Sumbanese version of Christianity that includes new type of rituals which emphasize those parts of Christianity that appeal to traditional Sumbanese religious feelings and abolished the rules and practices that were perceived too foreign.

Lorraine Aragon describes a similar process in Sulawesi in her book *Fields of the Lord*, about how the Tobako in Central Sulawesi created their own version of Protestantism. 'Central Sulawesi highlanders have transposed and relabelled their pre-Christian deities to confirm the missionary-supplied categories such as God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and Satan' (Aragon 2000:32). They regard themselves as true and fanatic Christians. Aragon's major argument is that this world religion could be modified to fit local conditions and local philosophy to form Central Sulawesi Protestantism, which is not just a Christian-coated style of animism.

Tobako Protestantism is an indigenized Christianity built upon almost a century of conversation with national and international representatives of foreign religious orthodoxies. Central Sulawesi Protestantism rests upon a differing set of ecological and historical conditions that are interpreted through an oral society's firm faith in a unified cosmos. (Aragon 2000:36.)

Aragon makes these points about the indigenization of Christianity in such a way to suggest that this is a natural process that happens everywhere in the world, namely, that people adjust new ideas to their existing local philosophy. The question why people like the Tobako did not stick to their own traditional religion remains. Aragon offers the role of state intervention as an

explanation. At first Christianity was instrumental for colonialism; by converting the natives, the missionaries created bridges of inter-ethnic relationships and support for colonial rule. After independence in 1945 Indonesian nationalism was formulated in terms of modernity and economic development. Modernity was strongly associated with Christianity. During the New Order of Suharto, the pressure to convert to one of the officially recognized religions became even stronger. After 1965 being 'without religion' could be equated with communist sympathy, a label that at least would end all career perspectives.

On Sumba the history of conversion to Christianity is rather comparable to that of Central Sulawesi. In both regions various ethnic minorities were converted, and major efforts of the missionaries were in the field of education and development. One of the differences between Sulawesi and Sumba, however, is that in Sumba there is no Muslim majority, a fact which would assign a distinctive identity for minorities. Protestant Christian identity does not make sense in Sumba as a strategy to distinguish oneself from the inhabitants of the neighbouring territory. Christianity is a uniting characteristic of modern, educated Sumbanese, who are well connected to the Indonesian state. As such, it can be used as a political identity, as done in the election campaigns described in chapter IX.

The fact that many people have become Protestant Christians has changed the character of the Christian Church on Sumba from a small foreign religious community to the church of the majority of the Sumbanese. By the 1980s the Protestant Christian Church had become the church of the majority on Sumba. Van Halsema (1995:83) reports that by 1976 the GKS had 52,000 members and that this number had grown to 100,000 in 1986. After 1986, when I lived in West Sumba, there were mass baptism services, where for example in Maradesa, part of congregation Lawonda, over 2300 people were baptised in one service. This spectacular increase in the eighties was due to political pressure. Any person who had something to do with the bureaucracy, such as school children who wanted to take their exams or graduates who wanted to apply for a job, would be better off after registering as Christian. In the West Sumba regional parliament Golkar seats were divided at that time between the Protestant and Catholic politicians according to the numbers of registered adherence to their respective churches. This stimulated large baptism campaigns from Waikabubak into the mountains of the interior of West Sumba.

A congregation that sees its membership increase tenfold has a significant challenge in attending to the needs and education of the new members. In the congregation Lawonda, of which we were members during our stay in Sumba, there was a severe lack of trained church cadre in the late eighties. People who were leaders in other spheres of village life, such as, adat elders or neighbourhood government members, were elected as members of the Church

council and had to teach and guide the (other) new members. Therefore this period strongly stimulated the creation of Sumbanese Protestantism. By 1987 there were 53 ministers on Sumba, all indigenous Sumbanese. Some of these may have been consciously looking for locally relevant and socially accepted content of Protestantism. In a chapter on theological education on Sumba Andreas Yewangoe (1995:123) gives an example of issues posed by young Sumbanese Christian theology students, such as 'how to compare the Biblical concept of 'sin' with the Sumbanese concept *njala*.<sup>7</sup> This is exactly the same type of question posed by the Europeans when they were confronted with the problem how to translate their message. Hoskins (1993:303) also reports discussions in Kodi in the eighties among Protestant ministers:

Although some Church leaders insist on a narrower interpretation on the content of 'religion', many followers clearly wish to accept Christianity *along with* traditional practices. They want someone to develop an argument for syncretism that makes sense to its real judges – the ambivalent and divided villagers of the region, who do not want to abandon their ancestors yet still seek to move into a newer and wider world.

All these discussions took place under the repressive New Order regime that promoted adherence to one of the five religions the regime recognized. After the demise of the New Order Indonesians were free again to decide on their religious adherence, however recent statistics in West Sumba do not show a decline in the numbers of Christians. In contrast, its membership is increasing. The increase in adherents of the Protestant Christian Church is partly due to growing popularity of evangelical churches, which are relatively new to Sumba. Their services are appealing not only because of greater emphasis on ritual and enthusiasm, but also due to such strategies as distribution of free rice and clothes.<sup>8</sup> Apparently, there has not been much change since Keane's observation in the 1980s that converts in Anakalang do not develop narratives of new insights or transformed lives. 'They typically portray entering the church as an act appropriate for educated persons, as an acknowledgement of the power of the government, the modern epoch, or one's kin, or as a more rational, economic mode of life in which one eschews the expense of sacrifices' (Keane 2007:164).

The number of Muslims, Buddhist and Hindu on Sumba is very small, and usually most of them are immigrants from other parts of Indonesia. In coastal areas of Sumba there are some Muslim communities, including Sumbanese who have become Muslims, usually because of intermarriage with Muslims

<sup>7</sup> *Njala* means: 'mistake, wrong, missed' (Onvlee 1984:369).

<sup>8</sup> Interview with U. Dingu, secretary general of the GKS, February 2004.

Table 2.2 Religious adherence in West Sumba according to government statistics of 2000 and 2002, in number of adherents

Religion	Islam	Protestant Christian	Catholic	Hindu	Buddhist	Other, mostly <i>Marapu</i>	Total popula- tion
Number of adherents In 2000	8,161	154,425	90,986	327	5	96,802	350,706
In 2002	11,224	197,888	105,385	327	5	69,157	
As percent- age of total population in 2000	2	44	26	0	0	28	100
In 2002	3	52	27	0	0	18	100

Source: *Sumba Barat in Figures 2000 and 2002*, Badan Pusat Statistik, Kabupaten Sumba Barat, Province NTT.

from other islands. Among the central government civil servants, who mostly live in Waikabubak, there are many Muslims.

#### *State as career: Umbu Djima and the forms of capital*

The overview of historical developments and statistics is one way of finding out about the state in Sumba. It is an outsider's view that organizes events into relevant categories. On Sumba, conversely, the past is conveyed through narratives in which certain people and objects figure prominently. In this section I present a life history of a retired *ex-bupati*, as an alternative way to describe the historical developments of state formation and introduction of Christianity in Sumba, their interaction, and how they are experienced and affect people's lives. I asked Umbu Djima to tell me about his life, when I visited him and his wife at home informally. Although this question is simple, a life history is not an objective story that is just there to be collected. Janet Hoskins warns that 'through 'telling their lives' people do not only provide information about themselves but also fashion their identities in a particular way, constructing a 'self' for public consumption' (Hoskins 1998:1). Umbu Djima has known me for many years and since 1986, when I was development worker in one of the rural areas of 'his' *kabupaten*. Since 1998 I have come to Anakalang many times and stayed with his female cousin who lives next door, and since our introduction in 1984, he has become a friend and source of information. Every time I stayed there I visited Umbu Djima, walking to his

house through the garden that connects my friend's home to his house. At the day of the interview we had been discussing the 2004 parliament elections, the new parties and in particular the characteristics of the local elections' candidates. After dinner, Umbu Djima liked to talk about his life, listing his accomplishments and offices and explaining the choices, considerations and experiences of successive periods in his life. As I have often heard other prominent Sumbanese men say about their lives, he stressed that it was not strategy, luck or fate that brought him where he was, but the hand of God. I have translated and summarized Umbu Djima's words into the biography below. It details how a boy from noble descent in Anakalang gradually moved upwards to positions from which the state's resources could be controlled. The latter process requires a great skill of accumulating and transforming various types of capital. Umbu Djima's life history is a long narrative full of examples on how he succeeded to make such acquisitions. Different types of capital are accumulated and converted from one type into the other. In his article 'The forms of capital' Bourdieu states that:

capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility (Bourdieu 1986:243).

These distinctions are helpful in understanding how the state is embedded in society in Sumba. It also clarifies why some Sumbanese are more successful than others, and why activities that at first glance seem to be 'just cultural' manifestations are so important for politics on Sumba. The use of 'capital' is a way of addressing differential resources of power, and of linking an analysis of the cultural to that of the economic. The key theoretical question is how these different types of capital transform themselves into each other in order to maximize accumulation.<sup>9</sup>

Umbu Djima was born in 1939 in Central Sumba, in Anakalang, a son of one of the noble families of this area. His female cousin told me that, according to the local myth of origin, there had always been a rivalry between the founding fathers of Anakalang's lineages. The authority to rule and decide on

<sup>9</sup> Schuller, Baron and Field 2000:4. 'Social capital' is not used in the way similar to the World Bank following Putnam's approach to social capital, as applied to Indonesia by Bebbington, Dharmawan, Fahmi and Guggenheim (2006). Their approach is to apply the concept in an instrumental way to stimulate village institutions in order to achieve community driven development and foster social values that can countervail corruption by state officials.

the division of land was the object of this rivalry, and it still exists, adapted to modern times, in 2006. From Kapita's book on Sumbanese history we know that in 1880, the Dutch Indies colonial government installed Umbu Dongu Ubini Mesa as the first raja of Anakalang and handed to him the golden stave, the symbol of colonial blessing of traditional leadership (Kapita 1976a:60). After the Second World War his grandson Umbu Remu Samapati was elected as the second *bupati* of West Sumba, and moved to the capital Waikabubak. His brother-in-law Umbu Sulung Ibilona, succeeded him as raja Anakalang and Umbu Djima was his eldest son.

Umbu Djima remembers his early youth in his home kampong as one of freedom and privilege.<sup>10</sup> He was the oldest of Umbu Sulung's children, the first child among seven children of the first wife. His father had officially four wives. When he lived with his parents in Anakalang he learned a lot about Sumbanese adat, since adat ceremonies and negotiations often took place in or near his home kampong. Umbu Djima was sent to the Christian school in Waibakul in 1946. When he graduated in 1952 he went to secondary school in the center of missionary activities, Payeti, in East Sumba. He followed the official curriculum successfully, and was initiated into Christian culture. Yet, in retrospect, he noted that being subject to missionaries' home rules and discipline was the most striking experience of those years. As son of the raja he was shocked when assigned household chores. After the second grade of school in Payeti he moved to Waikabubak in West Sumba, and graduated in 1958 from secondary school. He continued his education on Java, because at that time there was no higher school on Sumba. He was not sponsored by a church scholarship, because of a temporary crisis in the Protestant Christian Church of Sumba due to the political crisis between Indonesia and the Netherlands over Dutch New Guinea (Van den End 1987:584-7). He went to college and was sponsored by his own family who could afford to sell livestock to cover the expenses. He went to Salatiga in Central Java, one of the Christian centers on that island, where he lived with fellow Sumbanese students. Then he studied at the Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta with the faculty of social and political sciences. He was an active member of the Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia (GMKI, Indonesian Student Christian Movement). When he finished the first part of this study in 1965 he was immediately employed by the government of NTT, as civil servant in the office of the governor.

Before taking up this position Umbu Djima returned to Sumba to get married. His wife was the daughter of a noble family from Loli in West Sumba. Together they went to Kupang in early 1966, where he worked at a new

<sup>10</sup> Interview on 21 February 2004, Anakalang, Sumba.

office for *urusan pusat* (central government policies) in NTT. At the governor's office, there were at that time only seven well-educated employees, all of whom had to teach at the local university. In 1968, Umbu Djima became head of the office and director of the Akademi Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri (Academy for Domestic Public Administration) in Kupang, where many civil servants received their education. Additionally, he was member of the province's parliament (DPRD-I) from 1968 to 1971.

In 1974, the next phase in his career began with his promotion to the Head of the Department of Education and Culture, and his election as dean of the Cendana University in Kupang. In 1975, he was selected by the Ministry of Domestic Affairs to participate in a one-year program for advancing civil servants in Nice, France. It was his first experience abroad. The classes centered on regional government, since the French system seemed to be similar to the Indonesia one. The way of life in Europe, the language, the habits, the silence and cold weather were the most lasting impressions for Umbu Djima, as was the discipline required for time management and a work ethic. Upon his return, he accepted a new position as assistant secretary of the governor, Ben Mboi, and after three years he moved to the Head of BP7,<sup>11</sup> a new institution that was founded to increase the social diffusion and acceptance of the New Order's ideology. During this period Umbu Djima was also Golkar representative of the NTT province in the People's Consultative Assembly (Musyawarah Perwakilan Rakyat, MPR) in Jakarta, where he and his wife maintained a household. The Kupang residence continued to be a haven for Sumbanese students and relatives, who sometimes numbered up to 40 people. When the *bupati* of West Sumba died in 1984, Governor Ben Mboi asked Umbu Djima to be his successor. At that time it was Golkar and the Army who decided on the candidates, and in practice the governor who also had a military rank had the biggest say. Although Umbu Djima was not originally enthusiastic about this position, which at that time was perceived as a step down to a lower level of government, he agreed and was West Sumba's *bupati* from 1985 until 1995. Perhaps motivated by his prior experiences in foreign cultural contexts, his primary program was to introduce 'new ways', *heka pata*, which would put an end to what he called 'wasteful traditional ceremonies' and would rationalize production practices in agriculture. He was *bupati* in the tradition of his predecessors: a home grown political leader, the son or grandson of the colonial raja, who ruled as member of the New Order establishment. In West Sumba, unlike other parts of Indonesia, the strength of the New Order regime was not in its capacity for repression, but in the

<sup>11</sup> Badan Pembinaan, Penyelenggaraan, Penegaraan, Pendidikan, Pedoman, Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila.

record of successful development and maintenance of civil peace (Mitchell and Gunawan 2000a:2). During this period the only political organization available was Golkar, and therefore 'Golkar had the service of many able and idealistic men and women at its disposal and it had earned legitimacy in office from a long record of achievement' (Mitchell and Gunawan 2000a:2).

After Umbu Djima retired in 1995, he was elected in 1997 as a member of the National Parliament DPR-RI in Jakarta for Golkar. He was a member of this parliament during the demise of the Suharto regime and thus a first hand witness to Reformasi.

In 1999, he retired from this post and returned to his home in Waikabubak, Sumba and had built a new, large house in traditional style but with modern building materials and comfort in his home village Anakalang. In 2000, he started activities as the chairman for the local Church's building committee.

Umbu Djima's life history reveals that he is an expert in Indonesian politics, from Jakarta to Sumbanese village. It is also a testimony of his wealth in cultural and social capital. Bourdieu argues that the amount of cultural capital connected to a person can be measured from the length of its acquisition. In Umbu Djima's case, this included 20 years of formal education, supplemented with many years of additional learning as University lecturer and as a participant in the course in France for Indonesian civil servants. There are only few people of his generation on Sumba who have had a similar education and experience. His fields of expertise, for which he is respected in Sumba, include traditional Sumbanese culture, the culture and teachings of the Protestant Christian Church, the bureaucracy, Indonesian politics from the national to the village level, and knowledge of foreign cultures. The photographs of many prestigious occasions in his house, horse race trophies, and the large house in the village where he lives most of the time are the most obvious symbols of his capital. His titles *doctorandus*, (*mantan* (former)) *bupati* and most recently chairman of the Church building committee are evidence of his cultural institutional status.

A career like Umbu Djima's requires economic capital. He could study in Java because his family was able to afford it: they could sell livestock to get money to pay for school fees and boarding costs. Economic capital was transformed into cultural and social capital: those relatives who contributed livestock for paying school fees established a debt, which later could be rewarded, for example, when their children could stay at Umbu Djima's house in Kupang in order to have access to higher education. His offices as bureaucrat, lecturer, member of parliament and *bupati* all supplied him with economic capital.

Umbu Djima's life history contains two decisions which involved him more thoroughly in kinship network. First, he married a Sumbanese woman,



according to the traditional rules of preferential marriage, re-establishing marriage alliance between his own and another important sub-ethnic group on Sumba, and opening the way to use this type of social capital for political purposes. Second, he ultimately returned to Sumba to continue his career as *bupati* and to be amongst fellow Sumbanese, where political success requires a good position in local networks. The material obligations within such networks can become a heavy burden. Other Sumbanese men of Umbu Djima's generation with similar biographies made different choices. When I listed the characteristics of 'successful' Sumbanese, I found that many Sumbanese with a successful career married women of different ethnic origin; that fact excluded them from many of the obligations of Sumbanese marriage affiliation, which could drain their wealth. Sumbanese who reside outside Sumba can live a more individualized life, which facilitates accumulation of economic capital.

During his long career Umbu Djima became part of many social networks, such as, the kinship network in his home village, the Christian network through the missionaries schools on Sumba, the Sumbanese students' network, the Indonesian Christian students' network, the network with the pupils from the Academy in Kupang where he taught for many years, bureaucratic networks, and last but not least Golkar. Accumulating capital – social, economic and cultural is the way to obtain power, and it is the activity at the heart of Uma-politics. Every person's position in terms of power can be explained by assessing his or her assets in these different forms of capital. Social network connections can only be transformed into status or economic capital if they imply durable obligations subjectively felt or institutionally guaranteed. Bourdieu argues that,

this is done through the alchemy of *consecration*, the symbolic constitution produced by social institution as a relative, brother, cousin or as knight, heir, or donator and endlessly reproduced in and through the exchange (of gifts, words, women, etc.) which it encourages and which presupposed and produces mutual knowledge and recognition. Exchange transforms the things exchanged into signs of recognition and, through the mutual recognition and the recognition of group membership which it implies, re-produces the groups. By the same token, it reaffirms the limits of the group. (Bourdieu 1986:250.)

Chapter III will elaborate on the cultural repertoire in West Sumba which is an important source of cultural, symbolic and social capital.

*The state as bureaucratic procedures*

Umbu Djima's life history makes clear that he is one of the elite, and a prominent member of the political class. Those who do not belong to that class cannot easily identify with the state. They experience its existence in other forms, most of all as bureaucratic procedures.

In *Seeing like a state* James Scott (1998) describes how states make populations 'visible' or 'legible' through permanent surnames, standardization of weights and measures, cadastral surveys, official languages and other ways of standardising citizenship and identifying populations generally and nationally, rather than specifically and locally. The Indonesian state categorizes the Sumbanese according to criteria of national policy relevance. The state bureaucracy does not keep records of issues that are important to traditional Sumbanese identity, such as clan and domain of origin. Personal distinctions, however, which do matter to the state, are found on the identity card, the *kartu tanda penduduk* (KTP). The identity card gives the owner a number and an official name, and it registers blood group, gender, date of birth, marital status, religion, profession, and address in terms of the state's administrative divisions. For Indonesian residents over 17 years of age it is compulsory to own one.

Nomor K.T.P.	0947/27/KPRL/KKW/2002		
Nama lengkap	R. [REDACTED]	N.	[REDACTED]
Jenis Kelamin	Perempuan	Golongan darah	O
Tempat/tgl. lahir	[REDACTED]	25 - 10 - 1973	
Kawin/Tidak kawin	Tdk. Kawin	Agama	Protestan
Pekerjaan	[REDACTED]		
Alamat	Jl. [REDACTED]		35.
R.T./R.W.	27/09	Wilingapu	01/09/2002
Kelurahan/Desa	Prai Liu	A. N. BUPATI KONA	SUMBA TIMUR
Kecamatan	Kota Wailingapu	[Signature]	
Berlaku hingga	MARTHEN U. Z WOLAGOL [Signature] .MSi.		
	25 - 10 - 2005	NIP.	620024480

Figure 2.2. Identity card (KTP)

People who live far out in the mountains in Sumba could still do without an identity card, living their lives in the village, making a living through agriculture and only occasionally paying a visit to relatives or the market elsewhere on Sumba. Yet any contact with the state requires an Indonesian identity. To get a card one has to enter the sphere of bureaucracy and have a passport photograph taken. It requires money and surrender to a different type of authority than the traditional one. To be able to get an identity card one has to submit a photocopy of the family document and the birth certificate. The function of the birth certificate particularly sheds light on the spheres of life to which the Indonesian identity is most relevant:

Table 2.3. The Birth Certificate's function

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For legal status
Entering school, from kindergarten to university
Applying for a job and applying for membership of Indonesian police and armed forces
Getting an ID card/ family document/ family registration number
Getting a driving license
Applying for a passport
Paying family allowances
Establishing a will
Applying for scholarship
Applying for insurance
Registration of marriage
Performing the pilgrimage
Obtaining a death certificate
Getting a divorce
Registering a new child
Adopting a child
Voting in elections

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Source: [http://www.jakarta.go.id/en/layanan/masyarakat/surat\\_ket\\_lahir.htm](http://www.jakarta.go.id/en/layanan/masyarakat/surat_ket_lahir.htm) (accessed on 14-9-2004)

It is obvious that this registration is necessary for obtaining government-issued documents. From the Sumbanese perspective, it is disputable whether the Indonesian State is the authority providing legal status, because on Sumba land rights and disputes are still more a matter for customary law than state law. The Sumbanese regard marriage, death, divorce, child recognition and adoption primarily as matters for adat, and would only register these events with the government if there was some very specific reason. Population statistics on Sumba are therefore not very reliable if they are only based on official registrations.

*The state as economic sector*

The state appropriates part of its citizens' economic revenues and redistributes those funds. Regions are evaluated in the economic terms of how much they contribute to the national treasury and how much they receive in return. Sumba is part of the province of East Nusa Tenggara (Nusa Tenggara Timur, NTT), one of the poorest in Indonesia, where between 1996 and 2000 on only 0.65 per cent of the Indonesian national gross domestic product average was generated.<sup>12</sup>

The figures in Table 1 clearly show a very small per capita income, but the level of poverty of the Sumbanese population is a matter of debate among statisticians and policy makers (Betke and Ritonga 2004). The macro figures do not include income from barter, which is a major type of revenue in Sumba. Food especially is either a product of one's own cultivation or obtained through barter trade, and therefore invisible in the statistics (Vel 1994a:35-8). Despite this component of its economy, Sumba remains a very resource poor island. Cashew nuts, vanilla, candlenuts and cacao were the most promising crops for export to other regions. During 2004-2006 *kutu lak* (shellac)<sup>13</sup> had become a major export commodity. Sandalwood, which used to be the island's major commodity, is now officially banned from trade. Informal sources confirm however that illegal logging and trade is finishing off the remaining sandalwood on the island, just as in Timor (McWilliam 2001).

From the Sumbanese perspective, the best type of employment with regard to status and monetary income, and the common goal of pupils starting their education, is to be a civil servant. The riots in 1998 in Waikabubak, discussed next in Chapter VI, were triggered by demonstrations against the district government, which was accused of fraud and nepotism related to the results of exams for potential civil servants. According to official government statistics<sup>14</sup> there are 1658 official civil servants in West Sumba, and another 3205 people who work as schoolteachers. The total of people who work for the government is about 5000, which is 25 per cent of those employed outside of agriculture in West Sumba. This figure does not include people who work indirectly for the government or are employed by government officials, such as their drivers, housekeepers, guards and cooks. The figures only include persons who are government-employed themselves, and not those who share their household. If we were to estimate the number of people whose livelihood depends largely

<sup>12</sup> BPS Statistics Indonesia at <http://www.bps.go.id/sector/nra/grdp/table4.shtml> (accessed 5-8-2004).

<sup>13</sup> Shellac is a secretion of the lac insect *Coccus lacca*, and it is a material used as component for paint.

<sup>14</sup> *Sumba Barat dalam angka 2002*.

on income from government employment, we need to multiply 5000 many times. The only other sector in which people on Sumba earn a good (monetary) income is trade. This sector on Sumba is completely dominated by Sumbanese of Chinese ethnic origin. Table 2.4 depicts the structure of the economy in West Sumba according to official state statistics:

Table 2.4. West Sumba's Gross Domestic Product 2001 and its division over the major sectors of the district economy.

Indicator, for West Sumba 2001	In billion rupiah	As percentage of District GDP in 2001
Gross Domestic product (current market prices)	482	100
Government expenditures	78	17
GDP produced in agriculture, of which:		
a food crops' contribution to GDP	194	42
b horticulture	34	7
c forestry	0.8	0
d livestock	50	11
e fishery		1
Total	284	61
GDP produced in:		
a trade	14	9
b tourism	1	0
c mining	2	1
d industry	3.5	2
e building and construction	7	4
f banking and finance	6	3
g transport and communication	8	3

By far the largest employment sector is agriculture. In terms of the daily activities of the population, 87% of the economically active population works in agriculture. This figure includes well-educated people who have not succeeded in finding a job corresponding with their education, which constitute a hidden yet politically important category. The agricultural sector accounts for 61% of the District Gross Domestic Product. Moreover, 42% of the GDP is produced in food agriculture. The latter figure is highly fictive because a large part of food production is subsistence agriculture, which means that only a small part of the harvest is sold, whereas the bulk of it is kept for consumption or enters the barter economy, where food is exchanged for services. The

government is also much more dominant in the district monetary economy than these official figures suggest. The routine government expenditure by itself accounts for 16 per cent of GDP. The district government is the employer of the official civil servants and of numerous other employees with minor status. It is also the institution that issues infrastructure-related projects. The districts government has obtained more than 90% of its own revenues from the central government since 2001, through the General Allocation Fund (Dana Alokasi Umum, DAU).<sup>15</sup> Table 8.1 in Chapter VIII presents figures for the government budget from 2000 until 2005.

### *Social cleavage*

The statistics in this chapter already hint at the type of social cleavage which exists on Sumba. The percentage of the working population of West Sumba for whom 'agriculture' was main economic activity was 87% in 2001. Although, according to government statistics, the share of the agricultural sector in West Sumba's GDP is 61%, this does not mean that the division of income or wealth is likewise. Although I have no hard evidence, I am convinced that the figures about agricultural production are estimations of harvested quantities multiplied by standard selling prices, whereas in reality in the rural areas people use a large proportion of the products for own consumption, and sell only their surplus.

If we do not look at statistics, but travel around in West Sumba, it is clear that the rural population, living off the main road, is poor. Along the main road and especially in the capital town Waikabubak there are some relatively rich people. The urban population speaks Indonesian, watches TV, uses mobile phones if they can afford them, and communicates frequently with people outside Sumba. The rural population mostly uses the vernacular language and rarely watches TV, and their lives are more concentrated around their villages. But the rural youth try to participate in the urban experience.

Social cleavage in West Sumba is not an urban-rural division in a strict geographical sense. The term 'urban' as used here refers to a complex of linked characteristics: modern, involved in monetary economy, Indonesian, and literate. Any person on Sumba who aspires to inclusion in this urban group should have good links with the state, preferably by getting a government job himself. Obviously the highest concentration of 'urban' people live in the capital Waikabubak. There are also 'rural' people living in town, for example some of those who were born in the ancient kampongs of

<sup>15</sup> *Sumba Barat dalam angka 2002:252* gives 92% for 2001.

Waikabubak and kept their rural way of life. Unmarried youth from the rural areas are trying to become part of the urban setting. They come to town to go to school, provide domestic help in their boarding house, and some of them succeed in finding jobs in shops. The 'urban type of people' outside the capital preferably live close to the main road that connects Waikalo harbour with Waikabubak, Waingapu and Melolo. There, they enjoy electricity and have transport connections to town. Many people with higher state positions have both a house in the capital and a house in their village, with relatives in each house to keep the household running even if the host is absent. The further one travels from the main road, the sparser 'urban' characteristics become, for example, the rural schools have only a few teachers, the village heads speak vernacular most of the time, and there are no shops. The poorest people have no links with the urban area: they have no one to stay with if they go to town, they cannot afford the transport, and they are busy working on the land.

Chapter I introduced the political model of stratification that focuses on the role individuals in the political process, and the capacity they have to appropriate part of the state's resources. The division in political class, political public and *tani*-class is an alternative way of analyzing social cleavage in Sumba. The top layer of society and the central part of this model, the political class, consist of people who derive their revenues and income primarily from the state, through formal salaries from the offices they occupy, through projects they implement as commissioned by the government, or through informal means connected to public offices, such as, bribery, mark up, rent or corruption.

Civil servants, politicians and contractors are the core of the political class. Most of them reside in the capital Waikabubak, because it is the bureaucratic centre of West Sumba. The town is the seat of Central Government civil servants and the District Departments (*Dinas*). Central government civil servants are those who work for the National Family Planning Coordinating Agency (BKKBN), the Department of Religion, the State Court of Justice, the Public Prosecutor and the Central Statistics Office. Many of them are not Sumbanese. In 2002, 6.2 per cent of the population of West Sumba (23,000 people) resided in the capital Waikabubak. Yet, 38 per cent of the civil servants and teachers were based in the capital. Since the type of civil servant positions in town are the higher ranked, not only in numbers of officials but also in terms of power, Waikabubak is the centre of West Sumba's political class.

Of the large and medium scale trade companies active in West Sumba, 80 per cent are located in Waikabubak. According to the data of the Central Statistics Office, 50 of the 83 traders who are involved in trade with other islands, reside in Waikabubak whereas the others have their premises along the road to the harbour Waikalo. Of these traders, 72 per cent are labelled 'for-

Table 2.5. Number of civil servants and teachers in 2002 in West Sumba, in Waikabubak and outside the capital.

Location Type of government employees	Waikabubak (District capital)	Outside the capital	Total
Central government civil servants	172	0	172
Local government civil servants at District Departments	1184	0	1184
Local government civil servants at sub-district level	8	207	215
Local government civil servants at village level	15	72	87
Primary school teachers	168	1939	2107
Teachers in secondary and higher school	315	783	1098
Total	1862 (38%)	3001 (62%)	4863 (100%)

Source: *Sumba Barat dalam angka 2002*, Badan Pusat Statistik, Kabupaten Sumba Barat, Province NTT

eign', which means Chinese in this case. They are in control of various sectors in the Sumbanese economy: trade, transport and construction. There are no reliable figures publicly available to measure their role in the economy, but if the contribution of these three sectors to the GDP of West Sumba is taken as a very rough and speculative indicator of their official turnover, they account for at least 20% of the district's GDP.

The role of businessmen in politics is even harder to assess. Contractors need the support of those who can decide about the allocation of the district budget. This budget is used partly for the projects that contractors compete for. Politicians and bureaucrats who influence how the money is spent receive a percentage of the total project budget. In times of elections politicians clearly rely very much on support from businessmen: they provide transport, food and money to facilitate election rallies, as will be discussed in Chapter IX. The mutual dependency between businessmen and politicians and bureaucrats strengthens the cohesion within the political class.





### CHAPTER III

## Tradition, leadership and power

Sumba is still relatively unknown to tourists. It is one of the last bastions of surviving native cultures in the fast changing world; an unspoilt land with ancient culture and colourful traditions. Travelling across Sumba, we are greeted by its strange beauty: vast, rolling savannahs and large tracks of steppe where cattle and horses roam freely. The people of Sumba share the unique quality of their island. Their ancestors can be traced back to the Neolithic Age. A proud and happy people, the Sumbanese embraced the Christian religion in the sixteenth century. Reluctant to abandon ancient beliefs, they blended this new faith with animistic belief called 'Marapu', which they still practice even today, with colourful and spectacular rituals. Tall, traditional peaked-roof houses dominate the horizon. These unique houses surround enormous megalithic tombstones, as the Sumbanese believe that the departed ancestors continue living protecting their descendants. (Source: website Newa Sumba Resort.)<sup>1</sup>

The website of Newa Sumba Resort which is close to West Sumba's harbour Waikelo, presents this text as the information about Sumba. The exotic and pure otherness of the Sumbanese is a tourist attraction. The image of 'unspoilt land with ancient culture and colourful tradition' is also in the minds of many Indonesians outside Sumba. The initial owner of the Newa Sumba Resort was a very successful Sumbanese businessman, who left his home island when he was young. He made his career in international logging business and owned one of the largest beer-companies in Indonesia. He built the resort in his old age, both as a private holiday home and for developing tourism on his home island. After he passed away his children inherited the resort. They live in Jakarta and the USA and occasionally visit their resort.

Of course this image of 'tradition' is highly romanticized. The text is even blatantly wrong where it says that the Sumbanese embraced the Christian religion in the sixteenth century; in fact some of them only did so in the twentieth century. Yet, it is true that people on Sumba practice their *marapu* rituals even today. The sound of the beating of the gong that announces those rituals can be heard daily, sometimes in the main villages in more remote

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.newasumbaresort.com/sumba.htm> (accessed 23-8-2007).

areas, sometimes in town, and often along the road. Sumbanese call this time consuming activity '*urus adat*', which cannot be translated well, but means 'doing things in the sphere of the ritual obligations'. They have many expressions to refer to all the different rituals and the successive phases within such rituals. All Sumbanese adults frequently occupy themselves with activities of *urus adat*, for example, men spend many hours discussing strategies for adat negotiations, specialists spend even more time on this. The younger men travel about gathering livestock and other materials that will be used in adat exchange. When there is an adat event due, women spend days gathering and preparing food and drinks, and younger men put up party tents, arrange seats and slaughter the animals for the guest meal. Adat is the basic form of local politics on Sumba, and adat rituals are instances of performing political skills, by telling the most convincing narrative about the link to the ancestors and by negotiating the best deal for adat exchanges.

This is the context in which state politics take place. 'Politicians on Sumba who aspire to be *bupati*, have to know about Sumba, have to understand the ways we use here' was one of the slogans of Umbu Bintang, who was running for *bupati* himself in the elections of 2005.<sup>2</sup> They have to understand how people communicate, how social relations are mediated through material exchanges, how adat idiom is used as a language of politics, how *marapu* belief and its rituals affect the ways in which politicians can construct their authority as leaders. This chapter addresses those questions by describing kinship structure and social organization, traditional social stratification, ethnic divisions and characteristics of traditional leadership. In the second part of the chapter I discuss traditional concepts of legitimacy and power. The conclusions of this chapter summarize how Sumbanese tradition can be seen and used as a reservoir of social and cultural capital for local leaders and district politicians.

### *Traditional cultural capital*

When I asked several people in Anakalang just before the election campaign in March 2004 who the people whose names were on the list of candidates for the regional Parliament were, they responded by telling me about place of origin or birth, about the candidates' well known close relatives, their religious adherence, and about their present or former position (for example 'teacher', 'former village-head'). Local candidates would not be called '*orang Anakalang*' (a person from Anakalang) but the explanation about place of origin would be more specific, referring to the hamlet in which their House of origin is

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter VIII.

located. Others are indicated as 'orang Kodi' or 'orang Waijewa', referring to the traditional domains on Sumba. The different criteria for explaining a person's identity reveals that in this setting of contemporary regional politics, the actors have multiple identities, as members of their family or clan, original inhabitants of a specific domain, members of the Protestant or Catholic Church, and with positions that indicate their present rank in government bureaucracy. Traditional identity is a position in the kinship structure, social rank and geographical division in traditional domains.

Kinship structures usually begin in the nuclear family: wife and husband and their children. In Sumba, this is not self-evident since the husband may have more than one wife, since children often do not live with their parents and since parts of several nuclear families sometimes co-reside in one house. In my study of the Sumbanese (rural) economy, I chose the Uma (house) as basic social unit instead of the household or the nuclear family (Vel 1994b:78-80). *Uma* in the Sumbanese language means house, and it also refers to a group of people who belong to that house. Uma, in the latter sense, is part of a patrilineal clan, *kabihu*, and its members share their relation to the ancestors. *Kabihu* literally means corner pillar, and the patrilineal clans are the corner stones of Sumbanese society. Identification with a specific house connects people to the biographies of these houses and their objects – heirlooms, bones, graves – through which they trace connections to each other and the landscape (Gillespie 2000:16). Uma members do not necessarily reside in the house, but they will always come back, and perform their rituals there, especially those marking the stages of life, such as marriage and funeral. The members of an Uma share a relationship of general reciprocity, which means that they can always ask for each other's help (moral support and material assistance), can always stay at each other's houses and are always able to come and eat in each other's house. Outsiders can be incorporated in an Uma, as fictive kin, after performing the necessary rituals and the consideration of their willingness to obey the rules of reciprocity. Thinking in terms of reciprocity is crucial to understanding Sumbanese communication.

Traditional houses are built in groups around a square, and this hamlet is called the *paraingu* (Indonesian: *kampong*). In the past *paraingu* were preferably built on top of a hill, and they used plants and stone walls as fences. Within the *paraingu* there are several houses which all have a specific ritual function. The Uma Bakul (The Big House) is the main house of the *kabihu*, it is where the temporal ruler resides.

Within the patrilineal clans there is a distinction according to social rank. Nobility is hereditary, and confirmed by the possession of slaves. These slaves are the lowest class in traditional Sumbanese society. Their owners treat 'slaves of old' (*ata bokulu*, or *ata ndai*; Kapita 1976a:48; Forth 1981:215) as house servants, and assign specific tasks to each of them; they are the owner's



Uma: a traditional house

possession, in the sense that the nobleman can give his slave to another *kabihu* as part of the dowry, give him or her in marriage, and decide that the slave will be killed to enter the grave alongside him, so that in the land of *marapu* the two can still be together. The category of minor slaves (*ata kudu*) used to comprise was formerly made of persons acquired by purchase or capture before the abolition of slave trade and the suppression of internal wars by the Dutch (Forth 1981:216). In 2004, this class distinction is not as clear and sharp as it used to be at the start of the twentieth century, but it has not completely disappeared and it is much more relevant in East Sumba than in West Sumba.<sup>3</sup> Many contemporary leaders are of noble descent, and people of slave descent will usually still be member of the lowest class in present day social and economic terms. Members of the middle class in the traditional stratification, who are referred to as *tau kabihu*, the commoners, are more or less still subordinates of the noble rulers. At least they could be called upon

<sup>3</sup> See Twikromo (2008:50-4, 59-78) about slaves in Mangili.

to fight along side them, and to provide labour and materials for the renovation of noble houses and the harvesting of paddy fields (Forth 1981:229). The model of noble rulers who call upon their slaves and commoners to fight along side them, and to defend the rights of their domain, whether territorial or in terms of honour, is very alive in contemporary Sumba politics.

Social ranks are important with regard to marriage, and it is still the norm that a Sumbanese man marries a woman of at least equal social status. The size of the accompanying dowry is an indication of the status of the married couple and the children they will have. A marriage links two *kabihu*, because on Sumba all marriage partners have to be found outside one's own *kabihu*, and men prefer to marry their cousins, particularly a mother's brother's daughter (Forth 1981:329). A *kabihu* is either bride-giving or bride-receiving in relation to another *kabihu*, but cannot be both at the same time. Marriage alliances on Sumba can be regarded as the cement between the various *kabihus*, outlining the rules and extent of social, economic and political solidarity.<sup>4</sup> Marriage alliances in Sumba are asymmetric, which means that a long chain of clans are tied to each other through marriage bonds. In this chain the bride-givers, *yera*, have special leverage over their bride takers, *ngaba wini*:

*Yera* are the source of life for their *ngaba wini* and this should command great deference, reinforced in material terms by the debts fostered and renewed in recurrent exchange. In return, *yera* should foster and protect their affines. Along with this protection goes the threat that it will be withheld: a *yera*'s curse may cause the woman to be infertile or her children to be sickly. Expectations that *yera* will be protective are much greater in the case of old marriage alliances, in which the allies have in a sense proven that they are worthy of one another and reliable'. (Keane 1997:54.)

Although this quote might sound out of date, it is still very real in twenty-first century Sumbanese society. All present political leaders in West Sumba have a known identity in terms of marriage alliances, and are interconnected in this sense. All the Sumbanese actors mentioned by name in the stories in the next chapters are connected by kinship and marriage alliance, including Sumbanese living in Jakarta.

A person's position in terms of these traditional social distinctions is extremely important for his or her internal Sumbanese identity. It indicates where 'home' is; the rights and obligations in the reciprocal Uma economy are derived from this position; it is the entry point to the kinship network in which mutual social security is organized and which accounts for all the ritual needs a person faces during his or her lifetime. Loyalty, solidarity and

<sup>4</sup> See Webb Keane (1997:51-6) where he describes the 'Value and challenges of affines' in Anakalang.

dependency within kinship (and alliance) networks are important assets for local politicians. The kinship structure is therefore an important source of social capital. A person's position in the kinship hierarchy is a component of his traditional cultural capital.

There is a strong gender component in the idea of the traditional cultural capital on Sumba. Women traditionally never occupy positions of political leadership or ritual specialization. Adat negotiations – and by extension politics in general – are regarded as part of the male domain (Forth 1981:237). Yet, women are very important in the kinship structure. They embody the alliances between clans. They are also the *yera* in person, the sources of life for their husband's Uma. Sumbanese believe that blood is mainly passed down the generations through the mother. A child's social rank is therefore determined by the rank of the mother (Kapita 1976a:41). After the wedding the bride belongs to the clan of the husband. When she has given birth, especially to sons, her status in the kinship hierarchy will rise. The oldest generation of women can be very influential because they have reached senior positions, as mothers of their sons, as oldest women in the Uma, and head of the bloodline. For a Sumbanese man traditional the preferred marriage is with his mother's brother's daughter (Onvlee 1973:45), and in this way his mother has large influence in accomplishing that ideal marriage.

A Sumbanese man who marries a woman from another island and from a social group with whom no prior marriage alliance can be traced, pollutes the blood of his children and causes loss of cultural capital for the future generation of his Uma. For those Sumbanese who still adhere to these norms, status of an election candidate is discredited by the fact that he is married to a woman from elsewhere, no matter how successful or wealthy that candidate might be in other respects.

### *Ethnicity and traditional political organization*

When a Sumbanese are explaining another person's identity to a third party, they refer to them as people from a particular traditional region, which in anthropological literature is called domain. Needham (1987:6-8) described the characteristics of a domain on Sumba:

The integrating force within a domain is the hegemony of the main village and of the leading clan of that village. This clan owed its power to its ancestral spirits and the unity of the district or domain was manifested in the attendance at sacrifices and ceremonies performed at the main village by the dominant clan.

Before the colonial period, domains were the territories distinguished by initial occupation by certain ancestor. The clan of that ancestor was therefore



Map 3.1 Map of 'traditional' domains on Sumba

*mangu tana*, the lord of the land (Onvlee 1973:125). Louis Onvlee has argued that unity within a certain domain is determined by the ties to the *mangu tana*. Clans with a clear and acknowledged link to the *mangu tana* identified with the domain in virtue of social organization and territory. Onvlee notes the custom of referring to the people from Mangili by the names of the four dominant clans, and not with 'Mangili', which was later the name of the *zelfbesturende landschap* ('self-governing region, in the colonial period). The *mangu tana* would divide ritual performance functions among various clans in the domain; for example, one clan would do the rituals for fertility, another for rain, a third for blessing and protection in case of war, one for purification and a fifth, those who command lightning, for punishment in case of theft or other offences (Onvlee 1973:126-7). The cooperation between these clans would protect the wellbeing of all who lived in the domain.

The colonial government selected one of the clan leaders within a domain to be *raja*, *zelfbestuurder*, in their system of indirect rule. There were no clear criteria for determining who were the most eligible candidate for the position of *raja*. The Resident of Timor and surrounding areas wrote in 1877 that when the contracts with Sumbanese *raja* were signed (in 1862), the Dutch Indies Government did not know whether the Sumbanese men who signed it, had the authority as leaders in their own communities (Esser 1877:168). Onvlee wrote (1973:127) that the selection of a *raja* also depended on other



factors which determined the influence of clan leaders, such as, wealth, eloquence, knowledge and individual qualities. Some domains were merged into one *zelfbesturend landschap*. By the end of the colonial period there were 16 *landschappen* in Sumba. As time went on those 16 areas were increasingly seen as traditional domains (Goh 1991:x), and used by Sumbanese to answer questions about identity.

At the present, people on Sumba refer to other Sumbanese as a person from one of the traditional domains, such as '*orang Loli*', '*orang Waijewa*', and so on. They do not refer to the current administrative division, *kecamatan* (sub-district), when it has another name than the traditional domain. Addressing people and analysing events in terms of domain identities is a Sumbanese custom that can easily be utilized for political purposes and winning elections.

In the 1950s, the missionary linguist Louis Onvlee (1973:117-9) pointed out that the concept of 'a Sumbanese people' as opposed to more localized identities based on territories, clans or linguistic distinctions did not make sense. 'The idea of a people (Indonesian, *bangsa*) was fundamentally nationalist in character. In effect, a Sumbanese people does not become imaginable until after people come to think of themselves as Indonesian. Sumbanese is not an aggregation of all the clan and village identities but rather a historical precipitate of this larger category' (Keane 2007:89, note). For politicians in Sumba who want to use ethnicity to create a political constituency, identity related to traditional domains was the only avenue. In the past identities based on traditional domains were used many times to divide rather than to unite. In 1836, Kruseman, trade commissioner of the Timor area, recorded that the Sumbanese he encountered drew a very sharp distinction between outsiders, people from beyond their own island or domain, and insiders, those who shared their feasts (Hoskins 1993:43). 'There is such enmity between these domains, that whenever someone crosses the borders set by the ancestors, armed or unarmed, man, woman or child, they must be captured and are put to death immediately' (Kruseman 1836:75-6, quoted by Hoskins 1993:45). In 1998, rivaling district politicians used ethnic identity politics to invoke mass violence in West Sumba's capital as a part of their power struggle (see Chapter V). From 2002 up to now in 2006 there has been a political campaign for creating new districts in West Sumba, and privately ethnic arguments are often voiced as a reason to demarcate both Central Sumba and Southwest Sumba (Sumba Barat Daya) (see Chapter VIII). In these cases ethnicity is turned into political identity by politicians who delineate the boundaries that separate 'us' from 'them', and (re-)construct stories about those boundaries (Tilly 2003:32). Chapter IX contains examples of ethnic strategies in election campaigns.

*Traditional leadership*

One of the main questions which the Dutch colonial government faced when they wanted to apply indirect rule to this area was 'who are the traditional leaders on Sumba?' It is also a relevant question in contemporary politics because the criteria for such leadership indicate which factors determine socially accepted legitimacy of leaders. From Onvlee's description of pre-colonial political organization it appears that there was no single leader on Sumba nor within domains (Onvlee 1973:125). Leadership was a matter of different functions and there was a distribution of tasks with regard to each of these functions over the various clans. Within clans, there is a division between spiritual and political leaders.

The *ratu* are the clan elders who engage in priestly duties (Forth 1981:237). They receive knowledge of the ancestors concerning every aspect of life and convey that knowledge to the audience in ritual speech, poems of paired sentences, and in rituals. The *ratu* know the procedure for each ritual and have the ability to indicate the auspicious time for each staging and the objects required to fulfil the ritual. The *ratu* were not the political leaders of their clans. The nobility, *maramba*, held temporal power within each *kabihu*. (Forth 1981:237), but this leadership was not a hereditary attribute of all noblemen. The leader in charge was someone of noble descent with excellent rhetorical skills (Kruseman 1836, quoted by Hoskins 1993:44), and wealthy enough to be able to organize large feasts. According to Gregory Forth, the *ratu* and *maramba* exercised dual leadership:

it seems that in general the *ratu*, by virtue of their authority and expertise in customary and religious matters, informed decisions formally taken by the two leaders together, which were then expedited by the *maramba* (Forth 1981:242).

The *ratu* hold a higher position in the traditional hierarchy than the *maramba*. They are like 'elder and younger brother' (Forth 1981:238). The *ratu* are concerned with vertical relations between men and spirits, and the *maramba* horizontal relations among groups of men (Forth 1981:242). When the colonial government was looking for traditional leaders to occupy local positions within their system of indirect rule, they selected a number of *maramba* to become raja. These *maramba* received access to more sources of power than they had had before, and relative to other *maramba* in the same domain, so they became more powerful. They were backed up by the colonial government's ability to use violence, and they were responsible for tax collection, which also was a source of income for them. With those resources they had the means to attract more followers than their traditional clientele. The raja were appointed to govern *landschappen*, the administrative parts of the state of the Dutch Indies.

In that way a patrimonial system was created. This system was defined by Weber (1964:341) as a system in which:

The object of obedience is the personal authority of the individual which he enjoys by virtue of his traditional status. The organized group exercising authority is, in the simplest case, primarily based on relations of personal loyalty, cultivated through a common process of education. The person exercising authority is not a 'superior', but a personal 'chief'. His administrative staff does not consist primarily of officials, but of personal retainers. [...] What determines the relation of the administrative staff to the chief is not the impersonal obligations of office, but personal loyalties to the chief.

The patrimonial state is the governmental apex of a society characterized by traditional patron-client relationships (Brown 1994:115). With their new functions and privileges the raja had the means to change their status from one among the *maramba* to patrons. Not all raja were of noble descent, as the example in Chapter II about raja Horo has shown. He was chosen by the colonial government because he was a very bright student of the missionaries' school with excellent administrative skills.

At the present, criteria of traditional leadership are still important for authority in the village. Candidates for the positions of village-head or members of parliament have more chance of being elected if they are of noble descent. This legacy of leadership criteria is an impediment for women to participate in politics. Traditionally, politics is the realm of men. The binary oppositions of traditional culture associate 'male' with politics and spiritual matters and with the front side of the house where guests are received, whereas 'female' is the back side of the house, where everyday matters take place, water is brought to the house and food is prepared (Forth 1981:44). The two binary poles cannot function without each other, and women have always played a role in politics as spin doctors active in the background, discussing them with men, exerting pressure on and giving advice to those who act openly as the leaders.

### *Legitimacy and adat*

Who is the most legitimate leader according to Sumbanese tradition? The short answer to this question is that there is no single person or type that is the most legitimate leader in general. As described above, there are rules from the past and recognized customs which prescribe that the *maramba bokulu*, the high nobility, should be the temporal leaders. Among this group relative importance increases with age and seniority of descent (Forth 1981:163). This could be called traditional legitimacy based on the authority of the 'eternal

yesterday' (Weber 1921:396). Yet, even in the past, political power of *maramba* also depended on personal characteristics, and there was competition between leaders within domains. The main traditional repertoire of rules, customs, symbols, rhetorical techniques to fight such competitions is found in what is called adat.

Adat has multiple meanings (Li 2007:337). In the scholarly debates the term 'adat' is often used to refer to the traditional normative order in a specific part of Indonesia. But critics worry that the term is either too much associated with Dutch invention and codification of tradition (Kuipers 1998:9), or it is reduced to ceremony domesticated by the Suharto regime into 'traditional art' (*kesenian*) (Pemberton 1994:12). Farmers, women, men, youth, rich and poor, elite and ordinary people on Sumba are all involved in adat, and they use the term in various situations and for different purposes.

Van Vollenhoven and his staff in Leiden University recorded customary law in Indonesia in the late colonial period, and preserved the adat in many volumes of the *Adatrechtbundels*.<sup>5</sup> It was the type of law used in villages to settle disputes among the villagers. The main motivation for Van Vollenhoven's project was to protect the land rights of the village population. Adat in this form is largely associated with colonial rule, since it was only after the colonial state was installed on Sumba that a need emerged for having locally accepted legal system that could be relied upon to maintain order where the colonial bureaucracy was not sufficiently present. After the meticulously recording of adat laws, a body of written laws was created that could be used as an alternative to Dutch-Roman state law. Snouck Hurgronje, who studied adat anthropologically during the colonial period, noted in 1924 that 'the extraordinary thing with each type of indigenous adat or customary law is found in its fluidity, in the easiness with which it can be adjusted and moulded to fit changes in society whenever they occur'.<sup>6</sup>

European missionaries in Eastern Indonesia were confronted with adat in a different way than the bureaucrats. Where adat could be helpful as an instrument in indirect colonial rule, it was also a collection of customs that were partly in conflict with Christian rules. Marriage customs such as polygamy, cousin marriages and dowry payments were particularly problematic. Onvlee wrote that among the Dutch Protestant missionaries on Sumba there were two major positions. The first was that Christians were to strictly obey the rules and instructions of the Bible and live accordingly. The second posi-

<sup>5</sup> For the late colonial debate about adat see Fasseur (1992:237-56).

<sup>6</sup> 'Het eigenaardige van ieder inheems adat- of gewoonterecht ligt in zijn vlottend karakter, in de gemakkelijkerheid waarmee het zich voor maatschappelijke toestanden, waar deze zich wijzigen, weder pasklaar laat maken', (C. Snouck Hurgronje, 'Advies over de codificatie van Adatrecht', *Verspreide geschriften* IV, I, 1924:257, quoted by Onvlee 1973:135).

tion was more flexible, and it left room for those social rules that were not prohibited by the Bible (Onvlee 1973:134). The majority of missionaries held the second position, although there were always fierce discussions on practical matters, such as the question of whether it was allowed to eat the meat of ritually slaughtered animals (Van den End 1987:342-6).

Colonial administrators and Christian missionaries were both trying to understand and use adat and to prohibit some aspects of it. The problem scholars have with defining adat is not shared by Sumbanese, because there is simply no single translation for the word, and the concept is perceived so naturally that it is like asking a fish to define water. Onvlee wrote that *huri memangu* (or *pata mema* in West-west Sumbanese) is the expression for 'the customs and rules of life that are followed of old, that assign each group and each individual an appropriate spot in the world and in life; and it prescribes how to deal (communicate, behave) with people and objects' (Onvlee 1973:115). In his dictionary of the Kambara-Dutch (Onvlee 1984), he presents four words in Kambara that approach the Dutch(!) word adat: *uku*, *huri*, *pata* and *kalaratu*. The word *huri* or *pata* means 'the right way of behaving, or custom', *uku* means 'law, custom or way to do things'. The latter word can also mean 'tactics' or 'trick'. *Kalaratu* means 'rule or custom'. This combination comes close the range of processes gathered under the umbrella of adat on Sumba. I find it impossible to make a one-sentence definition of adat. My description is that adat is the word in Bahasa Indonesia that refers to the laws and rules of a community pertaining to all aspects of community life, including marriages, funerals, division of land and the rights to cultivate land, inheritance, rules of proper conduct, indications on how to celebrate, and the ways disputes in the community are settled; the rules, the procedures and the communities to which it pertains are not fixed and thus open for negotiation, a process full of tactics and tricks. In everyday usage, adat pertains to holding rituals to mark important events and resolving interpersonal disputes (Li 2007:354).

The most practical meaning of adat for ordinary Sumbanese is: the rules and material obligations connected to funerals and weddings. '*Adat belum diurus*' (the adat is not arranged yet) is a normal and often heard answer to the question 'are you already married?'. The sighing expression '*adat masih berat*' means that that the material obligations are hard to meet, that still a number of horses or buffalo have to be paid before the exchange is made. For politicians adat prescribes a desired way of behaviour, defines appropriate symbols, creates social events, indicates how to create reciprocal obligations, and presents an appreciated style of rhetoric. In the most recent edited volume on the subject, adat is defined as follows:

At the first level of abstraction adat is a complex of rights and obligations which ties together three things – history, land and law – in a way that appears rather specific to Indonesia. [...] At the second level of abstraction, adat also represents a vaguely defined but powerful set of ideas or assumptions regarding what an ideal society should be like (Davidson and Henley 2007:2).

When adat is used as a political term, it refers to a powerful set of ideas. Adat can be used in different contexts and interpreted in different ways by different actors (Li 2007:337-66). Adat is also associated with ‘the ideal society’ in the context of nationalist struggle or advocacy for the rights of indigenous people. Locally on Sumba, specialists use narratives of the past and the ‘ways the ancestors taught us’ to strengthen their position and interests, referring to a society with its rules that existed in the past without being romantic about it. Yet, both outsiders and insiders use adat to strengthen their political claims.

#### *Traditional concepts of power*

What makes a person powerful? What is power? The most common sense of political power derives from Weber’s widely used and popular notion that ‘power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance’ (Kurtz 2001:22; Weber 1964:157). Anderson’s classic article about ‘The idea of power in Javanese culture’ points at the cultural differences one encounters when trying to understand what power is, who is powerful and why. ‘The contemporary Western concept of power is an abstraction deduced from observed patterns of social interaction; it is believed to be derived from heterogeneous sources; it is no way inherently self-limiting; and it is morally ambiguous’. By contrast, ‘the Javanese see power as something concrete, homogeneous, constant in total quantity, and without inherent moral implications as such’ (Anderson 1990:22-3). Anderson suggests that a discussion on these concepts from the Javanese side might start with the observation that ‘Westerners have a concept of *kesakten* quite different from ours: they divide it up into concepts like power, legitimacy and charisma’ (Anderson 1990:20, note 8).

D.K. Wielenga touched upon this matter in a short essay in which he described the similarities between the philosophy of Edison, the nineteenth century American inventor of the electric light bulb and phonograph, and ‘the Sumbinese’ with regard power, life and energy. In summary, this view entailed that all life on earth is identical and goes on because it is infused with what may be called power, life, or energy, which in Sumbinese language (Kambera) is called *ndewa*. According to Edison, this power originates from outside the human atmosphere, as a glowing ball of energy, from which tiny

parts are scattered and cause life where ever on earth they land. According to the Sumbanese, the souls of the deceased forefathers will finally reach the ultimate God, who crushes the souls and sprinkles them out over the earth, returning *ndewa* to the earth and bringing life strength and vitality to whatever it touches, including trees and stones. Vitality and fertility are signs that a human has received *ndewa*. If a person dies and his relatives organize a very good funeral, slaughtering a fair number of livestock and providing him with a proper tomb, then the living can expect to get more *ndewa* than they would if they had not cared for the deceased (Wielenga 1925:33-8).

Wielenga's reflection relates to the subject matter of this book, which is political power and leadership in contemporary Sumba, although at the first look it may not seem that way. Umbu Dingu, the secretary general in 2004 of the Christian Church of Sumba, member of Anakalang's aristocracy, told me that he had been invited by several political parties to be a candidate in the 2004 elections for their party. Since he is the highest official of the most important Church on Sumba he would appeal to many voters as the leader of their Church. When I asked him whether he has any other special qualities that would make him a good candidate he told me that he can make tomb stones move:

*Umbu Dingu's charisma*

One day in April 2002, Umbu Dingu went to his home village in Anakalang. The name of this village is Gallu Bakul and it is one of the ancestral villages in the Anakalang area, home to major nobility. Gallu Bakul is famous and even mentioned in the Lonely Planet Guide of Indonesia's Eastern islands for its huge tombs. Umbu Dingu's father was the head of this ancestral village. He was a respected and strict nobleman, well known for his skills as a leader in rituals. One of these skills pertains to acting as leader in dragging tombstones from the place of quarry to the village where they were used in making tombs. In earlier days these operations took months, and thousands of people could be involved in dragging.

Nowadays tombs are usually made of cement, but once in a while there is exceptional case of a nobleman who still prefers a carved stone. That stone is dragged from the place of quarry to the road, transported by truck, and then dragged from the truck into the village. In April 2002 such a stone was used for tomb of Rocky Umbu Pekudjawang's father.<sup>7</sup> Rocky himself is a successful business man. He is in his early forties and lives on Bali, where he owns a large tourism enterprise, and a Hotel in Kuta. By preparing a huge tomb for his father, who was getting old, he displayed his wealth in his home village, and increased prestige for his father and the entire extended family. As a business-

<sup>7</sup> In the elections of 5 april 2004 Rocky ran for Golkar as candidate for the National Parliament (DPR-RI) for the area Nusa Tenggara Timur II. His official name on the elections' list was: Rocky Wisuda Praputrantanto Pekudjawang, SE.

man he also organized a tourist excursion to give foreign guests the opportunity to be part of this rare traditional event.

When Umbu Dingu was on his way home in 2002, he passed a stone dragging in Wai Bakul, not far from his village. For three days a large crowd of people had been trying to drag and make the stone move, but the stone would not move a single inch. Umbu Dingu was asked to try and lead the dragging masses. That means he had to scream out the ritual yell that calls the masses to pull and drag, indicating both the right rhythm and inspiring people to give all their strength. He remembered his father's words, saying that he should only yell to lead stone dragging if he was fully confident of himself. The stone is not merely a stone. Once it is carved into a tombstone it becomes a living object. It has a spirit, *ndewa*. It commands the draggers and it can be dangerous, killing a few men on its way from the quarry to the village. The proper lead singer has the power to command the spirit of the stone and subsequently to make the draggers succeed in their effort to move the stone. Umbu Dingu tried, and yelled, and the draggers replied with their '*yewaungu*' confirmation yell. In as little as ten turns of yelling and dragging, the stone was transferred into the truck. Similar things happened while trying to unload the stone from the truck. Only after Umbu Dingu sang his leading yell, the stone moved and could be dragged to the proper spot in the village.

Umbu Dingu is not an adat expert, nor a priest of the traditional *marapu* religion. By contrast, he is Protestant Christian reverend and since 2002 he has been for the second time elected as General Secretary (or Head) of the Protestant Christian Church of Sumba. He refers to his ability to lead stone dragging as merely a skill he inherited from his father. 'Or', he said to me, 'you can call it *karisma* (charisma)'.<sup>8</sup>

This story indicates that people with special skills are able to command and control *ndewa*, which makes them in traditional terms extremely powerful. Yet, it is another matter whether people on Sumba associate this type of power with modern political leadership. It does suggest that Sumbanese are still susceptible to ideologies in which signs of possessing a large amount of *ndewa* are an attribute for (political) leaders. Not many Sumbanese are able to explain their traditional concepts of power in these abstract concepts. These are part of an elitist perspective of ritual specialists. Yet, obvious and visible 'powers' as Umbu Dingu's skills with stone dragging appeal to the spectators and fills them with awe. His skills reflect a specific type of traditional cultural capital.

Anderson's indigenous concepts of power reveal that there are different perceptions on the origin, amount and ways of distribution of power. In this effort to understand the contemporary political culture on Sumba it is helpful to be aware of traditional philosophical concepts, like *ndewa*. Other parts of this theory are not so readily applicable on Sumba. Hoskins comments in

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Umbu Dingu, Waingapu, 28 February 2004.



this respect that: 'Both asceticism and mystical concentration of power in a single centre are alien to the Sumbanese symbolic world' (Hoskins 1993:322), although these are vital parts of Andersons' Javanese model.

In line with the arguments that will be presented in the next chapter on legal pluralism in village dispute settlement, I argue that the Sumbanese conception of goes beyond the dichotomy of either adhering to the traditional concept or adopting more modern 'western' concepts which see power as a force derived from various sources. The Sumbanese have mastered combining elements of various normative orders; a consequence of this attitude is that those who want to be the most legitimate, powerful and charismatic leaders should control as many types of resources possible in a quantity as large as possible. Power can be understood as accumulated capital: a combination of traditional and modern cultural, social and economic capital. Chapter IX presents a rough assessment of the 2005 election candidates' capital portfolio as an indication of their political power.

#### *Power resources*

Power on Sumba has always been a matter of control over resources. In general, these include human resources, material resources, and 'ideational resources' including ideology, symbols and information used by leaders to convince others of the legitimacy of their authority and to enhance their ability to acquire additional material and human resources (Kurtz 2001:31). The human resources are the clients, followers, supporters and benefactors of the leaders, and material resources are most of all money, and on Sumba food, livestock, and I would also add government employment. Ethnographic stories about politics do not distinguish so neatly between the resources. What politicians do is to use the resources, and manipulate the process to acquire more resources, and ultimately more power. Keane sheds light on the way the resources are perceived on Sumba, when he describes the popular perception of leaders (nobles, *maramba*) in Central Sumba:

When people talk about nobles, they often talk about their wealth and by extension, their generosity and protectiveness – and their danger when angered. [...] The activities that most distinguish a noble in practice – setting up great tombs, holding feasts, maintaining dependents, negotiating dynastic alliances, and sponsoring the marriages of others – require not only supporters but wealth as well (Keane 1997:58).

The supporters who were referred to in the quote are people who benefit from the noble's generosity and protection, and those who are dependent on the noble, receive material contributions and help for their ceremonies,

and are invited to attend the noble's feasts and be member of his group. The activities mentioned here all belong to traditional life on Sumba. In essence, Sumbanese who are or want to be leaders today still gather supporters in the same traditional way. Supporters are the human resources of power; no leader can do without a constituency.

Kinship and marriage alliance are the lines along which Sumbanese traditionally find their political followers. When anthropologists discuss the politics of kinship, they usually refer to the very complicated schemes of the structural functionalist school, in which kinship structures and rules with regard to preferential marriages are codified (Kurtz 2001:81). I share such a fascination with the kinship identity of actors in Sumbanese politics, because it explains how they are situated in the kinship system with its hierarchies and reciprocity rules. When I think of the politics of kinship on Sumba, I refer to how hierarchies, rules and morality of kinship are used for political ends. Politics of kinship comprise a style and strategy which is not confined to relations with real kinsmen, but which also can be used to create a new 'we'-group in which rules of generalized reciprocity apply (Sahlins 1972:193-4). Attending a funeral on Sumba gives a good impression on how kinship politics are used to create constituency.

#### *Funeral politics*

Traditionally, funerals are the most important ceremonies, since they involve establishing relations with the divine ancestors. A good funeral, with a proper tomb and sufficient amount of livestock slaughtered for the deceased to 'take along to the land of the spirits' has significant consequences for the living: it will improve their welfare. It is the only ceremony to which people are not invited, but simply expected to come. A large crowd of guests contributes to the quality of the funeral. Funeral ceremonies last for days or longer, and there is plenty of time to linger and chat with other guests. Especially the night wakes before the funeral are perfect occasions for youth to gather and socialize.

The incumbent *bupati* of East Sumba, Uumbu Meheng Kunda, was very active in attending funerals in East Sumba in 2004 and 2005. When he attended, a line of jeeps would drive up to the site of the funeral, resembling a traditional party of guests (*rombongan adat*). He would always bring a contribution for the funeral, either money or livestock. Rumour told that he had a special budget item to use for these occasions, called 'the tactical fund' (*dana taktis*). The gift would be reciprocated, in the traditional form of a pig, but in election years more importantly, in political support for Golkar.

The style of conduct is that of kinsmen, as if the politician were a relative of the deceased person, and the strength of this type of politics lies in the reciprocal economy. On Sumba the large barter economy is ruled by the morality of exchange (Vel 1994:49), which in this example is used to create ties between people that put them in a relationship of mutual obligation. It only works

when the corresponding norms are socially accepted and widely held. The morality of exchange as part of Sumbanese tradition is an ideational political resource.

Wealth on Sumba used to be measured and expressed in terms of livestock, such as, water buffalo, horses and cattle, and particularly in the humid rural areas of the island in the capacity to produce food (combination of paddy fields and labour). The size and shape of family's tombs were also very important indicators of wealth and status. Material resources are required to make such tombs, and once they are built they are the ideational resources of power: strong symbols of strength and status. Modern indicators of material wealth and symbols of power are the size, shape and number of one's houses. A successful Sumbanese will have several houses: one in his home village, one in the Sumbanese town where he resides when he is on Sumba, and one in Kupang or on Java. The houses on Sumba are preferably built along the main road, and combine typical traditional Sumbanese style, including peak roofs, with modern and expensive building materials, such as, plastered stone walls, tiles for decoration, tiles on the floor. Clothing style is also a strong power symbol. The uniform is the symbol of State power. Those who wear a uniform are part of the network of people who have access to funds and jobs and other kinds of privileges that are out of reach of ordinary people.

### *Conclusions*

Tradition is a source of capital that is still relevant and useful for contemporary political leadership on Sumba. This chapter discussed various components of traditional cultural capital.

A leader is classified locally in terms of traditional identity: a person's position in kinship structures, his social rank and the traditional domain of origin. Kinship structures along the patrilineal line compose hierarchies within a domain, with layers determined by rank. The highest position is that of nobility, and within the nobility the oldest of brothers within a House that can trace the shortest connection to the main founding father within the domain. Lower members of the same hierarchy form the natural constituency of the leader. Yet, personal characteristics, like eloquence and cleverness, can make a person more powerful than his position in the kinship hierarchy would imply.

Thinking in terms of reciprocity is an important component of Sumbanese traditional culture, and of present-day Sumbanese politics. The rules of reciprocity correspond with the relations in the kinship network. In addition, the network with which one gets connected through marriage alliance also sets the relations for reciprocity, and was often used as a strategy to widen the

area of dominance of a leader. The object of reciprocity was primarily adat gifts, such as, horses, buffaloes, golden pendants, pigs and cloths. Relations of generalized reciprocity include assistance, loyalty, and support. Adat is the traditional repertoire of rules, customs, symbols, rhetorical techniques used to vie for leadership positions and to negotiate about the type and size of exchanges.

Economic capital is important to gain power, and it was even more so traditionally. A leader on Sumba can only live up to the traditional expectations of leadership if he has sufficient wealth. Participating in exchange networks in a way that is in accordance with the status of leaders requires money, food and livestock. Wealth is also indispensable for feasting, which is the way to show social status and increase the numbers of the constituency.

Charisma in the traditional sense, as in the story about Umbu Dingu, is also a source of power. Charisma convinces the audience that his leadership is legitimated by ancestral powers. The traditional concept of power, *ndewa*, is a personal attribute, which can be recognized by its effects and symbols. Charisma cannot be actively acquired by potential leaders, but they can practice and improve their performance. The core of that performance is transforming traditional cultural and social capital into contemporary political power, by manipulating the symbols that refer to this wealth of capital. The following chapters will give many examples of that transformation.

Separating the traditional parts of leadership, or making a sharp distinction between tradition and modernity is artificial. In contemporary Sumbanese society other spheres of life are equally important, and invented traditions are part of every day modern life. The next chapter focuses on the State and the Church as providers of alternative networks of social organization, and alternative normative orders on which rules of conduct and domination are based.

# Village

After a ninety minute walk, or twenty minutes ride when the transport is available, from Anakalang to the north of Sumba, one reaches Lawonda.<sup>1</sup> There is no sign that marks the border of this area, and for a foreign visitor it is not always easy to recognize a village. Lawonda is both the popular name for the area that comprises seven *desa* (villages) and a congregation of the Christian Church (GKS). It is also the common name for one of these *desa* in particular, Prai Madeta. Lawonda (*Desa Prai Madeta*) has 1100 inhabitants who live in about 170 houses, most of them built in dispersed settlements called *paraingu*, hidden between the trees.

Arriving from the south, the first *paraingu* shows up on the left hand side, and looks very neat. There are four relatively large houses, with a well-maintained grass plaza between them, decorated with flowers and shaded by coconut trees. This is the settlement of the head of the neighborhood (*kepala dusun*), head of the southern part of the *desa* and one of the richest rice farmers of the village. Further along the road one can see the more common houses, built from wood and bamboo and covered with grass roofs. The main house in a traditional settlement has a triangular peak in the center of the roof. The relics which are consecrated to the deified clan's ancestor are kept in that peak. The floor of this type of house rises about one meter above the ground on wooden piles. Under the floor one can find the domain of livestock, the shelter for pigs and horses. The 'typical Sumbanese house' is a microcosm 'which reflects the totality of social and conceptual order' (Forth 1981:23). The divine ancestors, the living people and the animals co-reside in such a house.

Continuing the journey along the road in Prai Madeta, one can see that most houses do not have peaked roofs. This signifies that the inhabitants cannot afford to build such a pretentious and costly house, while also reflecting the more modern ideas on house building. The center of Prai Madeta is in this respect the most modern part of the village. Built in the valley, Prai Madeta

<sup>1</sup> In my book *The Uma economy* I included this description of Lawonda and Maderi. It depicts the situation by the end of the 1980s (Vel 1994:25-32).

marks the crossroads leading to north and east. The Christian primary school and a large sports field stand on the left side of the road. The modest buildings of the Christian secondary school are found on the right side. The only private houses in the village center are those of the schoolteachers and the GKS reverend. They are built on the ground with flat corrugated iron roofs. Modern houses are for humans only, and do not make room for ancestors or livestock. The new GKS church was built in 1983, next to the secondary school. The church was supposed to be the best building in the village; therefore its walls were constructed with limestone blocks carved from the hills in the surrounding area. The tower remained unfinished in 1990 and its absence signifies that the burden of the building's expense was too high to be covered solely by the congregation members' contributions. Opposite the church and a little further north, the building of the KUD (village cooperative) can be found. It has the familiar look of the square angled shed that could be found in every village throughout Indonesia in the 1980s. Although designed as a building for the storage of agricultural products like rice which the cooperative buys from the farmers in the area, in Prai Madeta, it is actually the residence of the village head, Umbu Hapi, and his family.

Walking on the road which heads to the north early in the morning, I see that the oncoming traffic consists only of pedestrians. Children in their white and red uniforms walk to school in small groups. On Wednesdays and Saturdays there are also many adults on the street; women carrying baskets with vegetables, fruits or other garden products, men carrying chickens, and occasionally a woman with a bundle of clay pots. They go to the market in Anakalang to sell these products, and at noon they return with the things they bought from the 'urban' traders: mostly sugar, coffee and tobacco. On these market days three or four trucks from Anakalang enter the village at dawn, pick up passengers for Anakalang, and depart at about seven o'clock. Those who can afford to buy the ticket prefer this uncomfortable transport over walking. The youth especially like to go to the market. It is their occasion to meet one another, and for a few hours be released from the ever-watchful eyes of their parents. Girls dress up in their nicest outfits and pass on love letters and other messages of their unmarried siblings. Everyone knows that the market is also the easiest site for abduction. This is the last resort for young men who are rejected as a future husband, but intend to marry the girl of their dreams anyway. Thus, the girls' parents are always relieved when they return home safely.

The company of pedestrians moving in the other direction is less cheerful. Early in the morning most of them are heading for the health clinic at the Propelmas Center in north Prai Madeta. This 'hospital' can offer them a visit with a nurse along with the minimum package of government-subsidized medicines. One must go to Anakalang to visit the doctor or midwives of the community health center (*Puskesmas*) for more sophisticated medical treatment.



Kampong Gallo Padi at the southern border of Lawonda, November 1998

The main road is the only route for motorized traffic. Pedestrians and horses often take one of the many paths that cross the hills and rice fields. A majority of the houses can only be reached by following these narrow tracks. In the sloping fields the sound of splashing accompanied by the 'Ho...ho...' of a herdsman indicate that he leads a herd of buffalo along a trail to the valley, where they can drink or trample the paddy fields. The trails and tracks along the fields are shortcuts, but because they are hidden from sight, often quite abandoned and leading through the domain of wild animals, it is not very proper and respectable to use them, especially in the eyes of the higher class.

The degree of activity one can observe in the fields depends very much on the season. The wet rice fields in the valley, covering an area of 120 hectares, are busy places during the rainy season. Here and there herds of buffalo trample the fields, walking around in the mud with mud-covered boys cheerfully shouting behind them. Nearly all adults who make their living in agriculture are completely integrated into the traditional labour organization of paddy production. In social terms this is a patron client system in which the large paddy field and buffalo owners are the patrons. In terms of labour the system ties those who own only a small field or are sharecroppers to the landlord and

buffalo owner. All work in the fields is done manually in groups, from preparing the field to transplanting, weeding and harvesting. Men of lower status in the labour hierarchy take turns all year long in herding the buffaloes that are used to prepare the fields. These men are usually the heads of poorer families, and therefore the primary target group for the development projects that aim at alleviating poverty. For these poorer villagers participating in different types of agriculture or other collective activities would mean stepping out of the traditional labour system and risking exclusion from large parts of social life.

In a small field a few women are planting rice for their own household. If a large field is being planted, the sound of planting songs can be heard from afar. Large rice farmers invite many women to assist in transplanting, and in return the women receive a meal with meat and plenty of tobacco, betel and areca to chew and coffee to drink. In spite of rain showers they work all day, until about five o'clock. Then it is time to bathe at the spring, and return home to prepare dinner.

Sunset is greeted by the sound of crickets. Only the moon lights up the dark in Lawonda. There is no electricity and most people can only afford to light a small kerosene lamp.<sup>2</sup> In the rainy season there is also the overwhelming noise of the frogs, which is referred to as 'the gongs of the *sawah*'. Occasionally one hears a real gong, beaten in the monotonous rhythm of the hymn for the dead. It is the call for neighbors and relatives to join the wake at the house of the deceased. When there are no such special occasions, the roads are abandoned at night and any nocturnal traveler alone is regarded as a thief. After dinner the families settle on their bamboo benches around the fireplace and sleep until early morning.

At Lawonda's north border is the complex of the NGO Propelmas, set up by the GKS in 1976. Propelmas staff worked in the area of the congregation Lawonda, covering the area of seven *desa*. Apart from the small health clinic, the Propelmas Center consists of a meeting hall, a storage shed, a kitchen, a few stables and one tiny two-story office. In the months of July and August, when the valley turns yellow and the rice is harvested, one can see many horses hitched at the gate of the Propelmas Center. They have carried paddy to the storage shed, where a hulling machine takes off the husk with a roaring sound. Paddy is usually sold in small quantities, just enough to get a bit of money for very specific and urgent expenditures. Only on the special occasions of large feasts do people bring paddy for hulling. Rice for personal consumption is stored as paddy and each day women and children pound and clean what is needed for cooking. Rice that is sold to Propelmas is kept

<sup>2</sup> In 1998 solar energy electricity was introduced in Lawonda. Households that could afford the investment of Rp. 75,000 received a small solar panel that provides power for two lamps.



in the storage shed and can be bought as *beras* in small quantities. The agricultural activities of Propelmas are concentrated more on dry land farming than on rice cultivation.

North of the Propelmas Center, the main road enters *desa* Maderi. There is some change in landscape, the area of wet rice fields is much smaller here, only 30 hectares.

The rice fields on the left side of the road are regarded by people from Prai Madeta as an extension of their *sawah*, because the water that floods these fields flows from the major spring in the northwest of Prai Madeta. The rice fields in this part of Maderi belong to the former village-head. He is an old man who resides in a small settlement between the rice fields. This is only a 'temporary' house, situated conveniently close to the road and to the spring. His permanent home is one of the houses in *paraingu* Maderi, which is built behind the trees on the hill top high above the valley. This was the first settlement here, and climbing the windy and slippery path to its entrance gate, one is assailed by a mixed feeling of fright and awe. *Paraingu* Maderi is regarded as a center of the indigenous religion and is associated with spiritual practices and black magic. The actual sight of the *paraingu* is surprising. With about twenty houses it is very large, and the open plaza between the houses is completely covered with tombs. Today the houses are only sparsely inhabited. The younger people have moved to garden hamlets and only return to this 'mother settlement' to visit their relatives and attend rituals. What used to be the safest place, on top of the highest hill and close to the deified ancestors, is now largely abandoned as an impractical and old-fashioned settlement. The former village-head has six wives and consequently, his house comprises a large group of people. He is still regarded as the head of his lineage. In practice, his settlement in the paddy fields is now the central meeting place for the adherents of the *marapu* religion. He retired from the village office in 1980. He was getting too old and too old-fashioned in the eyes of the district government: being illiterate, polygamous, and an active animist, he did not suit the image of a 'good, modern Indonesian government representative'.

A second prominent descendant of the ancestors who founded Maderi, lives in the middle part of what is now *desa* Maderi. He is known as *bapak guru injil*, the religious teacher. This area is the Protestant Christian center of the village due to the presence of his settlement, the Christian primary school, the church, and the private houses of several teachers. The appearance of the church reveals that it is only a branch of the congregation of Lawonda, as it resembles a poor bamboo shed. Before the end of 1988, the Christian community of Maderi was confined to the relatively prosperous and well-educated families of this middle part of the village. The Christian community was not

large nor united enough to present an alternative leader as the next village-head. Leadership in Maderi remains primarily based on kinship relations. The Christians represent only three of the twelve lineages in Maderi, and none of these three is among the most prominent. Historically the village secretary has always come from this middle part of the village.

In 1988 there was a big campaign for conversion conducted by a group of fanatic Protestant Christians who were supported by the district government. Many people in Maderi were baptized, and accordingly the Christian community grew. However, this religious shift did not directly open people to accepting other leaders.

Further north, houses become scarce for a while. The *desa* are the administrative units of the Indonesian government and on Sumba they do not correspond with clear geographical units or with obvious units of population. Even now, after thirty years of *desa*-history, lack of unity is a problem in Maderi. It is the major challenge for the present village-head, who resides in the third and most northern part of Maderi. His term of office began in 1985. In the five years prior to this date there was no clear consensus on who should succeed the former Village-head. Three candidates represented their own parts of the village. In the period between 1980 and 1985, the district government appointed a retired policeman from the district capital as village-head *ad interim*. The only remnant of his term in office is the institution of a weekly village market. Finally, in 1985 the community decided to accept the third candidate, who was illiterate, and the leader of only a minor lineage. However, he did have an acceptable reputation and did not offend the autonomy of the various groups within the village. His house is close to the second (public) primary school of Maderi, the *sekolah Inpres*,<sup>3</sup> which was built in the early 1980's.

The school appointed several teachers from other areas, and their presence strengthened the relative position of this third part of the village. Outside of school hours, the teachers are informal leaders in community activities ranging from church meetings and sporting events, to the farmers' organization. One teacher's wife has a very special position. She is a faith healer and within a short period she has become famous. Many people gather at her house during the prayer sessions, casting the *sekolah Inpres* as a new religious center. Generally, the other inhabitants of Maderi respect her because of her enthusiastic and obvious concern for her fellow people. In the GKS feelings about her are ambiguous; on the one hand they are pleased to have such a prominent Christian, but on the other hand they are frightened and concerned about her deviant way of practicing the faith.

<sup>3</sup> The New Order brought an end to the monopoly of Protestant Christian schools on Sumba. From the eighties onwards many public schools were built all over the island.



## CHAPTER IV

# Legal pluralism in village politics

How does democratization affect local leadership? Democratization is a long process that among other things imposes new national laws on regional autonomy and new elections, which change the context in which local leaders operate. Democratization introduces new elements into a context which is already very competitive. The local arena of competition between leaders is the focus of this chapter.

Traditionally, there has never been a single leader ruling over the entire Sumba, not even within the traditional domains in which the island can be divided, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Clan leaders had to compete in order to determine who should have the final say in resolving disputes, who could determine the type and amount of exchange obligations, and to secure the prestigious position of the leader of his territory. Traditionally, social rank, age and seniority of descent within the clan were important attributes for temporal leaders. In present day Sumba there are many more criteria for leadership and the repertoire of means for competition has also increased considerably. If two men are involved in a power struggle, whether as two candidates in elections, or as two opponents in a dispute, they can address and attack various identities of their opponent, including: position in the bureaucratic hierarchy, membership in a certain clan, status as brother-in-law, status as a fellow Christian, or board membership in a farmer's organization. In that way they can strategically deploy the existing normative pluralism to their advantage. Normative or legal pluralism is the presence of more than one normative order in a specific context, which are both or all simultaneously valid (F. and K. von Benda-Beckmann 2004:28). Part of the competition between local leaders is to 'construct the right normative combination in view of the forums involved in the specific arena of interest management at stake' (Spiertz 1992:91).

The most basic and every-day form of Uma politics is found in the village or neighbourhood, and this is the very local level which this chapter addresses.

The central story is a case study of a dispute between two village leaders.<sup>1</sup> The competition between the two leaders was played out through a dispute about who bore the responsibility for the pregnancy of an unmarried girl. In fact it was a test on the strength of various wider normative and ideological systems, each with their own rules and hierarchies. The case presents an example of legal pluralism on Sumba and shows the flexibility of using the various legal systems or spheres of authority. It is the case through which I learned what legal pluralism means and how it can be used in politics. It is both my analytical and historical point of departure for understanding Uma politics: at the village level, using the legal pluralism approach and starting at the end of the 1980s, at the peak of Suharto's New Order period in Indonesia.

The location where the case study is carried out is Lawonda. We lived in the southern part of this village from July 1984 until March 1990, and worked for the Protestant Christian Church of Sumba (GKS), which appointed my husband as the project leader of the community development project Propelmas (Proyek Pelayanan Masyarakat, Project for Service to Society). My husband was usually addressed as 'Pak Vincent', a neutral combination of the Indonesian title and the personal name. He was also sometimes referred to as 'Pak Pimpro' (Mister Project Leader).<sup>2</sup> I was usually addressed as 'Ibu Vincent' (Mrs. Vincent) and I worked as a project staff member and researcher. We were members of the local GKS congregation. The very modest complex of our development project was located at the north side of the village. Our house, made of wood and bamboo with a grass-thatched (*alang*) roof, was large and located on the top of a hill. Gradually the place transformed from just a patch of prairie land into a nice yard with flowers and fruit trees. Five teenagers, three girls and two boys, stayed permanently with us to do all the chores that kept the household going; in return they received good food, some money, shelter, clothes and experience in communication with foreigners. We used a paddy field that belonged to one of our old neighbours, to practice farming and to experience what it means to get entangled in reciprocal obligations. As foreign employees of the Church, we were part of the long history of Dutch missions on Sumba, with its accompanying pattern of expected attitudes and behaviours. This identity gave us access to the highest officials in Sumba, who were mostly educated in the mission's schools. From

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is a largely modified version of an earlier paper that was published in 1992: 'Umbu Hapi versus Umbu Vincent; Legal pluralism as an arsenal in village combats' (Vel 1992). In this earlier paper I changed all the names, and therefore my husband is called Vincent in this story. I thank Franz von Benda-Beckmann for his permission on behalf of the editors of the 1992 book to publish this version, and for his valuable comments on this chapter. I also would like to thank Scott Guggenheim and Matt Stephens of the World Bank in Jakarta for their comments on this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> On rare occasions, people in the most traditional sites of the Lawonda area would call Vincent *maramba Jawa*, the foreign nobleman.

the beginning and our house warming party in Lawonda we were pulled in the local kinship system and consequently received an adat identity, without which it is hard to live in Sumbanese rural society.

The story described in this chapter began in 1984 and ended in 1990. It is an account of a power struggle during the New Order period, shaped by the restrictions of the New Order regime. With hindsight, these constraints could be identified and serve as point of departure to describe the changes that were brought about by Reformasi. In February 2004, the World Bank published a study called 'Village justice in Indonesia'. Its aim was 'seeking to understand how poor people in Indonesian villages resolve disputes and what kinds of factors in particular enable them to succeed' (World Bank 2004:iv). The World Bank study team selected cases in which disputes concerned village leaders who were accused of embezzling the World Bank-sponsored sub-district development funds. Those types of disputes are different from 'ordinary' village disputes which deal mostly with conflicts concerning land, theft and inheritance issues. At the end of the chapter I will return to this report and compare my own case study with the World Bank's findings, which pertain to two cases in West Sumba. There I will also elaborate on the changes in village level governance and politics since the 1980s.

### *Village politics*

Village politics concern all matters in which village factions negotiate about their competing interests. The most important issues of village politics are dispute settlement and attracting and dividing funds from outside the village (like development subsidies and government programs). The most commonly occurring conflicts in Sumbanese villages concern land disputes, disputes between villagers who caused damage to each others' properties, and conflicts in the sphere of family relations concerning women, marriage and inheritance. Traditionally the elders of the clans which were in a dispute would settle it according to adat.

Apart from negotiating, there are other ways to address one's interests in a dispute situation. Violence serves this purpose in Sumbanese villages, for example, beating up perpetrators of whatever kind, abducting girls when they or their relatives block marriage plans, murdering thieves, and organizing small war raids for revenge. According to state law these actions are illegal, and peaceful negotiation is the only legal way out of conflict. Officially, violence is the monopoly of the State, and criminal cases in the village should be adjudicated by the police or Court of Justice at the sub-district or district level, respectively. In Lawonda in the 1980s, the village head represented state authority in the village.

From the colonial period until the end of the 1960s villages on Sumba became incorporated in the nation, but at a very slow pace. During this time they had the autonomy to deal with village affairs according to their own traditional governance. When President Suharto came to power his New Order regime designed a uniform structure of regional governance and a clear hierarchy giving the central government power over local communities. With Law 5 of 1979 in Indonesia the village head formally became the most powerful person in the village, with a decisive voice in all matters of village governance. The authority and power of the village heads after 1979 was derived from their contacts with the higher authorities, and they became 'clients of the state' (Antlöv 2003:195). Internal criteria like social rank, age and seniority of descent would still improve the village head's prestige, but these were no longer necessary for his authority and power. At least, that is the expected consequences of such drastic formal change in village governance, according to the studies of the impact of the New Order on village political institutions that were conducted in villages on Java.<sup>3</sup> Antlöv (2003:193) summarized the findings as follows: 'the New Order brought a 'reaching out' of the state into almost all aspects of village life, and a 'closing down' of politics, allowing no other ideology other than that sponsored by the state'. Empirical research in other areas of Indonesia, farther away from the centre of the state, calls this conclusion into question. The case study in this chapter shows that in the 1980s village politics in Sumba were not completely dominated by the state institutions and ideology.

Power of the village heads does not only come with appointments, loyalty to the state and formal position, but also with financial rewards. Since villages in Indonesia receive external funds for financing development activities in the village, the division of these funds is the second most important issue in village politics after dispute settlement. During the New Order the village head was the one who could decide how to use and spend these funds. Funds that came to the village through channels other than the government, such as, the budget of the development organization in Lawonda, were a threat to the village head's position. With the Law 22 of 1999 on decentralization this situation has changed and the power to decide about village funds was formally transferred to the democratically elected village parliament.

Authority and power are two-sided concepts. One side concerns the sources from which leaders derive their power and authority. In traditional Sumbanese philosophy the power of the spirits and ancestors is the only source of power, but for New Order village heads, it is the positions in the government hierarchy with protection by superiors in the higher-level gov-

<sup>3</sup> See for example Nico Schulte Nordholt (1981) and Frans Hüsken (1988).

ernment which are considered the real source of power. The other side of power and authority concerns the social recognition of authority, the social acceptance of leadership and the rules proposed by the village leader. The focus on this social side makes village leaders much more actors in their own social context, and less the personification of larger systems. Conflict between two leaders, a village political dispute, can be regarded as a competition between two actors who consciously combine elements of various normative orders in order to increase and consolidate social recognition of their authority. Recognizing this dynamic is part of the approach of legal anthropology, especially of legal pluralism,<sup>4</sup> which is used here to analyze the struggle between Umbu Hapi and Pak Vincent.

Another question concerning village politics is about its range, namely, is it confined to the problems and the area enclosed by the borders of the *desa*? The answer is that it is not possible to make such a strict demarcation. What I regard as village politics is the negotiating process that concerns the direct interests of people living in the village, in which at least one party in the negotiating process consists of actors residing in the village. In the conclusions of this chapter I will come back to this point.

### *Legal pluralism*

The description of the two villages, Lawonda and Maderi, already reveals the various groups, factions and the normative orders that comprise local politics. Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann (2001a, 2001b) showed how illuminating it is to analyze village politics in terms of legal pluralism. In this approach, the state law is seen as only one of the many spheres through which people order their lives and resolve disputes. Other significant spheres are those of religion and customary law, and other bodies of locally valid social norms may compose yet another 'legal' sphere. In Lawonda, the labels for the competing spheres are the state, the Church, tradition, and the local development project.

Legal pluralism is the presence in a specific context of more than one normative order, which are all simultaneously valid. In general a normative order is a collection of rules and values that share the same source of validity. The state, the church and tradition represent three systems,

each universalistic in principle, each with its own basis of ultimate validity and its theories about sources of valid rules and principles, which exclude the validity of other systems on their own terms. Each has its own experts and theorists, faced

<sup>4</sup> F. von Benda-Beckmann (2002); Griffiths (1986); F. and K. von Benda-Beckmann (2001a, 2001b); Merry (1988).



with the problem of finding pragmatic arrangements, none of them willing too much to concede to the other system, all of them claiming superiority or at least equality for their own system, last not least because it directly touched upon the legitimacy of the organizational structure to which they owed their political status positions, their right to make rules, to interpret them correctly, and to apply them. (F. von Benda-Beckmann 1992:6.)

In Lawonda during the 1980s the development project Propelmas was a fourth normative order. Development intervention introduces new rules and resources. The more attractive the resources are for the local population, the more important the rules of the development organization will become in village life, and the stronger the position of the leaders of the development organization will be in local politics. Analytically this 'development normative order' is not the same as state law, church law or customary law, but at the local level it was a normative system which had equal weight in local politics. This empirical definition of a normative order is in accordance with the conception of law as power: 'a set of resources for which people contend and with which they are better able to promote their own ideas and interests against others, given the necessity of working out and preserving accommodative relationships with strangers' (Turk 1978:218). When we use the concept of normative order in this broad way and place it in the reality of the local context, it is possible to distinguish a separate normative order in Lawonda, represented by the development organization.

The village head and the leader of the development organization engaged in their power struggle in the arenas of custom and tradition, and government and the church alternatively. Opting for one arena was not a matter of morality and of choosing what is just, true or equitable, but more a matter of testing different strategies in order to find the one that would be most favorable to one's personal power and status. Legal pluralism is used as a resource in the village disputes. Powerful people in the village are able to manipulate the legal repertoire according to their own interests.

Normative orders in Lawonda differ in various respects: their basis of validity, their institutions and hierarchy, and their criteria for access and inclusion. The question of the basis of validity can be answered theoretically and empirically. For village politics in Lawonda the empirical answer is much more important. The difference in institutions and hierarchies of each normative order creates the possibility of change in positions. The story of Umbu Hapi versus Pak Vincent illustrates that an individual actor can have a superior position when the first normative order is declared valid and an inferior position under the terms of the second normative order.

*Forms of capital*

Not every villager has access to all four normative orders. It requires membership or adherence (Church), a good position in the state structure, or the right descent, although fictive kinship is an exception to these exclusive criteria. The higher one's position in the hierarchy of a normative order, the greater will be their ability for interpretation of its rules and procedures. A way to assess positions in a power struggle is by analyzing the competing parties or persons in terms of the forms of capital as explained in Chapter II. A closer look at the characteristics of Umbu Hapi, the village head, and Pak Vincent, head of the development project, reveals their sources of power and helps to explain the strategies which they use in a conflict that superficially seems to be confined only to the domestic sphere.

Umbu Hapi was born in 1940s. He is wealthy in traditional cultural capital. In the past, Lawonda used to be a domain of nobility, and Umbu Hapi is a descendant of the most prominent noble family. The tombs in the ancient *paraingu* of Lawonda indicate the status of *maramba*, or noblemen, who lie buried there in large graves surrounded by four pillars that support carved tomb stones.<sup>5</sup> In the colonial period, Umbu Hapi's great-grandfather Umbu Siwa Sambawali, was appointed as raja of Lawonda and, in 1930 as raja over the larger area Umbu Ratu Nggai (Kapita 1976b:61). The raja and his relatives benefited from their new government position, and they gained considerable material wealth because they were entrusted with the task of levying taxes. The children of this family were among the first to attend school and to continue their education elsewhere. Umbu Siwa's grandson Umbu Tipuk Marisi became the first Regional Head and chairman of the Council of raja after Independence, in 1949. In Lawonda the raja's family was at the top of the social hierarchy. The consequence of this prosperity was that the children of the first leaders left the area; they found good positions in the district government or became professionals in the urban areas. Some like Umbu Hapi's father remained; he became the village head in Lawonda. People in Lawonda referred to him with his 'horse name' which is a type of prestige name used for noblemen (Kuipers 1998:106). This is a symbol of his nobility and cultural capital.

When he was the village head, Umbu Hapi's leadership was not as conspicuous as the leadership of his father and grandfather. His private educational and professional careers were not very successful. His prestige was gradually eroding in the 1980s, and though he was still acknowledged as a nobleman, the Lawondanese were often eager to explain that he had merely

<sup>5</sup> This type of tomb, *wacu pawici*, is only allowed for people of the highest social status, and can only be afforded by the rich, because the costs of carving and pulling such a stone and the complementary ceremonies are very high.



The final adat meeting with Umbu Hapi's father

replaced his cousin who lived in town and he was not really the master of the slaves who stayed with him. He would ask for the services from his villagers, but they were increasingly reluctant to comply with his demands simply because he was the village head. In the 1986 elections for village head, his main competitor was the village secretary, who was a member of the second clan of Lawonda, and regarded as (relatively) well-educated, bright, and open to new ideas concerning village development and agriculture. The village head was re-elected, but the public discussions surrounding the elections showed the emergence of preference for a new kind of leadership.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of village standards of economic capital, Umbu Hapi was a wealthy man in the 1980s. He owned many of the best paddy fields, some of which could be irrigated, so that it was possible to get a second crop from them per year. Usually he would sell paddy every year, showing he had surplus in spite of the many mouths he had to feed from those fields. He also owned buffalo and horses, but not a great number. His house did not give him any prestige in the traditional terms: he lived in the KUD building for

<sup>6</sup> In the next elections in the 1990s this candidate was elected as new village head.

years and afterwards in a small brick house he built in front of the KUD. He preferred to live close to the main road, in the 'modern' centre of the village, and enjoyed the daily company of his neighbors there, namely, school teachers and the Christian reverend. He spent a substantial amount of money on the education of his five children.

Umbu Hapi's younger brother lived in Waikabubak where by the end of the 1980s he was the Head of the SOSPOL office.<sup>7</sup> This brother was Umbu Hapi's most important direct access to the network of influential state officials in town. He regarded his brother's house as his own and could stay there and meet people whenever he was in town. Marriage alliance also provided him with social capital. His wife was a noble daughter from one of Anakalang's main kampongs, Pasunga, which is also the home kampung for many present higher state officials.

Umbu Hapi's family members were not all Christians. The educated members were, partly because the schools required official registration for one of the state-recognized religions. Yet, the uneducated relatives who worked on the land for him or lived in their ancestral house up on the hill kampung were 'not yet' Christians. The girl in the story below, who accidentally got pregnant was one of those relatives.

The fact that Propelmas' leaders selected Lawonda as the location for their development activities can be interpreted as evidence that Umbu Hapi's social capital in GKS circuits was sufficient to bring this project to his village.

The composition of Pak Vincent's capital was completely different. He was born in the Netherlands in 1953, and is much younger than Umbu Hapi. When he first came to Lawonda, he did not have any traditional cultural capital. Gradually he gathered advisors on adat matters and in the course of the six years he lived in Lawonda he gained some knowledge of local culture and the ways to solve disputes. His adoption into one of the clans was a cultural asset, enabling him to function in the kinship system. Pak Vincent was an engineer, this title showed his educational status. He was a foreigner, with experience in several other countries and cultures in Asia and Africa, facts that contributed to his cultural capital. He was a Dutch agricultural engineer and assigned by the Protestant Christian Churches that had sent many missionaries to Sumba before. That put him in the 'missions-tradition' which gave him another type of cultural capital. It also opened many doors to Sumbanese in high positions. The latter were often educated in the missions' schools and many of them had personal experience with Dutch missionaries who were generally well respected by the Sumbanese population.

<sup>7</sup> This is the local office of the Social and Political Directorate of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs.

For example, access to *bupati* Umbu Djima at that time was facilitated by that mission's social capital.

Propelmas board members were important for Pak Vincent's social capital. They all occupied key positions in relevant social networks. The chairman at that time was the Reverend of the GKS congregation of Waikabubak, and many high civil servants were 'his' congregation members. The board's secretary was the head of the Christian primary school in Anakalang, an unmarried woman of noble rank, and close relative of *bupati* Umbu Djima. Members of the board included a nobleman from another clan in Anakalang who was the Head of Civil Service of the sub-district's office in Anakalang, the reverend from Lawonda, and two representatives of the population in the area where Propelmas worked, who were in fact the highest elite of that area (and thus village head and nobility as well).

Propelmas was a church organization and therefore positioned in the organizational schema of the GKS. The Propelmas staff and board would report to the GKS foundation for welfare.<sup>8</sup> The general meeting of congregations of the GKS, the *sinode*, chose representatives as board members of this foundation, and usually they were a mix of people from East and West Sumba, with similar characteristics as the people recruited as board members for Propelmas: high social status, good positions in the state apparatus and/or a superior position in the church hierarchy. This foundation was usually rather distant from the everyday concerns of Propelmas, but if necessary its members would facilitate access to useful connections in the upper echelons of the church or in East Sumba. Pak Vincent was just a member of the congregation in Lawonda, without any special status, whereas Umbu Hapi was member of the church council.

Pak Vincent was not wealthy at all according to traditional village standards, since he did not have any land and only two horses. His main wealth was the promise or dream of a development project, a potential reservoir of funds that could be tapped by people in Lawonda. His private salary in money was also economic capital that attracted many visitors who would try to receive or borrow some of it. In the Uma economy (Vel 1994) establishing debts is equal to creating social capital, since the exchange of objects confirms social relations. Lending money was for Pak Vincent a way to create social capital.

Work in the context of Propelmas also created social capital for Pak Vincent: every day he was involved with groups of farmers and women's organizations in the area. Those were horizontal networks based on class and gender, bridging differences in clans and religious adherence.

There is no conclusion about whose capital is larger or has more weight.

<sup>8</sup> YAKKEL, Yayasan Kesejahteraan Keluarga, (GKS) Foundation for Family Welfare.

Both Umbu Hapi and Pak Vincent had accumulated a considerable amount of capital, but in very different ways. They both enjoyed power positions in the village, but based on different criteria and addressed at different identities of the village constituency. This brings us back to the competing spheres of normative pluralism: adat, the state, the Church, and the development project.

#### *Adat in Lawonda*

Adat is used here as a shorthand for the normative order of customary law and tradition in Lawonda. As discussed in Chapter III, adat is the word in Bahasa Indonesia that refers to the customary laws and rules of a community pertaining to all aspects of community life, including marriages, funerals, division of land and the rights to cultivate land, inheritance, rules of proper conduct, indications on how to celebrate, and the ways disputes in the community are settled. The legitimacy of adat as a legal system is more dependent on social acceptance than on formal (and written) legal systems; the rules, the procedures and the communities to which it pertains are not fixed and thus open for negotiation, it is a process full of tactics and tricks (see p. 66). On Sumba adat is also an art: its negotiations are conducted in ritual speech, which is a type of poetry that only specialists are able to compose.

In the description of a village in the preceding chapter, there were many signs and symbols of tradition in village life: the shape of the houses, labour organization in agriculture, the death wake, traditional ideas about borders which connect lands that are irrigated from the same spring; the ritual centre high on the hill in Maderi, polygamy as a status symbol, and illiteracy as a characteristic associated with adat. In every event of adat rituals the clan elders, including the *ratu*, assemble and discuss the strategy to be followed during the negotiations. The specialist in ritual speech, called *wunang*, will conduct the actual rituals and in that performance he acts as the representative of the clan.

It is debatable whether adat, as a normative order, has a general basis of validity, because, as folk law, its content is never universally valid, but rather attached to a specific people in a specific locality. On Sumba the ancestors compose the basis of validity of all the rules and procedures. Hoskins (1993:280) has noted that the ritual specialists in Kodi (at the west end of Sumba) who performed divinations, songs and oratory saw their task as 'repeating the words of the ancestors', preserved in paired couplets of traditional verse, not as devising their own interpretations. Obedience to the words of the ancestors is necessary for the safety of the living, so that they will enjoy prosperity and fertility. In traditional Sumbanese philosophy the fate of the clan is dependant on the correct execution of all rituals. The central importance of the clan

implies the acceptance of family relations, kinship and affinity, as the key determinant of social conduct. People think of others in terms of relationships: once the relationship between two people is clear, the appropriate conduct is clear too. The relationship determines what gifts are appropriate for exchange, what kind of services one is entitled to receive or obliged to give. It also determines the types of penalty in cases of dispute settlement.

The intensity and quality of social relations depends on proximity within the kinship system. Brothers within the patrilineage are closest kin. The type of exchange most appropriate for this relationship is in the terminology of Marshall Sahlins (1972:193) *generalized reciprocity*, which

refers to transactions that are putatively altruistic; transactions in the line of assistance given and, if possible and necessary assistance returned. In the middle range of possible rules of transaction there is *balanced reciprocity*. It refers to direct exchange, in which the reciprocation is the customary equivalent of the thing received and is without delay. The other, unsociable extreme, is *negative reciprocity*, which is an attempt to get something for nothing with impunity, the several forms of appropriation, transactions opened and conducted toward net utilitarian advantage.

At the other end of the spectrum are the types of people for whom negative reciprocity is suitable: strangers, outsiders, foreigners, in short people with whom no kinship or marriage relation can be traced. If there are no intentions for future communication or cooperation, negative reciprocity applies. This is a dangerous feature for development programs brought to the village by outside agencies, and especially troublesome in the case of credit programs since there is no moral incentive among the villages in rural Sumba to repay credit (Vel 1994:64). When strangers enter the community to stay and participate in it, fictive kinship is a solution to set positions and rules of conduct and exchange. That requires a proper ceremony between two parties: one that adopts the stranger as brother, and the other to be his family-in-law. Adat specialists of the two parties discuss the type and size of required exchanges, such as, horses, buffaloes, pigs and cloth, in a way that resembles marriage negotiations. Fictive kinship was offered to a man from Sulawesi who wanted to marry a girl from Lawonda; Umbu Bintang, the candidate for *bupati* in West Sumba in 2005, (see Chapter IX) had his Javanese wife adopted by a *kabihu* that was already wife-giving to his own lineage, to create a complete married Sumbanese identity for himself. We were incorporated into fictive kinship, Pak Vincent and me, into two local *kabihu*, and this gave us a type of identity that was required to participate in many aspects of village life. From our own point of view, it made us feel at home and accepted, but it also caused a lot of problems and obligations.

Adat's basis of validity coincides with its source of authority in that it is the older men of the village who are the adat elders. They conduct dominant

discourse in the village by presenting adat as the natural way to preserve order and stability in society. Women and youth experience a second source of authority: older men control the land and livestock which enables them to control women and youth. Adat rules are used as tools in exercising this power; for example, in the case of marriage, adat prescribes that a man should pay a dowry price of livestock to the family of his bride.

There are no separate adat institutions in Lawonda other than traditional social organization of patrilineal clans, with an internal hierarchy of sub-clans named after their main House (Uma). Not every old man will become a clan elder. It depends on social rank, knowledge about adat and on economic status which is the ability to give material support in exchange for moral support or subordination. In recent discussions on village democracy and the revival of adat institutions, the latter are often presented as 'democratic' because they emerge from the people (Li 2007:337). This type of democracy, however, would not include women and youth.

Adat in Lawonda is an oral and living law. As a strategy of resistance against the government or other institutions or people from outside, villagers sometimes present their adat law as if it were a system of strict rules and prescriptions that do not allow deviations. Yet, adat is 'much more complex and negotiable than peasants make bureaucrats believe' (F. von Benda-Beckmann 1989). Negotiation is an important and strong element of adat; it means that people are used to having different options in a given situation, rather than a strict rule that is valid in all cases and uniform for all persons (as is claimed for state law). 'Just repeating the words of the ancestors' is therefore a very euphemistic and formal description of the art of ritual specialist. Davidson and Henley (2007:5) write about contemporary practices of adat in Indonesia in general:

The informal, uncodified character of most '*adat law*' makes it vulnerable to political manipulation, as does the idealization of order and stability with which adat is associated.

That is exactly why adat is suitable as a resource in power struggles, also in village politics.

### *The state in the village*

The state is omnipresent in the village, and was so in 1990. In Lawonda and Maderi, the village government officials are addressed in every day life with the title of their function: 'village head', 'neighborhood head' or 'district head'. The state made Lawonda part of the Indonesian nation by bringing ideology, services and buildings to the village, including schools, uniforms,



flag raising ceremonies, the Village Cooperative (most of all the building), the agricultural extension officer and occasional visits of health teams, and teams for training the village population in Pancasila philosophy and its meaning in daily life. Modern Indonesian citizens are expected to act according to the state normative order, speak Indonesian, preferably wear a uniform and adhere to a universal religion.

The state brought funds, resources, infrastructure and salaried personnel to the village but it also levied taxes in Lawonda. The amount of tax revenues from the village is very small compared to what the state invests in the village. In the 1980s land taxes were the most important type of tax and in spite of the financial burden people were usually eager to pay because the registration of land tax payment is a type of land registration which informally served as proof of landownership.

Most villagers in Sumba are not familiar with official state law. What trickled down to village level are local versions of state development law, which often have nothing to do with the original version. For the villagers state law is what local government officials say it is or what they force the people to do.<sup>9</sup> From the villagers' point of view there are several different sources of government authority: (a) (the threat of) violence, (b) the bureaucracy, and (c) the prospect of subsidies, jobs and relations with government officials that provide access to money. In Lawonda violence is not monopolized by the state, but it is a very common means used by all authorities to punish disobedient subordinates. Men beat their wives, parents beat their children, teachers beat pupils; when a thief is caught he will be beaten first before he is handed over to the local police, who in their turn will beat him first before anything else happens. State violence is known and feared by the villagers especially when carried out by the army. On several occasions during the New Order period, the army joined government programs, such as the promotion of family planning and dry land farming and horticulture, in order to make these messages more convincing. The state, the nation and its authority were carefully socialized in the 1980s through teachings of the 'Moral Pancasila', which was the official state doctrine, in the nursery school, in weekly courses for the total village population and in refresher courses for all government officials. Bureaucratic prescriptions thus have brought the state into the villagers' lives. To achieve civil registrations, obtain identity cards, participate in elections, and be able to graduate from school, one has to submit to the rules and procedures of the state. The state is also imagined as a huge source of funds and opportunities for material gain. For a villager, the best opportunity is to get a government job or at least have good relations with government officials, which can bring him benefits such as subsidies, jobs or other privileges.

<sup>9</sup> See also Gupta (1995:378).

Government officials in Lawonda insist that state law and government rules are more valid than all other kinds of law. However, they usually adopt the strategy of first solving matters *secara keluarga* in the way relatives do and by using adat. Only if the parties involved are unable to settle the matter in a way that is mutually satisfactory will the government impose its state law. A material consideration that hampers the application of state law and services is that all of the involved procedures are rather costly in monetary terms. The rural population in Sumba might have ample access to land, control over livestock and a sufficient amount of food, but generally they lack money. An application for land registration involves traveling costs of going to the office in town, and bureaucratic and sometimes political fees that exceed many times the monetary value of the annual harvest of the land concerned. When disputes are regarded as issues between lineages and not between individuals, someone who wants to bring a case to court has to rent a truck or bus to bring all relatives and supporters along. Strength in a case might be measured by the quality of the arguments, but it is also increased with the number of physically present supporters, who all have to eat and drink. It makes using state law a costly affair, even without considering the bribes that have to be paid.

For the government officials themselves it is not easy to act only as a state representative, because usually they are completely entangled in adat relations as well, having family relationships with one or more of the parties involved in the matter. The distinction often made in literature between bureaucrats and villagers is too strict to be applied in Lawonda. It would be more appropriate to see the government officials in Lawonda as 'villagers with some government privileges'.

### *The Christian church in Lawonda*

#### *Ordinary church service in Lawonda in 1990*

Every Sunday mornings there used to be a long church service. The Church Council met every week before the service started, and depending on the number of issues to discuss the service started early or later. Lawonda's congregation members gathered in the new church that was built in the late 1980s. The brick-walled building replaced the old church that was made of bamboo with a thatched roof. The new church was never completely finished. There are no tiles on the floor yet, the tower is not completed yet, and there are no plastic chairs yet, but benches made of bamboo.

Lawonda's reverend usually preached in the vernacular, mixed with Indonesian sentences. Men sat in the back where they could continue chewing their *sirih pinang* (areca nut and betle) and women and children were in front. The doors and windows were open for the dogs that always followed their master, even

to church. Most people, especially those in front, liked to sing. The reverend usually chose a mixture of Indonesian hymns, which use Western European melodies, and Sumbanese songs composed from old melodies that are sung in the paddy fields and while transplanting paddy. Only a few people owned a hymnbook, so after every new line the reverend would read the next line before it was sung.

The Church is an important institution in Lawonda, just as it is in nearly all villages in West Sumba. The church creates its own network of members of 'the Christian family' with its own hierarchy, positions and rules. The general basis of validity of Christianity is the Bible. As described in Chapter II, Christianity on Sumba is strongly associated with modernity and development. For people in Lawonda, God's will as it is preached in church and in home gatherings is more relevant as religious guide than reading the Bible, because not many own a Bible and, in general, only a few people regularly read at all. The primary school in Lawonda was one of the first in the area established by the Protestant missionaries in 1914. This means that by 1990, many generations were educated in the Christian school. It was the Protestant missions' policy to educate the elite first, and therefore Protestant Christianity is closely associated with the traditional elite, and derives some of its authority from the social status of its members. The congregation of Lawonda consisted of 300 persons in 1962, about 700 in 1970 and about 2000 in 1980. Umbu Hapi and his family joined in 1978.<sup>10</sup> During the initial period in which Dutch missionaries dominated the protestant Church, conversion was a difficult process, requiring several years of Bible study and training in the practical meaning of the Christian way of life to become a 'servant of the Lord' and abstain from all customs and practices that were not compatible with the 'new way of life'. This very popular theme for sermons and other Christian ceremonies encouraged orientation towards the future, the hope of progress and modernity. Keane (2007:48) describes in his book *Christian moderns* the core secular message of Protestantism on Sumba as a rupture from a traditional past, and progress into a better future.

In the 1980s 'political conversion' became more common. The choice of one of state-recognized religions (Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism) was not difficult for people in Lawonda because they would usually follow the leader on whom they were most dependent (for example clan leader, buffalo owner, or father-in-law). In December 1988, the number of members of the congregation of Lawonda (GKS) doubled. On one day 2653 people were baptized. This was the result of a large evangelization campaign

<sup>10</sup> The number of church members – officially registered by the church itself – can be compared to a total population of about 10,000 people in the area of (the congregation of) Lawonda in the 1980s.

initiated by Protestant politicians in the district capital Waikabubak who hoped this campaign would result in increase in church membership and support for their district politics. At that time the Golkar seats in the District Parliament in West Sumba were divided between Catholic and Protestant candidates in proportion to the number of officially registered members of their churches. Massive baptisms firmly established a constituent base for Protestantism in Lawonda. Members of the Church Council used to be chosen according to their merits as Christians; but in 1988 the criteria shifted and people tended to choose church elders who already held a position as leaders in government or in adat, even if they had just become Christians.

A complicating factor in the case study is that both Umbu Hapi and Pak Vincent had distinct definitions of 'the church'. For Umbu Hapi 'the church' was mostly the church and its members in Lawonda. In his perception 'the church' was also the network of Christians on Sumba, former classmates in Christian schools and the history of Christianity on Sumba. Pak Vincent was a member of the Lawonda congregation only for a limited period. He was also member of a much wider Christian network, connecting members of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, the officials in the Board of the Christian Church of Sumba and its foundation's boards. He often communicated with others in this network, outside Lawonda and outside Sumba. When Umbu Hapi and Pak Vincent referred to the 'rules of the church' they often had different cultural settings and religious interpretations in mind.

The church in this case is the Protestant Christian Church. There was also a Catholic church Lawonda since the mid-1980s. The building was a simple wooden shed, and the members of this congregation were concentrated in the southern part of the village. I heard that one of the main reasons people became Catholic was related to feuds within families (for example: a man decided to become Catholic after disputes with his Protestant brothers) or because men from Lawonda married women originating from places close to Catholic churches in other villages. The Catholic community played a marginal role in village politics in the 1980s, because the village elite were Protestant Christian.

#### *The development organization*

In Lawonda the development organization was Propelmas, and with hindsight it may be more accurate to call it a NGO (non-governmental organization) linked to the GKS. The type of development Propelmas' staff was engaged with is not what was in the New Order context generally called *pembangunan* (translated as development). The latter was associated with top-down programs initiated, managed and funded by the state to increase eco-

conomic growth (Schwarz 1999:29). Matters of human rights or equity were not included in the concept. The *pembangunan* programs were mostly in the field of infrastructural project development and building activities. Contractors with good relations with state officials implemented the programs and usually benefited considerably themselves. The largest New Order 'development projects' were associated with Suharto's cronies, including his children (Schwarz 1999:146-7).

It seems odd to include 'the development organization' in a list of normative orders, because this organization is only a small fragment of a different ideological realm. It is also not very common to think of a small development organization as an active force in shaping local law. Analytically 'the development organization' does not provide a normative order of the same type as religion or state. The latter have universal systems of rules; their official bases of validity are written down and all who study the texts can know their rules. Yet empirically, in the specific context of Lawonda, the different normative orders of adat, state, church and development organization are equivalent. From the villagers' point of view they all represent a totality of values and rules, and each of the four orders is represented in the village by its own institution(s). They all are a source of authority. Here 'the development organization' is used as a label to distinguish a set of values, rules and norms that are produced by the local development organization.

Development activities are rationalized and justified in terms of models. These models roughly consist of two components: (1) structures of institutional organization and action which provide options or directives for the activities of bureaucrats or villagers (the latter usually being the 'target group'), or for joint activities of both; and (2) rationalizations and justifications of these behavioral structures in terms of their supposed social consequences. The models are normative in their behavioral program, their goals and their underlying legitimization. In other words, 'development projects have the form of law'. (F. von Benda-Beckmann 1989:133-4.)

One general value put forward by development organizations is that of progress. From this perspective, everyone should strive to improve his or her situation, from producing more food, to acquiring land, to reducing the pollution of the environment. Although often there is no detailed, written definition of what 'improvement' means and the exact targets that the organization tries to achieve, as was certainly true for Propelmas, there is an impressive list of things that should be changed in order to 'improve the situation'. Development ideology is future oriented and in that sense the opposite of adat, which derives its knowledge and legitimacy from the past. Another essential value promoted (at least in theory) by development organizations is that of democracy. Farmers should organize themselves democratically, be

free to choose for themselves with whom they want to cooperate and what they would like to do. In Lawonda Propelmas put this into practice. It set up new 'horizontal' institutions: women's groups, youth groups and farmers organizations. Social organization linked to this development project was focused on class and gender, although it was not openly put in those terms as a result of the New Order's official ban on SARA (ethnicity, religion, race and class) issues. Farmers' groups would regularly have meetings with colleagues from other areas, building an initial form of farmers union. This was strategically adapted to the state jargon with the name *musyawarah kontak tani* (council of farmers groups). Development activities created an opportunity for class-based networks in the region, forging connections among clans and bridging religious differences.

Propelmas was also part of larger networks of NGOs which worked in similar fields in other parts of Indonesia or elsewhere in the world. Foreign guests came to Propelmas, walked around in Lawonda and were the visible links to global networks.

Propelmas' organization consisted of an executive staff with members originating from various parts of Indonesia, such as Lawonda itself, Bali and Central Java, and headed by a Dutch director. The Propelmas Board was legally responsible for the project. It consisted of members of the sub-district's and district's elite, who were also prominent members of the GKS.

Why would people in Lawonda accept the rules of the development organization? Both the village head and other villagers had expectations of material gain through a development project. Initially this was probably one of the main motives for people to participate in the development activities. A second stimulus for the authority of Propelmas gradually developed after a few years: Propelmas offered villagers some alternatives to exploitative relationships. It set up farmers' organizations and these protected farmers from negative pressure from inside or outside the village. Some village leaders eventually viewed Propelmas an additional vehicle on the road to power, because of its relationships with higher level bureaucrats, higher level church authorities and farmers' organizations elsewhere.

Formally Propelmas was an executive unit of a foundation of the GKS. In practice it was rather autonomous, especially since the donor church in the Netherlands provided funds directly, without the mediation of other parts of the church organization on Sumba. In Lawonda Propelmas and the church were regarded as two different institutions; usually they coexisted, but sometimes their leaders were in open conflict.

*Umbu Hapi versus Pak Vincent*

When Propelmas' initiators looked for a suitable location for the project in 1976, they chose the GKS congregation in Lawonda. The Village head of Lawonda, Umbu Hapi, had received Propelmas with open arms, attracted by the name of this development project, which includes the Indonesian word *proyek* that was commonly associated with large funds and the opportunity for local officials to receive a percentage. Thus he expected that this would be the project that would bring status, wealth and power to his village and to himself. To his disappointment Propelmas preferred to work with the poorer sections of the village population and showed a quite Calvinistic morality on spending money or giving credit and gifts. His mood turned into disapproval when the people involved in Propelmas started to become well respected and esteemed in the village.

From 1984 until 1989 my husband who is called 'Pak Vincent' in this story, was the project leader of Propelmas. This was only meant to be a temporary position and one of his main tasks was to find an Indonesian project leader. Vincent strove as much as possible for a flat organization that avoided hierarchy, convinced that this would stimulate staff members' initiatives and creativity. This type of leadership was rather unusual in Lawonda.

Apart from being employed in Propelmas we also lived our private life in Lawonda. This included being neighbors to the families who lived on the south side of the village, and being members of the local congregation of the church, as well as inhabitants of the *desa*. We did not have servants in our house but, 'foster children': three girls and two boys between the ages of 15 and 24 years lived in our house, did most of the domestic work and, since they were members of a missionary's household, they were also supposed to pick up some education there.

One of the foster daughters was called Kapi. After leaving school she had stayed with the village head, Umbu Hapi, for a year to take care of his daughter. She did not receive any reward for the work other than food and shelter; the village head did not feel obliged to give her more because he considered Kapi to be his 'sister'. Genealogically she was the Umbu Hapi's father's sister's daughter, but since Kapi's father never succeeded in paying off the bride price for her mother, the clan of her mother still held the right to give Kapi in marriage and to receive the bride price that would be paid for her. As she was staying with the village head she was very aware of his anxiety to marry her off and therefore did not feel at ease. When the village head's baby daughter was taken from Lawonda to be raised by relatives in town, Kapi went home to her parents. After a few months she asked whether she could come and stay with us; for Kapi the work in our house was less tiring than the work for her parents, the food was better and it was fun and exciting to stay with for-

eigners. We accepted Kapi because we could use more help in the house, and Kapi's sister-in-law, as a representative of her family, handed her over to us.

We lived together quite pleasantly until July 1987, when I discovered that Kapi was pregnant. 'Who was responsible?' was my first question, and she revealed that it was a boy from a neighboring village, and that it had happened at her sister's house while we were on leave in Holland. I was very displeased, because apparently we had failed to provide a safe home for unmarried girls, and even more because I liked her very much and I could see what trouble and unhappiness she was in for. Still unfamiliar with the strategic conduct in these matters, I decided to visit Kapi's mother and sister-in-law informally. The sister-in-law was out when I came; the mother showed her disapproval with the situation of her daughter. She was not very sad that Kapi was pregnant, nor was she angry with me, because all people in Lawonda agree that 'it is easier to guard a herd of buffaloes than to guard your young daughter'. She was sad because the father of the child was a poor boy who obviously could not pay much of a dowry price for Kapi. She told me that they had already had discussions about this subject with Kapi when it became clear that the two of them were having an affair.

After getting advice from Sumbanese friends we decided to bring Kapi back to her parents, just the way she came (which means informally), without any gift exchange or meals or other ceremonies. But every time we had made an appointment or tried to do so, her brother and sister-in-law, those who were supposed to receive her, were out. In the end, after a week of failing to meet the appropriate relatives, I brought Kapi to her brother's house and left her there to stay.

In the meantime there had been a number of consultations between Kapi's brother and sister-in-law and Umbu Hapi. In a family gathering organized by Umbu Hapi, the boy who Kapi identified as the father of her child denied it. Next they accused one of our foster sons, Tena, of being the father of her child. Therefore Umbu Hapi had advised Kapi's family not to take her back, but to leave her at our house in order to make their argument stronger. Now we were not only regarded as parents of Kapi, sharers of the loss caused by her situation, but also as parents of the father responsible for these events, and therefore accountable to Kapi's genealogical family for their loss. Our foster son firmly denied that he had had anything to do with Kapi's pregnancy. Umbu Hapi, ignoring Vincent's objections, announced a meeting at our house to settle the matter. He planned to incriminate our foster son as the father of Kapi's child and sentence him and the ones responsible for him to pay to her family either a full dowry price or a compensation for the devaluation of Kapi as marriageable daughter.

In 1984, just after our arrival in Lawonda, the village head had already arranged family ties between us and his family. When we invited him and



his family to our house-warming party, his father suggested attending in the customary way (*secara adat*): with a group, carrying gifts for ceremonial exchange. Looking forward to experiencing some indigenous culture, we accepted his offer, naïve as we were. His group carried a pig and a hand-woven cloth, we accepted, and gave a horse, a buffalo and a traditional ornament (*mamuli*) in exchange. But the most important implication of this event was that we accepted the relationship with the clan of Umbu Hapi as if they were bride-givers (*yera*) and we were bride-takers (*ngabawini*).

For the meeting which he proposed now in order to settle the matter concerning Kapi, Umbu Hapi had concocted a good plan: his messenger added that we should wait at home for them to arrive, together with the head of our neighborhood (*kepala dusun*) who usually acts as the head of the clan that lives on our side of the village and who had always been a great advisor to us in adat matters. The advantage here for Umbu Hapi was that in this way there would clearly be the two parties as required for adat negotiations present, and our main advisor would be subordinate in the village government hierarchy. The second member of our party, it was suggested by Umbu Hapi, had a subordinate position too. Fearing an adat trap we invited two church elders, the head of the neighborhood as representative of the local government, and three Sumbanese colleagues of Propelmas, who volunteered to be our indigenous solicitors and to do the creative questioning and thinking.

The delegation representing the party of the village head consisted of a number of people who were invited to speak on behalf of the 'large family of Umbu Hapi'. Neither the village head himself nor Kapi's brother nor her father was present. They brought Kapi with the intention of offering her back to us. After the spokesmen of both parties had explained their intentions for this meeting, opportunity was given to ask questions and discuss the matter. Tena was invited to react openly to the accusation, which he absolutely denied. Kapi was asked to give her story on the events that caused her pregnancy; she said that our foster son was the father of her child and she added that 'it' had happened about one year ago. When she was asked whether this was the last time she had intercourse with him, she said 'yes'. Because most of the people present at this meeting had better knowledge about the facts on human reproduction than Kapi obviously had it was clear that Umbu Hapi had lost the argument. The spokesmen tried to bring the meeting elegantly to an end but it was hard for Umbu Hapi's group to conceal their disappointment and anger towards Kapi. When they left they took Kapi back home.

At Kapi's home Umbu Hapi was waiting. At night a boy came to our house conveying the message that Vincent was expected in the office of the village head 'the day after tomorrow at eight o'clock'. Kapi's brother had lodged a complaint with the village government. No more than guests of the Indonesian people, with only temporary visas, we were keen to maintain

good relations with the government in general. But we were also fed up with spending so much time on settling this matter, so Vincent decided to visit *bupati* Umbu Djima to complain about the village head.

When Vincent arrived in the office of the village head, Umbu Hapi had already renounced his original intention on making an angry speech and forcing Vincent, as an ordinary village inhabitant, to settle the conflict with Kapi's family by paying a penalty to them. Although Vincent had not yet succeeded in visiting the *bupati*, the mere rumor of this plan had been enough to cause hesitation amongst the village government. The other members of the village government staff disagreed with the village head and found that his approach was ill conceived since foreigners could not be considered just ordinary village inhabitants; whenever problems occurred with foreigners higher government officials would have to be consulted and the matter would be dealt with by SOSPOL in the district capital, where Umbu Hapi's brother was head of office. Thus, when Vincent arrived 'the day after tomorrow' as requested, the village head was in a delicate position. He explained again in mild words that he was displeased with the situation that had emerged between Kapi's and Vincent's family and that he would like to see it resolved. As a way out they nominated a third person who was accepted by all to resolve the issue. This final decision was more a way of avoiding being forced to make statements, than an actual plan for settling the matter. The third person was never asked to execute the task he was chosen for. One or two weeks afterwards Vincent met the *bupati* at a party in the house of the *bupati's* father. Vincent was accompanied by the secretary of the board of Propelmas, a female cousin of the *bupati*. The *bupati* listened to their story and replied that he would not take any action for the time being; he addressed his cousin advising that the Board should try to intervene if things got out of hand. But he added that in the event that the Board's intervention was unsuccessful, he would be willing to intervene personally.

After a few weeks the head of the neighborhood of our part of the village came to our house with a new proposal; it was his own idea and had the approval of the village head. Perhaps we could have a meeting at Kapi's brother's house to settle the matter. This meeting should include a 'hand washing' ceremony to demonstrate in a proper adat way that we had nothing to do with Kapi's pregnancy and to hand all responsibility back to her family. The gifts that we should provide in this ceremony would be a horse, a woven cloth and a traditional ornament. Although this proposal could be seen as a placating gesture and a way to peace, we did not accept it, because the accusation was still false and therefore we did not want to pay any penalty in whatever way. We were afraid that to agree to a 'hand washing' ceremony would be equivalent to accepting that this matter should be settled within the sphere of adat, and surrender ourselves into the hands of adat experts

and their interpretation of what is equitable and just. So the problem neither reached a solution through adat nor through the village government. For nearly half a year nothing happened. Kapi delivered her baby in September, a son, and she stayed with her brother. I went to visit her, and there did not seem to be problems with Kapi or her small family.

In February 1988 our foster son who was accused of being the father of Kapi's child wanted to marry in church. His marriage was already arranged according to adat, and he and his wife-to-be submitted a request for religious blessing. After this request had been announced in church, the congregation's council received a letter, sent by Kapi's brother stating that there were 'legitimate objections' to the proposed marriage in church. According to the letter, our foster son was still regarded as the father of Kapi's child and, unless the matter was resolved properly, Kapi and her family would object to the proposed marriage. Although the church elder who received the letter had left it at home, the village head himself entered the council's meeting in order to explain its contents. He also explained what was considered to be a proper way to resolve the matter. The church council called Vincent and our foster son for a small meeting, where they said that Tena had to make peace with Kapi's family first before he could marry in church. Vincent replied that Tena and him were willing to make peace as Christians, which means by immaterial ways of showing regret about things that have happened; but he also said that he would never agree to give a horse and a sarong as a condition for marriage in church.

Tension increased and both parties were disinclined to surrender. After two weeks of refusing to participate in the peace-making ceremony suggested by the opposing party, Tena and his wife decided to revoke their request for religious blessing and to postpone their marriage in church until better times. The Church Council then decided that Tena, from that time on, was not allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper, since he refused to make peace with Kapi's family. To give moral support, Vincent and I also decided to abstain from the Lord's Supper. This is one of the most serious sanctions the Church Council in the Sumbanese context can impose: excluding people from a communal meal is like exiling them from the local community.

Because a large part of the Congregation Council did not feel at ease with this situation, either because they did not like the village head, or because they did not approve of this manipulation of church rules, it was decided that Tena was allowed to marry in church in his village of origin, 10 km away from Lawonda. He was also allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper in that village. Since this village and Lawonda all belong to one congregation the decision did not make sense to us, but it worked in practice. We did not have to surrender, Tena could marry in church, and the village head would not lose face in public.

When we were on leave in Holland for the second time, Tena and his wife married in church in their own village. Our absence was a good excuse to have the ceremony in the village of Tena's parents, and in this way it would not seem like yielding to the strange decisions of the Church Council or like surrendering to Umbu Hapi. In Lawonda Tena was still not allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. In the meantime Umbu Hapi was chosen and appointed as a church elder, a member of the Church Council. Apparently there was no objection to his nomination because of his part in the conflict between Kapi's family and Tena's party.

In July 1988, Umbu Hapi tried to marry Kapi off. He wanted to give her in marriage to a boy who had already stayed at Kapi's brother's house for a long time. He was a boy of low social rank and by no means able to pay a sufficient bride price for Kapi. The marriage would imply that he would stay permanently with Kapi's family, working for them in a position of total subordination. Kapi did not agree at all with this plan and she ran off with her son to the house of her uncle. She refused to return to her brother's house until the would-be-husband had left and Umbu Hapi had assured her that she did not have to marry him.

In December 1988, Kapi and her son were baptized in church. They were two of more than 2000 people who were baptized on that day in the congregation of Lawonda. Umbu Hapi had encouraged her to take part, as a member of the Church Council, and as village head, because the district government authorities favored the large increase in the number of members of the Protestant Church. This political pressure was decisive for Kapi's baptism at this particular day. The fact that she was baptized should not be interpreted as a sign that the conflict with our party is over. Umbu Hapi was very silent about Kapi's participation in the event.

In 1989, Umbu Hapi and his family faced many problems. One of his houses burned down and the stock of maize was lost; his wife suffered from strange skin diseases and some people said it was leprosy; his youngest son had a very severe attack of malaria that nearly killed him and left him in hospital for nearly a month. Umbu Hapi sensed that this was a punishment from God, and that he should change his ways in order to escape from further punishments. After his son had recovered he organized a large thanksgiving party. Pak Vincent, our colleagues from Propelmas and I were invited, much to our surprise. We attended the party and like all the other guests we were encouraged to leave all bad feelings behind and to start living as good Christians.

This did not entirely end the conflict. The decision of the Church Council that Tena was not allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper still was not withdrawn. Therefore we tried to arrange a peacemaking ceremony 'in a Christian way', which meant without material exchanges. After a while Umbu Hapi

agreed and the meeting was held at his house. The fact that we would be leaving Lawonda within a short period also accelerated reconciliation. Being on good terms with us again, the father of Umbu Hapi ordered us to come and visit him before we left Lawonda, in order to ask his permission, as Vincent's father-in-law, to travel back to our own country. Reluctantly we accepted the old man's invitation and like a good son-in-law Vincent brought Umbu Hapi's father a horse and a *mamuli*.

The conflict was settled and we could go home in peace.

### *Clash of paradigms or legal pluralism*

The case study illustrates the confrontation of different norms in an extreme form. As Calvinists, we refused to settle a dispute by material exchange. With hindsight, I admit that we did not quite understand that the 'fine' of horses and buffaloes was part of a long term exchange pattern that primarily served to facilitate social relations between the two parties and confirm status. Kapi belonged to our household in the period she got pregnant, and according to Lawonda's customs this implied that the head of the household was responsible, no matter who was the father of Kapi's child. That very question of who was the father? was the most relevant to us to determine responsibility for Kapi's status. And so there was a clash of paradigms in the private, moral sphere.

In this case it was a foreigner who represented the European and Calvinist way of thinking. There are many Sumbanese who have been exposed to this code of morality for a long time and have internalized parts of it. Umbu Djima's life history in Chapter II provides some examples of his Calvinist ideas and policies. The Protestant Church's normative order has become part of the Sumbanese normative repertoire.

The case study can also be read as a power struggle by the end of the 1980s. In the late New Order period the village head had a very strong position, with decision-making power over every matter that was handled by the government. The leader of the development project challenged his authority, and disappointed the village head, because the 'project' did not bring a comfortable percentage of its funds to the village head as it should have according to New Order expectations. The dispute over the foster daughter's pregnancy was a way to frame the power contest. Umbu Hapi, who started the contest, assessed he would have the strongest position under adat jurisdiction, and then Pak Vincent would be a non-person, a stranger, who had received a sub-ordinate status (though only due to Umbu Hapi's own actions). He overlooked the fact that local advisors could assist his opponent and teach him how to play according to the appropriate rules.

From 1975, political activities were officially not allowed below the district level, except for those organized by the state party Golkar. Political activities here refer to meetings and actions organized by political parties. This is a definition of politics that does not include the ways in which people in villages deal with their own politics, which might include getting help from people in town. In the case study above village politics are conducted through institutions of the four normative orders. Pak Vincent had access to the district head through the Protestant Christian network, since the district head was a former pupil of the Dutch missionaries, and Pak Vincent their most recent successor. The Propelmas Board secretary facilitated access to the district head through her kinship network. An apparent strategy in Uma politics is to seek support from higher level officials through any kind of network available. On the other side of this confrontation, Umbu Hapi had a brother in the SOSPOL office.

Umbu Hapi could have resorted to some type of traditional sanction that are often used to deal with outside perpetrators. Burning their house is such a sanction, practiced in the past with at least two missionaries' houses (Wielenga 1927:68-9). Another option to humiliate the opponent is to steal his horses, especially his private riding horse, since this is the traditional symbol of his masculinity.<sup>11</sup> These options, however, were more dangerous for Umbu Hapi's position, since according to state law these are criminal acts.

What the New Order government suppressed was grass root political activity. With the absence of political parties as institutions to promote the interest of the voters, other institutional networks, like the Church networks or NGO networks, assumed this function of facilitating political communication. The conclusion that the New Order government caused 'a closing down of politics allowing no other ideology than that sponsored by the state' (Antlöv 2003:193) is too simplistic for the reality on Sumba.

In studying different types of leadership, based on varying normative orders, one easily becomes inclined to think in terms of a 'clash of paradigms'. Analytically the normative systems are so different that it is hard to imagine that a compromise or combination would be possible. When Tanja Hohe (2002:570) described the clash of paradigms between the international UN administration and local political legitimacy in East Timor, she contrasted village leaders with the lowest officials in the international administration's hierarchy. The latter is imposed from outside, and what was lacking (according to her analysis) was a good forum for communication between the Timorese population in the districts or villages and the state administration.

<sup>11</sup> See *De heilige paarden*, a novel by Johan Fabricius (1959) based on the notes of reverend D.K. Wielenga.

When one is dealing with completely separate organizations, with different people who occupy their offices, one can expect a clash of paradigms. When the same people hold offices in the 'clashing' organizations or institutions of a particular normative order, such as was the case in a village on Sumba, there will be a centrifugal mixing force that finds a compromise within the setting of legal pluralism.

What is Uma politics at village level? Village leaders are actors in the various realms of the different normative orders that exist in their village. They are skilled in forum shopping as described by Keebet von Benda-Beckmann (1984:37): 'When fields of jurisdiction of different institutions overlap, disputants can choose between these institutions. They base their choice on what they hope the outcome of the dispute will be, however vague and ill-founded their expectations may be.' Questions about preference for a specific normative system or its legitimacy are not so relevant. What matters is how useful the institutions, the networks, rules and sanctions are for pursuing a particular political goal. Strategic use of hierarchies, networks and rules seems to be the core of village level Uma politics. This focus on hierarchies is an impediment for women, youth and lower status men from getting involved in politics. Forum shopping is a strategy that is only adoptable by those who have access to the different institutions. The consequence for people who lack such access is not very favourable. When rights and legal services become negotiable and when there is no institution or force willing or able to ensure rights and access to legal services to all persons, eventually legal services or rights will be traded off just like economic or social services. In that case, forum shopping requires a full purse, and people with an empty purse will return empty-handed.

#### *Village justice in West Sumba in 2004*

This last observation is also a basic concern that motivated a recent study of the World Bank (2004) in Jakarta, entitled *Village justice in Indonesia; Case studies on access to justice, village democracy and governance*. It is based on eighteen ethnographic case studies from fourteen locations in nine provinces in Indonesia; two of the cases are from West Sumba. The World Bank study team was inspired by the legal anthropology approach, in particular legal pluralism (World Bank 2004:106, note 3). The report 'starts by seeking to understand how poor people in Indonesian villages resolve disputes and what kind of factors in particular enable them to succeed' (World Bank 2004:iv). A first finding is that villagers and village leaders preferred to resolve disputes informally. 'Their emphasis on harmony largely reflected the realities of vil-

lage life, where people are known to and depend on one another, but also reflect a fear of revenge and – for village leaders – a desire to preserve status quo and avoid external scrutiny’ (World Bank 2004:iv). The World Bank study focuses on a particular domain within the pluralistic legal structure: the cases in which villagers used the formal system of state law to solve a dispute. What kind of cases would bring villagers to use the state courts and why can they not solve the dispute at hand by their preferred adat law?

The cases selected for this study are mostly corruption cases: for example, a village leader embezzled a large sum of the funds that was part of village poverty projects funded by the World Bank. Nearly all these corruption cases were dealt with by the formal justice system, the state justice courts, and not by informal village dispute settlement. All successful cases, in which the perpetrator was sentenced, had a dedicated ‘case leader’ or facilitator who could organize collective action and link villagers to external assistance. The case leaders created links and coalitions with legal aid lawyers, local media and NGOs to raise public awareness of the cases and scrutinise the performance of legal institutions. The cases that succeeded were those that attracted a wide range of constituents, for example, involving NGOs that could use the case for wider advocacy. Although the cases were successful in getting the perpetrator sentenced, in none of the cases the court verdict was fully executed.

The story of Umbu Hapi illustrates how village leaders in Sumbanese village politics use law as a resource, and how they preferably combine various normative orders, with institutions both inside and outside the village, to serve their own political interests. The World Bank study concludes that there is a high incidence of village communities using the formal (state) legal system as a last resort for defending their interests in cases where their existing village institutions had failed. How can this difference be explained? Did village authority structure change so much over the last few years that now villagers organize themselves, seek the support of NGOs or lawyers and bring a village leader who they accuse of corruption to the Court of Justice? Has adat lost its legitimacy?

The difference between the cases of the World Bank report and the quarrel between Umbu Hapi and Pak Vincent concerns, in the first place, the nature of the conflict. Corruption is a type of crime that cannot easily be dealt with by adat. The funds that are embezzled originate from outside the village, and are not owned by a person or family. Adat dispute settlement in West Sumba requires that the case be formulated in variables of adat discourse: in terms of related actors who both make a claim on something that is linked to village events or property. If villagers mobilize as the group who are bereft of the funds embezzled by the corrupt village head, their group identity might not be easy to translate in terms of adat parties, which are patrilineal clans. This could be one explanation why corruption cases are brought to court.



A second difference relates to the period in which these cases happened. The confrontation between Umbu Hapi and Pak Vincent happened in the 1980s whereas the World Bank study cases were recorded in 2002 or 2003. In the period between the 1980s and 2003 the position of the village head changed considerably, making him more subject to democratic control. Freedom to question a village leader's position and acts increased. Since 1998, changes in the village governance have made room for political activities: there are political parties, and a plurality of leaders can emerge. Law 22 of 1999 on Regional Autonomy has a separate section on village governance, the most important of which is that the Village head is no longer appointed by his superiors, but instead by the Village Representative Board (Badan Perwakilan Desa, BPD) who are elected by the villagers. The BPD has the power to dismiss the Village head. Village funding consists of a block grant from the district and local resources; the village budget is drafted and approved by BPD together with the Village head (Antlöv 2003:198-200). These are very large changes compared to the New Order situation which lasted from 1979 to 1999. In practice it does not mean that everything immediately changed according to these new laws. Political culture does change over a fortnight. The World Bank study includes a short summary of the case study in one of the West Sumbanese villages, which illustrates, according to the authors, the effect of 'a culture of impunity':

*Corrupt village head sentenced by the Court*

In Mamodu, West Sumba, villagers made no active attempts to report their village head's embezzlement of funds from the *Kecamatan* Development Project. They said that they were angry about his theft of funds but were too intimidated by him to do anything about it. The village head had an authoritarian reputation and a history of misappropriating funds. Indeed, during his term as village head, he was said to have taken animals belonging to villagers and sold them on the open market for his own profit.

'If you had a horse, he'd take a horse', said one villager. 'If you had a pig, he'd take a pig. But he didn't pay for it. Horse, buffalo, pigs... the point is, it didn't matter what it was, he'd just take them as the village head, without paying.' Others said that the village head was from a noble family. 'He was noble (*bangsawan*),' they said. 'He seems like an authoritarian person... he is clever. We couldn't stop him from doing what he wanted to do. He just does what he wants.' But villagers' inaction did not signify consent. People in the community did know what they were entitled to; they just thought that their efforts at resisting it would fail. 'They feel as if they are simple,' said the new village head. 'The community knows about their rights, but they don't know how to protect or struggle for their rights. They don't know yet how to fight/oppose (*melawan*).'

Eventually, a group of community leaders, some of whom were said to be connected to political rivals of the village head, who had gone on to take a seat in parliament, decided to report the village head's theft of development funds to

the district head. And when government auditors doing a routine audit came to the village, villagers told them that the village head had misused the project money. After two World Bank visits to the area, project staff and local government pushed for the case to be followed up by the prosecutors and courts. Eventually, the village head was charged with corruption, found guilty and imprisoned. Villagers say they were pleased that their village head went to jail. 'We are not scared of him anymore,' said one villager. 'He is like our enemy.' (World Bank 2004:35.)

This case study of Mamodu suggests that there was political rivalry in the village which strengthens the motivation for action. Corruption is not always a big enough crime to make villagers active in bringing the perpetrator to court. One reason is that what is regarded as corruption locally is not the same as what is regarded as corruption in Western way of evaluating or according to World Bank rules. It would be very interesting to know in how many cases of villages receiving funds in the Kecamatan Development Programme there are signs or evidences of corruption, and in how many of those villagers started action against the perpetrator. Since these cases involved rival elite members, there was no problem with regard to the costs of going to court. There has to be sponsors, because ordinary villagers can not afford expenses like these. The fact that the corrupt village head was not just a village head but also member of parliament, makes him a public figure on district level. Therefore an extra reason for bringing the man to court could be that this forum is at district level and therefore more in balance with the range of influence and activities of this person.

The two cases which have been presented in this chapter show the presence of legal pluralism in Sumba. In Umbu Hapi versus Pak Vincent customary law and 'church law' were the more important resources in the struggle. For the corruption cases studied by the World Bank, the state law appeared to be the more appropriate resource for villagers who wanted to get rid of their corrupt village head. A general conclusion is that disputes, conflicts or political fights are fought within the normative arena that is thought to be most promising by the strongest party.

The fact that there are villagers who stand up against authoritarian and corrupt leaders also is a sign of the larger changes that have taken place since 1998 in Indonesia nationally. The champion of authoritarian leadership, President Suharto, stepped down from office and from that moment onward democratization was set in motion. The cases described in the World Bank report point to one type of consequence at Sumbanese village level that was brought about by the national changes in Indonesia. The next chapter focuses on the changes democratization brings in general and describes the regime change in Indonesia from a Sumbanese perspective.



## CHAPTER V

# Regime change and democratization

On 21 May 1998, people on Sumba saw on television that President Suharto's authoritarian regime had come to an end after 32 years. It was the final result of the students' demonstrations in Jakarta and other major cities that demanded the president's resignation. People's complaints about rising prices had arisen in an atmosphere of protest, at a time when students were willing to organize demonstrations for any legitimate cause and for which they could count on broad support. They demanded Reformasi, reforms and on the top of their agenda was the departure of the president and tyranny.

What would this mean for Sumba? There had never been a clear protest movement on Sumba demanding that the president step down. Sumba was governed by the New Order bureaucracy, but it was far from the centre. The state officials on Sumba were mostly Sumbanese. Although national events had their impact on Sumba, this impact was often very different from the consequences elsewhere in Indonesia. Due to its characteristics, such as, being resource poor, sparsely populated, located in the far southeast of the archipelago, Christian in majority and with a majority of the population living from subsistence agriculture, political and social events can have different consequences on Sumba than they might on Java. The Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998, for example, turned out profitable for many Sumbanese, who were primary producers and who saw the prices of their products rise. Conversely, the financial crisis was hard for those earning monetary wages or salaries, most of whom were employed by the government.

In 1998 'transition to democracy' was the accepted and hopeful vehicle of all changes happening in the country. Soon, critical scholars observed that that there was no smooth transition after all. Instead, they argued that Indonesia was 'in search of transition' (Henk Schulte Nordholt 2002:3-4) without a clear direction of the process. Others even argued that the 'old predatory interests of Suharto's New Order regime' have effectively captured the institutions of democracy, and consequently there would never be a real democracy (Hadiz 2003:119).

In the first part of this chapter, I elaborate on the concept and ideology of

democratization as a background for understanding how the democratization process was used by local leaders on Sumba. The second part gives a narrative of regime change in West Sumba, telling how Umbu Djima's successor gradually became unpopular and how tension in the district increased.

### *Democracy and constitutional liberalism*

*Demokrasi* is a concept in Indonesian political discourse, including that on Sumba, which is often used but usually not explained. *Demokrasi* is about elections, but does it also include freedom of press and speech? Western writing about democracy is often an expansion of implicit connotations of the concept. Applied to a non-European culture, however, the effects of democratization can be quite different than they were in Europe. In his seminal work *The third wave; Democratization in the late twentieth century*, Samuel Huntington (1991) argues that this 'third wave' of democratization started in 1974 with the Portuguese revolution that brought an end to the Salazar's dictatorship. With the fall of the Berlin wall this wave reached its peak. There was growing international optimism on the necessity and possibilities for democracy all over the world. Some argued that democracy is beneficial to development; others said that it is the vehicle for international capitalism. Some have argued that the freedoms which people have in democratic countries are part of basic universal human rights, whereas others claim that a western style democracy is inappropriate in the conditions found in Southeast Asia. When Indonesia is positioned within the international debate on democratization it is important to specify first what definition of democracy is used and second which methodology is adopted to measure the extent of democratization.

The original Greek meaning of democracy is 'rule of the people'. In the context of European history it received the more specific meaning as a form of government wherein voters choose representatives to act in their interests, with the freedom to act according to their own judgements. This form is a representative democracy, of which modern liberal democracy is a type. In the media, but also in academic writing, democracy is often not specified, but taken for granted. Amartya Sen (1999:5) argued that by the end of the twentieth century democracy has become a universal value:

While democracy is not yet universally practiced, nor indeed uniformly accepted, in the general climate of world opinion, democratic governance had now achieved the status of being taken to be generally right. The ball is very much in the court of those who want to rubbish democracy to provide justification for that rejection.

Democracy is used as a container concept, including much more than just the governance by people's representatives. Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1995:6-7)

describe three essential conditions for democracy, based on their comparative research on experiences with democracy in a large number of developing countries:

- Meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government power through regular, free and fair elections that exclude the use of force;
- A highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, such that no major (adult) social group is prevented from exercising the rights to citizenship;
- A level of civil and political liberties – freedom of thought and expression, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and demonstration, freedom to form and join organizations, freedom from terror or unjustified imprisonment – secured through political equality under a rule of law, sufficient to ensure that citizens (acting individually and through various associations) can develop and advocate their views and interests and contest policies and offices vigorously and autonomously.

The third condition for democracy concerns constitutional liberalism. It is taken as part of the democratic package that civil liberties must be guaranteed by law to make democracy a system of governance beneficial for all people within a state. What will happen if democratic institutions are introduced in a society where there is no constitutional liberalism? What if people vote for their representative not based on rational choice for who represents their interests best, but based on kinship ties or religious affiliation? In Sumba, people are always regarded as part of a larger totality and first and foremost as part of their kinship network. The larger part of agricultural land is clan property, not registered as individual land property. Individual rights may be guaranteed by a constitution, but what counts in practice is often the rule according to local customary law.

If democratization is 'political change moving in a democratic direction from less accountable to more accountable government, from less competitive elections to fuller and fairer competitive elections, from severely restricted to better protected civil and political rights, from weak (or non-existent autonomous associations to more autonomous and numerous associations in civil society' (Potter 2000:368), it encompasses much more than just elections. If democratization is limited to electoral democracy alone, then elected governments who believe they have absolute power to act according to their own wishes and for their own benefit can easily take advantage of the system. Fareed Zakaria (1997:30) argued that 'the tension between constitutional liberalism and democracy centres on the scope of governmental author-

ity. Constitutional liberalism is about the limitation of power, democracy about its accumulation and use'. Most demands of the reform movement in Indonesia in 1998 reflect constitutional liberal ideals, but the result up to 2005 could also be regarded as 'illiberal' democracy, denoting a particularly authoritarian kind of representative democracy, in which the leaders and lawmakers are elected by the people, but tend to be corrupt and often do not respect the law (Zakaria 1997:22). In the upcoming chapters I will examine how democratization is interpreted and implemented in West Sumba.

### *Demands of Reformasi*

In 1998 the financial crisis in Southeast Asia caused steep rise in prices in Indonesia. The cost of living had gone up and, moreover, many people lost their jobs. It caused unrest in society, especially in the urban areas. Social inequalities became more obvious than ever, and increasing prices fuelled the anger and frustration of the masses. Protesting students in 1998 voiced two clear demands: Suharto's resignation and Reformasi. They desired an end to the authoritarian regime and something drastically different to replace it. Toppling the dictator was a clear point of action. Reformasi, however, was much more complex. Crawford and Hermawan (2002:205-12) summarized the main items on the reform agenda which they 'distilled from the views of a range of commentators, drawn from secondary sources and interviews' as:

- Military reform to establish civilian supremacy over the military and to end the dual function of the army, where the military acts both as agent of security and defence and as an important social and political force. The most concrete demand is the army's withdrawal from politics and civil service;
- Legal action against perpetrators of human rights violations and corruption in the past;
- Constitutional reform to provide a legal framework for establishing a democratic state and its institutions;
- Decentralization to distribute more authority to local and regional governments so that they can take their own initiative in response to local problems and demands;
- Checks and balances to enhance the accountability of the government, such as independent political parties (opposition), critical mass media and responsive legislative bodies.

These demands were the starting point for a wide range of different actors to interpret and discuss. The proposed reforms were highly political in the sense

that they concerned arenas of power and conflicting interests.

The demonstrations in Waikabubak in October 1998 that will be discussed in Chapter VI were real Reformasi protests: the demonstrators demanded the end of corrupt practices and legal action against the civil servant who was responsible for the nepotism in the civil servants admission tests. They also demanded that *bupati* Malo to step down, which corresponds with the more general demand for the army's to withdraw from politics and civil service.

Suharto's successor, president B.J. Habibie, responded to these demands and openly supported reform. Although he was not trusted by many, being Suharto's former vice president, during his short time in office very important laws were formulated and passed in the national assembly. The Habibie government made democratic elections and regional autonomy two of the cornerstones of its legislative agenda (Aspinall and Fealy 2003:3). Law 22 of 1999 on regional government introduced the devolution of political authority from the centre to the *kabupaten* (districts), circumventing the provincial level. The national, central government kept its authority in the fields of foreign policy, defence and security, monetary policy, the legal system and religious affairs. Law 25 of 1999 on Central Regional Fiscal Balance concerned the financial arrangements of decentralization and dealt with the division of regional revenues, providing the regions with a far larger share of these revenues than before.

### *Changing local regime*

At the end of the 1990s there were still no newspapers in Sumba. The only authors who recently published about this period of Sumbanese political history are David Mitchell and Tuti Gunawan (2000a). They describe the ways the New Order period was beneficial to Sumba:

#### *New Order blessings for Sumba*

The great strength of the New Order establishment in West Sumba was not its capacity for repression, but its record of successful development and maintenance of civil peace over a 30-year period. Its monopolization of power had meant that any civilian who wanted to contribute to the developmentalist project at the political level had to do so through the Golkar organization. In this way Golkar had the service of many able and idealistic men and women at its disposal and it earned legitimacy in office from a long record of achievement. [...] West Sumba had many reasons to be pleased with the developmentalism of the New Order. Being a relatively poor and undeveloped District it had been the recipient of substantial subsidies from the central government year after year to fund its development, and having no great natural wealth it had not attracted the predatory interests of outsiders. (Mitchell and Gunawan 2000a:2.)



This explains why on Sumba there was no movement for Reformasi. While the effects in material terms were positive for the two districts as a whole, by the end of the 1990s the island's highest government officials were not popular among the people in West Sumba.

Prior to this period in this New Order period, Umbu Djima was the West Sumba's *bupati* for a decade from 1985 until 1995. At that time district heads were assigned by *Jakarta* at the proposal of the governor in Kupang. The military and Golkar were the parties that brought forth candidates and in the province NTT they had an agreement on the number of district heads each of them would provide. Thimothius Langgar was Golkar's candidate when Umbu Djima's term ended in 1995. He was a young promising bureaucrat from Waijewa in West Sumba. Yet, the outcome of the provincial fight between the military and Golkar over the division of *bupati* seats, was that the army supplied its own candidate for West Sumba. And so the office was given to Rudolf Malo, born in Waijewa and a son of commoners. He was a colonel in the Indonesian air force, and had not lived on Sumba after he had moved to Java to attend secondary school. He married a woman from Java. He had been in charge of the logistics of a large air force base in Baucau, East Timor, and then had served a term in the provincial representative council (DPRD-I) in Kupang (Mitchell and Gunawan 2000a:4).

At the start of Malo's term in office there was no problem in leadership. Umbu Djima praised his successor and West Sumba's Golkar chairman, T.L. Ora received the new *bupati* well, perhaps influenced by the fact that T.L. Ora's sister is married to Umbu Djima. Tensions between *bupati* Malo and the local elite, most of them Golkar members, increased when it became clear that Malo applied a military type of leadership in the District where *Uma* politics were the common way of handling matters of political interest. Mitchell and Gunawan refer to this difference as 'command politics versus relationship politics'. Malo's authority was based on his status as member of the army, and his support came from traders and people outside Sumba. When the national regime collapsed in 1998, it also put an end to the era in which 'command politics' could be implemented without criticism.

### *Uncertainty after May 1998*

There was uncertainty in Indonesia in the first months after the demise of the New Order. Suharto was gone, and his successor Habibie was only supposed to head a transitional government. No one knew where the transition would lead to (Henk Schulte Nordholt 2002:3-4). The existing political framework had lost its legitimacy, and so president Habibie, who was regarded as the last representative of the old regime, lacked a supportive base for political power

(Hadiz 1999:105). The euphoria surrounding the fall of Suharto was only short-lived. The economic situation did not improve immediately. Despite all of the rhetoric about Reformasi *total* (total reform) that was broadcasted on television and fed hopes that Indonesia would be the newest liberal democracy in the world, changes did not take place quickly. Vedi Hadiz (1999:106-7) argued soon after May 1998 that it would be very possible that the New Order would continue, in a modified form, without Suharto:

While inter-elite struggles have ensued, this has only allowed for the partial unravelling of the New Order political structures rather than Reformasi *total* as demanded by the opposition, especially students. The military as an institution remains firmly behind the New Order, in spite of internal cleavages, and a severely damaged public image after revelations about kidnapping of activists and brutal massacres in various regions. Golkar, while badly weakened internally by defections, and externally by popular disaffection and distrust, remains a formidable political machine that its opponents can only dismiss at their own peril.

Hadiz' observation has proven to be largely accurate: although the head of the authoritarian regime resigned, the political structure was not immediately changed. Furthermore, regional heads of government were not replaced, so the New Order bureaucracy remained in office. Yet, loss of the ultimate leader and the damaged image of the state caused the bureaucracy's hierarchy to become unstable in 1998. Regional heads of government had to live without the certainty of receiving orders from the centre or of being backed up by the powers of central government. The fact that they are situated among and have to work within the local societies which they serve suddenly became much more relevant.

Placing state officials in their societal context and disaggregating the state into many parts and types of officials also suddenly became very relevant to analysis of events. In New Order Indonesia, the state comprised the governing officials, and also included the army, police and Golkar (Smith Kipp 1993:87). After May 1998, the political crisis in Indonesia could be understood as the question of whether these groups still collectively composed 'the state' or instead represented competing forces each of which held some of the state powers.

In West Sumba, reactions to the uncertainty about regime, authority and the future which had spread all over Indonesia culminated in two days of mass violence. One of the causes of the violence in the streets of the capital town, and at that moment in time, was the rivalry between local political elites. If all reforms proposed by protesting students would be accepted by the national parliament, the conditions for Sumba's district politicians would also change dramatically. Decentralization would bring these individuals more

power and resources; new political parties would bring new opportunities to create constituencies and networks; direct elections would necessitate building support among the voters and free media; the presence of opposition and civil society organizations would demand of the district's government more transparency and accountability. At this dawn of a new period, competition for power in the district became more intense and even included mobilizing violence in the district's capital town.



A street in Waikabubak's commercial centre

## Capital town

Dorkas waits in front of her house in Lawonda for the small buss that collects travellers to Waikabubak. It is just after sunrise. She wants to go to town to visit the hospital. She has been feeling very tired during the last several months with fevers every two weeks, and the nurse in the village clinic had not given her a diagnosis and the right medicine. An older woman joins Dorkas in the buss; she is going to see her daughter in town. Two young girls get on board. They have attended their uncle's funeral in the village, and now they have to hurry back because they only had permission to be absent from secondary school for three days. At the next corner, a middle-aged man carrying a small pig steps in. He desperately needs money to pay school fees for his son. In town he will get a better price for the pig than here in the village. Descending to Anakalang the road is rather bumpy. The surface had been rehabilitated last year, but there are already large holes in the middle of the road. People blame the contractor, who surely used the cheapest materials and put the rest of the money in his own pocket. The driver puts a new tape in the recorder and cheerful Christian pop music provides enjoyment for the passengers.

Waikabubak is the capital town of West Sumba. In 2002 it had 23,000 inhabitants, which is only about 6 per cent of the total population of this District. The capital is much more important than a meagre '6 per cent' suggests. Many people stay there temporarily: as a guest in the house of their children, as a pupil in a boarding school, as a casual labourer as long there is work to do. Members of West Sumba's wealthier class often have a house in Waikabubak and a house in their home village. They live in town during the week when they go to work, and in the weekend they spend their time in the village. Some of them have a house in the provincial capital Kupang as well, or even on Java. In Waikabubak they can use their cell phones and send text messages to places outside Sumba, which is the easiest, fastest and cheapest way of communicating with the world outside the island. Groups of relatives, working youth and school children live in the houses of one of the wealthy landlords. Part of the group switches residence very often, including the landlord himself. A wider circle of relatives considers these houses *kita*

*punya rumah sendiri*,<sup>1</sup> our own home, and they feel welcomed to stay there whenever it suits them.

The Dutch East Indies government chose Waikabubak as the administrative capital of the southwest part of the island after the pacification of Sumba by the Dutch army in 1913 (Van den End 1987:686). One Dutch *gezaghebber* was stationed in town. In the same period the Dutch Protestant Christian missions also chose Waikabubak as a centre of their activities. Missions had several criteria that preferably had to apply to new posts. They had to be located in densely populated areas, with relatively easy access and other suitable qualifications of a regional centre, not far from a sea harbour, with good supply of water and a relatively cool climate.<sup>2</sup> Waikabubak is originally the name of a spring (*wai* means water) that provided water for a large valley in which many garden houses and cultivated lands are located. One of the first activities of the colonial government was to construct roads connecting the centres of administration, mission and trade. Waikabubak was connected, via Anakalang, to Waingapu, and to the north with the harbour Waikelo. In 1925, the Christian missions opened the first hospital in Waikabubak, headed by the Dutch doctor J. Berg. In that year there were 250 Christians in southwest Sumba (Wielenga 1949:220).

Since that time the capital has also been a centre for health care in West Sumba, and it still is in 2005. The Christian hospital in the centre of town looks worn out. The new Public Hospital (Rumah Sakit Umum) just outside town is the better alternative, where one can visit even specialist doctors. Yet, people who can afford it go to Bali or Java for treatment when there is a really serious illness. The director of the public hospital is a very popular Sumbanese doctor from Kodi and in June 2005 he was chosen as deputy District Head (see Chapter XI). The Christian congregation of Waikabubak is not very old: it was installed in 1937, as the second congregation in West Sumba after Rara (Wielenga 1949:220). The first Sumbanese reverend at Waikabubak was H.M. Malo, the father of Manasse Malo, a professor at the Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta since the 1980s, who was very important for Sumbanese politics in 2002-2004 (see Chapter VIII). In 1947 the first (Christian) secondary school (SMP) was established in Waikabubak, and it took until 1960 before this town, and West Sumba in general, had its own SMA (junior high school). The former pupils of this high school now make up a social network connecting many people with influential positions.

Waikabubak around the year 2000 is a widely stretched town, with a ribbon-

<sup>1</sup> *Kita punya rumah sendiri* is also an expression that refers to the network of close social relations in which resources are exchanged in generalized reciprocity. See Vel 1994:159.

<sup>2</sup> 'Motieven voor keuze van een plaats als zendingspost', Letter from J.F. Colenbrander 27-08-1911 in Van den End (1987:158-9).

like building pattern along the main roads that extend in all cardinal directions. Coming in from the direction of Anakalang and Lawonda in the east, a modest arch welcomes the visitor to Waikabubak. It is about four kilometres from the centre. Since 1998 many new houses have been built along the main road and the style is getting fancier every year. The best have spotless white-tiled verandas and walls, and windows with black tinted glass. Traffic gets busier as one approaches the town centre. The absence of sedan cars reflects the bad quality of the roads in West Sumba; such a car could only be used in town. In 2002 the statistics office counted 1400 motorcycles in West Sumba, and many of these often come to town. It is the cheapest and fastest mode of transport.

The surroundings of Waikabubak include a large plain with some singular hills. The old kampongs built on these hills are still there. They used to be central villages of the Loli area, and now they are rural islands in the middle of modern Indonesian 'urban' life. The original inhabitants of this area, called *orang Loli*, lament having lost their land to traders and bureaucrats that came to town since it first gained importance as district capital. On the other hand they exploit the traditional spots as tourist attractions. Kampong Tarung is the most famous kampong, according to the Lonely Planet guide:

reached by a path next to the Hotel Tarung Wisata or off Jalan Manda Elu, Kampung Tarung is one of the most important ritual villages for the whole valley. It is the scene of an important month-long ritual sequence, the Walu Podu, each November. This is an austere period when even weeping for the dead is prohibited. Rites consist mainly of offerings to the spirits the day before it ends, when hundreds of chickens are sacrificed. People sing and dance for the entire final day. Tarung's monuments are under official protection. You might also be shown a human skin drum held in the village. (Turner 1998:377.)

When the author of this text in the Lonely Planet guide wrote the lines in 1998 it was only a few months before the rituals he described became part of a war in the streets of Waikabubak. Just as the old Kampong Tarung became situated in the middle of a modern town, the traditional rituals became part of a modern political conflict that is analysed in the next chapter.

The centre of the town is composed of five or six streets. One is the main shopping street. There are no fancy shops selling expensive or elegant goods, let alone a shopping mall. The typical shop is the general Chinese retail *toko*, with hardly any specialization, and always with small vendors in front. I have been well acquainted with one of the Chinese families who own a shop in Waikabubak's main street since 1984. Like most shop owners, their shop is just one of many activities in which they participate. They sell groceries, some shoes, and spare parts for machines and cars. They also have a considerable number of trucks that they use for transporting their own commodities and

also for renting out. They own a ship that brings in goods from Surabaya and travels back with agricultural produce, livestock and with whatever load needs to be transported to Java. They are also contractors and can take charge of construction projects. They are the agent for one of the airlines that flies to West Sumba's airport, Tambolaka. The family resides behind the shop when they are in Waikabubak. They can watch TV with a satellite receiver that catches over 170 TV stations from all over the world. The family often goes to Surabaya where they have a second home. They occasionally make a trip to relatives in Singapore or Hong Kong. They are very well informed and intelligent discussion partners, especially when it comes to assessing the economic potential of Sumba.

From the early 1990s until 2002, the number of hotels in town grew to six. The most expensive is Hotel Manandang that charged about 20 US dollars per room in 2004, which is extremely expensive by Sumbanese standards. Its guests are tourist groups, but more often it is occupied with those who attend the numerous workshops or seminars organized by government agencies or NGOs. Since the effectuation of regional autonomy the district government has much more money to spend and construction of new hotels is one of the outcomes of this situation. In the 1990s the District government already decided to upgrade its own dwellings: they built a new centre at the outskirts of town with a prestigious parliament hall and office of the *bupati*. The parliament members all received a new car. With the same conspicuous style the old Christian church of Waikabubak was replaced by the end of the 1990s with a huge pseudo cathedral, showing most of all the wealth of the town-congregation's members.

There is nothing much to do in Waikabubak, generally. Once in a while there is an event at the sports stadium in the middle of town. There is no cinema or game hall. There is a horse race stadium, but races are sporadic.

## CHAPTER VI

# Violence in Waikabubak

What is written in Indonesian history about the dramatic period from 1997 to 1998 all seems to focus on what happened in Jakarta, or at least on Java.<sup>1</sup> For Indonesians in other regions the change in regime was perhaps not the most significant event of 1998. How people, for example, in Ambon or West Timor or Sulawesi experienced the transition in the national capital only became matter of wide scholarly interest after large incidences of communal violence in those regions attracted attention. Consequences of national regime change created the circumstances under which local tensions became salient and evolved into mass violence.

The student demonstrations in Java set the example for people elsewhere in Indonesia to demonstrate against the violations of their interests and rights. In West Sumba people protested publicly against the corrupt and nepotistic practices of the *bupati*, who allegedly gave priority to his own ethnic group in hiring civil service. What was new was that open criticism of the head of (regional) government was allowed, and that issues of ethnicity, race, class or religion (SARA)<sup>2</sup> were no longer taboo and could therefore be used in articulating grievances. Tensions in Waikabubak over local issues increased within the national atmosphere of uncertainty culminated into a day of severe violence in the streets of Waikabubak.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All contributions in Arief Budiman, Barbara Hatley and Damien Kingsbury (1999) focus on what happened in Java and more specifically in Jakarta.

<sup>2</sup> SARA is the abbreviation of *suku, agama, ras dan antar golongan*.

<sup>3</sup> This chapter is a modified version of the article 'Tribal battle in a remote island; Crisis and violence in Sumba (Eastern Indonesia),' (Vel 2001) originally published in the journal *Indonesia*. I thank the editors of *Indonesia* for their permission to reprint.



*Bloody Thursday according to CNN*

On 6 November 1998 CNN reported: 'Tribal battle in Eastern Indonesia kills 19, police say'. This news message followed:

'Thousands of rival tribesmen fought a pitched battle with spears and knives on a remote eastern Indonesian island, killing at least 19 people, police said on Friday.

The fighting on Thursday in the western part of Sumba, a barren and inhospitable island southeast of Bali, had been brought under control with police reinforcements, Colonel Engkesman Ehilep, the chief of East Nusa Tenggara province, said.

He told Reuters that 19 people were killed in the fighting between members of the Loli and Wewewa tribes but had no word how many were injured. Ehilep said about 3,000-4,000 people were involved in the battle attacking each other with rocks, knives and spears. Tension amounted in the area on Wednesday after rumours spread that one tribe was planning an attack, he said. Ehilep said about 150 policemen were usually posted on the island and they had been supported by reinforcement of about 60 more troops. Some 100 more troops were on their way to Sumba.

The Jawa Pos newspaper reported on Friday that 100 people were believed to have been killed.

Sumba is renowned for its ikat textiles and was once a rich source of sandalwood before over-cutting brought down its stocks. But it is a hot, dry island and has few of the tourist attractions which mark other islands in eastern Indonesia.<sup>4</sup>

In this chapter I describe and analyse what happened on the day of mass violence in Waikabubak, which was afterwards named 'Bloody Thursday' (Kamis Berdarah). Contrary to what the CNN news lines suggest, this was not a mere isolated incident, but it was one of the first cases in a long series of acts of political violence in Indonesia's regions. After the violent riots in Waikabubak on 6 November, there was the 'Ketapang Tragedy' in Jakarta on the 22 November, followed by the 'Kupang Tragedy' on 30 November and 1 December, which was followed up by communal riots in Sulawesi on 6 December. Violence on Ambon only started in January 1999 and lasted much longer than just a few days. Each violent riot in this period had a local and a national component, a short-term reason why violence was provoked and a history of tensions in which this particular event was embedded. In the last section of this chapter I will discuss how 'Bloody Thursday' in West Sumba relates to other cases of mass violence in Indonesia from the period between 1998 and 2001.

In this chapter I examine the Waikabubak violence as a phase in Sumbanese political history. This means that I do not regard it as a 'spontaneous incident'

<sup>4</sup> <http://cnn.com/WORLD/asiapcf/9811/06/RB002826.reut.html> (accessed on 9-11-1998).

that could only happen in 1998 because of the turmoil nationally in Indonesia. Bloody Thursday fits into a long history of elite struggle in West Sumba. Paul Brass (2003) had developed an approach which views violence as a process, in which one can distinguish phases in riot production, based on his research on Hindu-Muslim riots in India over 30 years. Applied to 'Bloody Thursday', it enables a sophisticated and long-term analysis of the violent events in Waikabubak in November 1998.

### *Explaining communal violence*

Brass's approach, as described in *The production of Hindu-Muslim violence in contemporary India* focuses the attention on the role of politicians who encourage violence along religious or ethnic lines. These politicians translate local, more general conflicts in communal terms, thereby enforcing boundaries between social groups and transforming those groups into political constituencies. A central point of attention in his analysis of riots is the question: when a local incident, involving individuals with potentially multiple identities, is converted into communal conflict, implicating larger collectivities, is the shift caste, ethnic or religious based in nature (Hedman 2005:134-50)? Brass (2003:32) considers communal violence, where riots are endemic, as functional part of an 'institutionalized riot system, in which known persons and groups occupy specific roles in the rehearsal for and the production of communal violence'. The phases follow a sequential pattern in which planned steps in the production of violence are combined with spontaneous actions.

The third phase which Brass distinguishes, after preparation or rehearsal, and activation, is the explanation or interpretation of the violence. Ordinary people, the media, police and the civil authorities all have their own explanations of the occurrences of riots, and what evolves is a struggle for control of the meaning of riots in their aftermath (Brass 2003:24).

The multiple functions served by capturing the meaning [...] of an inter-communal, interethnic or inter-religious riot include legitimising illegitimate violence, concealing the extent of preplanning and organization that preceded it, and maintaining intact the persons, groups, and organizations most deeply implicated in the violence by preventing punishment of the principal perpetrators (Brass 2003:14).

Discourse analysis is the most appropriate method to distinguish the different stories constructed to explain the violence. Brass points at the connections of these small stories to a 'master narrative': a large, nation- or even worldwide discourse in which a particular incident of communal violence fits. Bloody Thursday according to CNN is an example of such a discourse. It situates



Motorcyclists are the champions of spreading rumour that will inflict mass violence

violence in Waikabubak in an image of Indonesia as a beautiful tourist destination, apart from a few islands where indigenous tribes fight their primitive wars. It suggests that the army and police restore order at short notice, so that stability is not threatened. There seems to be no historical background, nor a connection to national developments or politics, and the violence is just an incident. This image of Indonesia is in accordance with New Order state propaganda which wants to attract foreign tourism.

The main questions to be answered for any case of communal violence, and here specifically for 'Bloody Thursday' in Waikabubak, are (a) what happened in each successive phase from the 'triggering accident' up to the large scale violence? (b) why did this violence occur in Waikabubak, at that particular moment? (c) how is the violence explained by different actors or sources?, and (d) whose interests were served? To answer these questions I will follow Brass' phases of riot production.

*Preparation: master narratives, previous antagonisms and crisis discourse*

What preceded the violent events in November 1998? How can 'Bloody Thursday' be regarded as an escalation of previously existing tensions? How did national discourses encourage local violence? First, there is the local master narrative of perpetual enmity between the sub-ethnic groups in West Sumba, of which Loli and Wewewa are two examples. Second, violence has always been part of Sumbanese culture and if applied in a functional and regulated way it is not regarded illegitimate. Third, the main back-stage actors in Waikabubak's violence have a longer history of rivalry. Fourth, the national crisis discourse in 1998 inflated feelings of insecurity among West Sumba's population. Lastly, the reports on wide spread corruption, collusion and nepotism – addressed with the acronym KKN – reached Sumba and supported suspicion towards the bureaucracy and encouraged civil protest.

*Narrative one: clan rivalries*

One of the 'master narratives' in which the antagonism between the fighting parties on 'Bloody Thursday' was framed was the discourse of perpetual clan-rivalries in West Sumba.

The people of West Sumba describe the enmity between domains as timeless, an opposition that came before history and could never be mediated or resolved. People who did not share a common language or ancestor were 'strangers' [...] and the cycle of revenge killing between traditional enemies was compared by the West Sumbanese to the slow-burning coals of ironwood and tamarind trees [...], which are never extinguished. In contrast, feuding between people related by descent or marriage was said to be intense but short-lived, like flames in tall grass or bushes [...], which flare up fiercely but just as quickly burn out. The societies of west Sumba have few piece-making rituals, since the territories themselves were said to be 'at odds' with each other. (Hoskins 1996:233-4.)

In the nineteenth century neighbouring domains were unsafe territories, where a stranger could easily get caught and be sold as a slave. In her article 'The heritage of headhunting; History, ideology and violence on Sumba, 1890-1990', Hoskins (1996:232) argues that in the pre-colonial age feuding in West Sumba was not so much aimed at control over land as it was in East Sumba; rather it concerned control over people. She explains the difference by the relatively greater rainfall in West Sumba that made arable land available in abundance:

There was a shortage of people to work the land, and of pigs, horses and buffalo to raise on it. Stealing livestock was a prime motivation to raiding a neighbouring

region, as was capturing slaves to keep or sell to Endehnese pirates who operated along the north coast (Hoskins 1996:233).

Although interregional warfare is regarded as a part of the past, its heritage in the present appears in hostile discourse and in the inclination of leaders to legitimize their authority by mobilising visible crowds of their ethnic fellowmen as followers.

Even in twenty first century Sumba one can often hear Sumbanese speak of others in terms of these sub-ethnic categories, referring to the traditional domains. In this generalising type of daily conversation, *orang Loli*, for example, have a reputation as notorious thieves and thugs.<sup>5</sup> In the recent past there were several clashes between orang Loli and orang Wewewa. The last major one was in 1991, it was about a land dispute. Population density in Wewewa and Loli is relatively high and land has become scarcer than it was in the past. Additionally, members of the Loli clan have seen their land increasingly occupied by Waikabubak's town expansion. 'Strangers' employed in government administration, schools or businesses have taken over their original village territory. The 1991 conflict was settled with a peace-making ceremony in which each side swore an oath, using traditional ritual speech, to never again invade the territory of the other. At that peace-making ceremony, the *bupati* of West Sumba who was in office at that time, Umbu Djima, was prominently in attendance, as were leaders of the Christian Church. In daily life there was antagonism between the two groups in town, because many people from Wewewa work in town as petty traders and small shop keepers and are more successful in business than the Loli clan members in Waikabubak. Many members of both groups are Christians. The Loli group who adheres strongly to the Marapu beliefs are very prominent and visible because their dwellings are located on the hill top in the centre of Waikabubak, in the old kampong Lai Tarung, the Mother Village of Loli.

#### *Narrative two: violence, warfare and violent rituals in West Sumba*

Another ideological framework into which the violent riots in Waikabubak fit concerns the perception of violence in West Sumba. Traditionally violence is regarded as a legitimate means to certain ends. Since there was no central state in Sumba before 1900, local rules are used to decide which type of violence was functional, appropriate and legitimate. Head hunting and preda-

<sup>5</sup> Especially in Anakalang and Lawonda. In the *pilkada* election campaigns of June 2005 one of East Sumba's candidates hired *preman*-like campaign workers, for intimidation and rioting if necessary. They were commonly referred to as *orang Loli*.

tory raids were common practices between regions, like Loli and Wewewa. At the individual level performing violence is a way to prove masculinity. Concerning this, Hoskins (1996:227) quoted an old proverb from Kodi: 'a fierce youth becomes a wise old man': a successful warrior was considered to have earned a position of social importance and respect.

Violence is also incorporated in rituals. When people are gathering, feuding parties have to reconcile with each other before a ritual can be performed, and the ritual itself presents an occasion for dealing with emotions.

A series of rituals which is important for the analysis of 'Bloody Thursday' is called Podu.<sup>6</sup> Podu is the festival that marks the start of the new agricultural year, when celebrants call for the first rains. The stars and constellations indicate the time for Podu rituals, and the rituals start three days after the full moon. In the Western calendar this takes place by the end of October. All the successive rituals of Podu<sup>7</sup> facilitate a clean social start of the new year, by getting rid of 'bitterness and heat',<sup>8</sup> and by renewing and strengthening social bonds. Some of the rituals of the Podu festival are very violent, such as the ritual hunting of wild pig. The hunt refers to part of the Sumbanese origin myth in which the wild pig represents evil. Apart from the ritual meaning, hunting wild boar in this period of the year is also very important for agriculture. At the end of the dry season when the fields are clear of crops and the least overgrown, the wild boars are relatively unprotected, and hunters can easily detect them. The crops will suffer less damage from the boars if their population is reduced at this time, just before the start of the annual rains. Catching a wild boar and the ritual consumption of its meat is very important for social purification at the start of the new year.

The second violent ritual relevant as a background for 'Bloody Thursday' is the *pasola*. The *pasola* is a ritual of warfare, a contest during which men riding horses throw wooden poles at one another. The participants in the *pasola* prepare themselves very thoroughly, making offerings to placate the angry spirits, dressing in their best cloths, decorating their horses with coloured ribbons. Roughly, the combating parties in the *pasola* are men from mountainous regions and men from communities living near the sea. Although the *pasola* looks like real warfare, it is domesticated violence. Violence occurs among the riders only and not among the onlookers who share and exchange food. The fighting is intense, but limited in space and time. The *ratu* are the super

<sup>6</sup> Geirnaert-Martin (1992). The description of the Podu festival in this section is largely based on Geirnaert-Martin's book.

<sup>7</sup> 'Ashes of life; The annual rituals of Lamboya, Sumba 1996', an ethnographic film by Erik de Maaker, Dirk Nijland and Danielle Geirnaert-Martin. Leiden: CNWS, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Traditionally the Sumbanese believe that 'bitterness and heat' – which cause people to fall ill and prevent animals and plants from thriving – are caused by human transgressions, such as incest and violent behaviour.

visors of the combat, and they sometimes verify the weight of the wooden poles, and indicate both the start and the end of the combat. Geirnaert-Martin reports that in Lamboya, the police, and also sometimes the army, have taken over some of the traditional role of the *ratu* as supervisors (Geirnaert-Martin 1992:293). This can perhaps be explained by the fact that the *pasola* has grown to be a major tourist attraction on Sumba, and every year there are thousands of spectators, both indigenous and foreign.

What is important about the two Podu rituals for understanding what happened on 'Bloody Thursday' is that these are clear examples of domesticated violence. The acts of violence are completely bounded by rules, and all parties involved accept the authority of the *ratu* to set the rules and indicate the end of the fight. Both rituals are firmly connected to natural occurrences: the position of stars and moon, the start of the rainy season and practices in agriculture. These connections are very important because they set the preconditions for the ritual. Successful performance of Podu rituals depends on continuity in preconditions. The latter include the availability of all material requirements for the rituals (like food, wild boar, pigs, horses), the continuity and predictability of the climate and more specifically the actual start of the rains by the end of October, and the social acceptance of the authority of the traditional ritual leaders. In 1998, these preconditions were not fulfilled. In October 1998 there was a 'ritual crisis' which forced the ritual leaders to find a new and creative ways of pursuing their interests.

### *Narrative three: local political rivalry*

The October 1998 protest was not the first occasion on which the *bupati* of West Sumba, Rudolf Malo, was severely criticized. Since he was first assigned to the office in 1996, he had often been accused of making poor decisions, failing to secure enough food aid, and distributing funds inefficiently. Although he has a Sumbanese ethnic background (born as member of the Wewewa clan), he was generally regarded as an outsider during those times when people were dissatisfied with him, since he had lived most of his life in other parts of Indonesia and was married to a woman from another island. Rudolf Malo did not belong to nobility, nor were his parents in any other way famous leaders on Sumba. He owed his appointment as *bupati* to his status as officer (Colonel) in the Indonesian Armed Forces. His main rivals for *bupati* position were from Anakalang and Loli in 1996. His strongest opponent was the chairman of the parliament of West Sumba, Toda Lero Ora, a member of the Loli clan,<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Loli is the name of the clan residing in the area of Waikabubak and its surroundings. This

descendant of the raja Loli. Pak Lero<sup>10</sup> was chairman of Golkar in 1996 and remained so at the time of writing this book in 2006. Throughout this period he has been the chairman of the regional assembly (DPRD) in Waikabubak. Pak Lero is affiliated through marriage alliance with the elite of Anakalang. Umbu Djima, who was *bupati* before Rudolf Malo for ten years, is married to Pak Lero's sister. Pak Lero agreed to act as Umbu Bintang's wife's family,<sup>11</sup> solving the problem that she was actually Javanese. When the couple returned from Java and sought a proper and complete kinship identity in Sumbanese society, this fictive kinship arrangement rendered Umbu Bintang into the position of Pak Lero's bride taking party, and thus slightly subordinate to Pak Lero. All these important men play their own role in processes that produced the violence in Waikabubak. Both marriage alliance and violence are strategies in West Sumba's elite rivalries.

*Narrative four: national crisis discourse*

In 1997-1998 *krisis* was the shorthand expression in Indonesia pertaining to a wide variety of problems. The *krismon* was the local expression for the financial crisis that hit the country in August 1997, leading to a dramatic devaluation of the Indonesian currency, rising consumer prices and loss of employment. Crisis was a vague national phenomenon that could be blamed for any adverse development such as illness or locust plague or rising prices, and it seemed that no one was able to turn the tide. It was *kristal*, a total crisis, or in the words of Arjun Appadurai (1999:305), 'a growing sense of radical social uncertainty about people, situations, events, norms and even cosmologies'. In such a situation ethnic violence can restore some clear social boundaries and reduce the feeling of uncertainty (Appadurai 1999:307).

The period of extreme weather conditions, with long droughts that alternated with shorter periods of abundant rainfall and floods generated the strongest 'crisis' for most Sumbanese in 1998. A major warming of the equatorial waters in the Pacific Ocean that caused shifts in 'normal' weather patterns, referred to as 'El Nino' was blamed for these phenomena. Most agriculture on Sumba, even the paddy cultivation is rain-fed. In this sense people are to some extent used to uncertainty. Yet in 1997-1998, the normal rain pattern was completely disturbed. On average, the rainy season starts in October or November and lasts until April. During the rainy season the rain falls regularly: every day a

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geographical area is also referred to as Loli or Lauli. Wewewa is also referring to a clan, and to the area of this clan, west of Loli.

<sup>10</sup> Toda Lero Ora is usually referred to as *Pak Lero* (mister Lero).

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter IX, where Umbu Bintang is one of the main candidates for *bupati* in the June 2005 elections.



shower that lasts for an hour or two, and in January there is usually a week in which it rains all day. In 1997, the first rains did not come until December and after a few weeks they stopped again. Like in other parts of Indonesia, El Nino brought long periods of drought. On Sumba two successive maize harvests failed, yielding only a quarter to half of the usual amount. The first months of 1998 were therefore hard for the population on Sumba; they had little income due to bad harvests, but prices were rising due to the *krismon*. The total volume of the paddy harvest on Sumba in 1998 was much less than usual.

In July, when it should be the heart of the dry season, it rained on Sumba. This occurrence of rainfall in the dry season prevented villagers from burning wastelands. Usually in August the villagers burn the fields to get rid of the old and dry grasses and shrubs so that fresh grasses can grow and livestock will have good fodder again. In 1998, the fields were so wet due to the July and August rains that they could not be set afire. The grasses, weeds and shrubs would not die and instead grew thick and tall.

When the time to celebrate Podu arrived, the ritual hunting of wild boar was to be part of it. Wild boars live in the wastelands, and hunters run over the hills and chase these boars with spears and knives. In November 1998, there could be no hunting, because the wastelands were overgrown with weeds, blocking the paths and the view and giving shelter to the wild boars. The cancellation of the ritual hunt caused problems for farmers whose dry land gardens are located adjacent to the wastelands, because the increased population of wild boars proved destructive, as they scavenged in the gardens, ruining the crops. The cancellation of the ritual hunt also posed serious problems for the *ratu*, because the hunt is an essential part of the annual cycle of rituals.

The *ratu* also faced another threatening effect of El Nino. Their type of knowledge and authority is partly based on reading the stars and constellations as points of reference in the local calendar to indicate the start and end of seasonal periods. The periods in this calendar are associated with specific local activities. Every ecological area has its own variant of the calendar, relating to plants that grow in that area or local activities that the inhabitants usually perform. The start of the planting season, and other moments in the agricultural cycle are connected to the phases of stars and constellations. Now that the pattern of rainfall was so radically different from usual, the local calendar lost its meaning as a guideline for agricultural practices. The old knowledge of the *ratu* could not give appropriate guidance for agriculture. Farmers on Sumba had to get used to listening to weather forecasts on radio or television, and make individual decisions in planning their activities.

When, in the first months of 1998, the drought continued, and there were real food shortages on Sumba, many programs for food aid were designed for the province of NTT. In November, during my visit, I heard that some of the funds meant to help the victims of the early 1998 drought had still not been

distributed in the villages. In general, the substantial aid-funds designated to assist the victims of drought in Sumba did not, for the most part, reach the villagers, but were pocketed by corrupt officials. The allegation of corruption was one of the main motivation for the national protests against KKN. Reformasi demonstrations demanded the end of these corrupt practices and prosecution of its perpetrators. In 1998, the anti-KKN discourse motivated individuals all over Indonesia to address these crimes. District government officials in Waikabubak were criticized for their inept management of successive food aid programs.

The financial crisis, *krismon*, hit Indonesia in August 1997. The Rupiah was devaluated. Prices of imported products rose precipitously, and consumer prices of basic household needs increased every day. In industry, many businesses had to be closed, and their employees were laid off from their jobs. These negative consequences by themselves were good reasons for protest. They intensified the frustrations that may have eventually lead to violence.

On Sumba, the effect of *krismon* was not as comprehensively negative. Most people in the rural area are self-employed and produce their own food. The farmers are producers, and especially paddy farmers, benefited from rising prices of the crops they sold. During my visit in November 1998, I noticed that the farmers were continuing to build new houses, which can be taken as evidence of relative prosperity. A man who earned his income from selling candlenuts and edible bird's nests built the most amazingly large house. Since both are export commodities, his earnings were comparatively good and he could afford to build a large house with a zinc roof.

In town the situation was worse. Those who depended on salaries faced difficult times because of rising prices. Local businessmen found that the government commissions for construction of buildings and roads were decreasing. Job opportunities were dwindling in the towns as well. One of the consequences of the *krismon* on Sumba was that the position of people from the rural area, as it related to their land, food, and economy, was improving relative to the position of people in town, who received salaries in money and now faced uncertain employment prospects.

### *Trigger incident*

Many people in Sumba are convinced that the best strategy for avoiding worry about income and food and other material requirements, and for gaining respect, is to become a government official. Therefore, when the results of the selection tests for candidate government officials (CPNS)<sup>12</sup> were announced

<sup>12</sup> Calon pegawai negeri sipil.

on 24 October 1998, it disappointed many people who had applied and were rejected. In the Province NTT there were 27,000 candidates who competed for 1400 assignments as *pegawai negeri* (civil servants).<sup>13</sup> The number of candidates eventually selected in Waikabubak turned out to be very low.

When it became clear that some candidates who had not even entered the test were selected, whereas others who had a sufficient score were not accepted, participants became furious.<sup>14</sup> On 26 October 1998, 30 university graduates demonstrated in Waikabubak in front of the parliament building, protesting the systematic corruption of the civil service examinations that cheated them out of the jobs for which they had trained. There was no response from government side, and another demonstration followed on the 29 October. The protest became increasingly directed against the abuse of power by those office-holders who had used their influence to secure jobs for their relatives. When the *bupati* of West Sumba, Rudolf Malo, declared that solving the corruption problem at provincial level was not within his capacity and accused the demonstrators of being politically suspect, the demonstrators heckled *bupati* Malo and accused him personally of practising KKN (corruption, collusion and nepotism). By 29 October, the ongoing demonstration had grown to 200 participants, who demanded that the *bupati* accept responsibility for corruption and step down from office. In other parts of the province Nusa Tenggara Timur (in Alor, Flores and Kupang) there were similar demonstrations.

### *Transformation into communal conflict*

On 29 October, the *bupati* felt seriously threatened by the demonstrators and by the parliamentary faction controlled by T.L. Ora, who could have used this disturbance to his political advantage. On 31 October, there was another demonstration in Waikabubak, and this time the demands of the demonstrators were even stronger. They insulted the *bupati* by calling him by his ancestor's name, an action considered to be extremely rude, since it tends to highlight and ridicule a person's ethnic background. The demonstration had evolved from a protest against KKN in regards to the civil service examinations to a protest specifically against *bupati* Malo and his supporters and relatives. The first demonstrators did not predominantly consist of *orang* Loli, but they were united by their shared experience as victims of corruption. As the demonstrations grew, more Loli participants from town and neighbouring villages

<sup>13</sup> Source of the data for this section: *Pos Kupang*, 13-11-1998 and 15-11-1998, and personal interviews.

<sup>14</sup> See also David Mitchell 1999.

joined. This Loli mob stoned and burned houses of many Wewewa people in town (Mitchell 1999:2). After this, the conflict subsumed the two parties along ethnic lines. The position of individuals with multiple identities in this inter-ethnic battle, became increasingly polarized.

On Monday, 2 November 1998, 500 people from Wewewa came to Waikabubak on trucks to stage a counter demonstration. In town they stayed at the homes of relatives of the *bupati*, and this raised suspicion that the *bupati* himself had invited the *orang* Wewewa to come and protect him. This would have been an unusual action, since it is the police's responsibility to guard the safety of people and the *bupati* in town. The rumour quickly circulated that 500 hostile *orang* Wewewa had entered town, and that the police had confiscated all their knives and other weapons. Such rumours are strong mobilization tools. Since the parliamentary chairman, T.L. Ora, maintained strong ties with the Police Commander, rumour also predicted that the police would protect Waikabubak's inhabitants (especially Loli) from attacks by Wewewa raiding parties. Tension in town grew.

On 4 November, report reached Waikabubak that one of its own residents, an *orang* Loli, had been murdered at the market of Ombarade in Wewewa. This was the last straw for the *orang* Loli, and they decided to get ready for action.

#### *Elevation into a wider discourse*

That night they gathered in the old *kampong* in the centre of town, where they held a *marapu* ritual. As explained above, November is the month of Podu. It is a holy month (*karamat*). It is the month for hunting wild boar. At the ritual in *kampong* Lai Tarung the *ratu* asked their *marapu*'s permission to substitute *orang* Wewewa for the wild boar. The *ratu* took a long leaf of a palm tree and split it in two. If the right part of the leaf broke off first, this would be taken as a sign that the *marapu* agreed to the substitution; if the left part broke off first, this meant 'not agreed'. Thrice, the right part was first. Strengthened by this clear approval of the *marapu*, *orang* Loli prepared for a battle. This added an abstract and more elevated level to the violence, making it more than revenge and enlisting the warriors to protect their whole ethnic group.

The Loli fighters also felt strengthened because they heard that T.L. Ora had said that the police would not harm them. To distinguish them from others, *orang* Loli had to wear a white headband or a string of palm leaf around their heads. On the same day, 4 November, report reached Wewewa saying that one of their clan members was murdered at the market in Waikabubak.

Early on the morning of 5 November, some 2000 Wewewa men arrived at the outskirts of Waikabubak. According to their version of events, they

came 'to protect their relatives in town'; according to the Loli interpretation of events that day, they came 'to raid and burn Loli houses and finally attack Lai Tarung'.<sup>15</sup> Loli men went out and started to burn houses of *orang Wewewa* along one of the main roads from town. Fighting soon intensified, centred on the market place (*Pasar Inpres*), where a large number of people were killed. According to eyewitnesses, groups of *orang Loli* left their kampong in intervals to go to the area in town where *orang Wewewa* reside; these groups entered the houses of Wewewa, smashed up everything inside, and killed the inhabitants who had not yet escaped.

According to official reports, 'Bloody Thursday' resulted in the destruction of 891 houses and the deaths of 26 people.<sup>16</sup> The number of casualties was probably much larger.<sup>17</sup> The worst damaged in *kecamatan* (sub-district) Loli was the Sobawawi neighbourhood, where 84 houses were totally destroyed, including those owned by Daud Pekereng, the Head of Civil Service in West Sumba, who was directly responsible for nepotistic practices at the admission exams for new civil servants.<sup>18</sup> Many bodies could not be identified, were hidden, or taken home immediately by relatives.<sup>19</sup>

### *The aftermath*

After 'Bloody Thursday' many inhabitants of Waikabubak left town because they were afraid. There were strong rumours that *orang Wewewa* would take revenge and burn the whole town. The consequences of this chain of events were felt for a long time.<sup>20</sup> The town's economy suffered, since many traders no longer visited Waikabubak. The prices of food rose. *Orang Wewewa* did not feel safe going into town anymore and therefore had no access to services that were only provided in town, such as hospital and postal services. Among the refugees who fled Waikabubak were many government officials, so that their offices were unoccupied as well. Government personnel did not receive salaries for several weeks, because the money from Waikabubak was transferred to Waingapu for safety. Worst off were the families who lost their

<sup>15</sup> *Pos Kupang*, 15-11-1998, pp. 4-5.

<sup>16</sup> *Pos Kupang*, 15-11-1998.

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.hamline.edu/apakabar/basisdata/1998/11/07/0004.html>, where a number of 50 is mentioned.

<sup>18</sup> *Pos Kupang*, 20-11-1998, p. 8; and interview with Daniel Umbu Ledy and Paulus Saga Anakaka on 20-6-2005 in Anakalang.

<sup>19</sup> The problem with identifying the casualties was also said to be due to the fact that the victims were decapitated. Sumbanese have a tradition of head hunting, and the *marapu* belief that when the corpse of a deceased person is decapitated, it is impossible for the deceased person to enter the world of the *marapu*.

<sup>20</sup> *Pos Kupang*, 15-11-1998, p. 3.

fathers and husbands. A hundred policemen (*brimob*) were transferred from Kupang and stationed in Waikabubak to guard the safety of the citizens.<sup>21</sup> By the end of November, the people in West Sumba had become frustrated by the extent of devastation. Moreover, they feared that a similar 'incident' could easily happen again. Still, at that time, life turned back to normal in town at least in the markets, and transport and other services were resumed.

*Bupati* Malo did not step down. There were impeachment proposals in the DPRD from former Golkar *bupati* Umbu Djima and also later from four Golkar party boards in the Wewewa district,<sup>22</sup> arguing that *bupati* Malo should resign because he could not prevent the violence on 5 November. Governor Piet Tallo in Kupang decided that *bupati* Malo could remain in office, since he considered impeachment would only increase political tensions in Waikabubak. Rudolf Malo's reputation had been badly damaged, in such a way that he could not count on much support in the next *bupati* succession procedure that was due in April 2000.

Local elite and Christian leaders from Kupang tried actively to restore peace. There were several meetings between the government district leaders (Muspida) and civil society leaders from both feuding factions. In their peace-making efforts, they both used adat ceremonies to try and effect reconciliation, and they appealed to the Christian brotherhood. Several names popped up prominently in the newspaper reports besides *bupati* Malo and DPRD chairman T.L. Ora. These were reverend Yoshua Bili, general secretary of the Christian Church of Sumba in 1998; Dr. Andreas Yewangoe, who represented the Union of Sumbanese living in Kupang (Ikatan Keluarga Besar Asal Sumba) in a fact finding mission shortly after the November 6, and who is a national Christian leader in Indonesia; and Umbu Bintang,<sup>23</sup> who was at that time Head of the Planning Board (Bappeda). The latter was 'mediator' in a meeting with the Wewewa clan in Elopada on 18 November. When people in Elopada questioned him about his role in the meeting he answered 'I was born and raised here. That's why I feel the moral responsibility to contribute to West Sumba', implicitly referring to his status as son of his famous father Umbu Remu Samapati who was *bupati* in the 1960s.<sup>24</sup> According to an interview in Pos Kupang not all people who were directly involved in the violence felt at ease with the elite's peace declarations and ceremonies, stating that they could not identify with any of the representatives performing the peace ceremonies.

<sup>21</sup> The transfer of this brigade of *brimob* in turn facilitated the violence which occurred in Kupang on 30 November and 1 December 1998.

<sup>22</sup> *Pos Kupang*, 25-12-1998, 'Komcat Golkar desak FPK cabut dukungan kepada Malo'.

<sup>23</sup> In Chapter IX Umbu Bintang's performance in the 2005 *bupati* elections is discussed in detail.

<sup>24</sup> *Pos Kupang*, 20-11-1998, p. 8.

*Explanation and interpretation*

The way events are explained in their aftermath is crucial for how they will be remembered. The more the analysis is framed in terms of broader discourses, the better it can be used as an argument or basis for sequel events. Brass (2003:24) focuses attention to the fact that 'ordinary people, the media, police and the civil authorities all have their own explanations of the occurrences of riots, and what evolves is a the struggle for control of the meaning of riots in their aftermath'. In data dealing with the aftermath that are available to me, I have noticed three different narratives for explaining 'Bloody Thursday' in Waikabubak. First is the incident version that explains the events as criminal acts between two fighting parties. Second is the political explanation, which puts the events into the framework of local power struggles and connects it to the upcoming *bupati* succession. Third is the long-term local explanation that puts the events into a longer series of inter-ethnic warfare that continued after 'Bloody Thursday'. After these three explanations the question remains why this event in Waikabubak left out of the 'post-Suharto violence in Indonesia' discourse. I argue that some of its features are inconvenient for generalizations that are often made in this context.

*Explanation one: criminal incident*

The CNN report portrayed the events in Waikabubak on 5 November 1998 as an incident. The image that CNN depicts is one of an isolated event, where no connection with political tensions on national scale seems to be involved. The report reveals many of the caricatures that are prevalent with regard to peripheral regions in Indonesia: remote, isolated, tribal, backward, traditional, and uninteresting for foreigners. The headline suggests that primordial characteristics of these Eastern Indonesian peoples are at stake, by calling the events a 'tribal battle'. The only source of information is a police report, and one line from the national newspaper. A second actor that used this perspective to explain 'Bloody Thursday' in Public was mayor-general Adam Damiri of the TNI. He said there was no evidence whatsoever for the rumour that 'Bloody Thursday' was caused by a struggle amongst the political elite, and that he regarded it as a purely criminal event.<sup>25</sup> In this perspective the violence is just a problem of law and order and as soon as the police restore

<sup>25</sup> *Pos Kupang*, 15-11-1998, p. 6. Pangdam IX /Udayana Mayjen TNI Adam Damiri commented on 7 November to a reporter of *Pos Kupang*, who wrote 'Damiri belum menemukan adanya muatan politik di balik peristiwa "Kamis Berdarah" itu. Peristiwa itu masih dilihatnya sebagai kriminal murni'.

peace the problems are solved. There is no attention paid to the historical, cultural or political context of the violence.

*Explanation two: part of local elite's political struggle*

Nearly all newspaper articles about 'Bloody Thursday' suggested political motives behind the violent events. Pos Kupang reported the apparently common opinion that a power struggle between the chairman of the parliament (DPRD) and *bupati* Malo inflamed the anti-corruption and nepotism demonstrations into mass violence. The two politicians were never openly accused by anyone quoted in the newspapers, and when asked in an interview they both praised their good cooperation. Yet, the rumour of their involvement was the talk of the day in West Sumba after 5 November. Pos Kupang dealt with the lack of open accusations by analysing what may have led to the rumour. In one article on 15 November, the struggle was connected to the process of choosing a parliament chairman in 1997. In this struggle, one faction supported candidacy of an Indonesian Army candidate, whereas the other faction supported the Golkar candidate T. L. Ora. The army candidate won, but Pak Lero has frequently locked horns with him afterwards.

An article two weeks later, in the 29 November issue of Pos Kupang, connected this power struggle to the process of *bupati* successions that were due begin in all the districts of the Province NTT between 12 November 1998 and 25 April 2001.<sup>26</sup> *Bupati* Malo's term ended on 18 April 2000. In 1998, the procedures leading to the election of a new *bupati* started with letters of support, sent by groups of private persons and civil society organizations to the district parliament's factions. These fractions would then put forward candidates for the *bupati* position, and the Governor of the Province would select three names from those candidates to propose to the Minister of Home Affairs, who eventually would decide and appoint one of them as *bupati*. Pos Kupang stated that apparently the number of support letters had become the most important factor determining whether a person would be nominated as candidate.<sup>27</sup>

The campaign to get letters of support started significantly in advance of actual nomination. Successful public performances generate support. An impressive event like 'Bloody Thursday' offered ample opportunity to present oneself as a successful leader, or to cause a competitor to lose face. After 'Bloody Thursday' *bupati* Malo saw the number of his critics rise. By the end of December 1998, four sub-district branches of Golkar sent a letter

<sup>26</sup> Pos Kupang, 29-11-1998, p. 5, 'Bercermin pada kasus unjuk rasa'.

<sup>27</sup> Pos Kupang, 29-11-1998, p. 6, 'Institusi dadakan untuk kepentingan sesaat'.



to the parliament asking *bupati* Malo to step down, adding that if he would not follow up on their request, they would at least withhold their support for him in the next *bupati* election.

The anti-KKN demonstration, the issue that triggered the violence, thus lost importance in the media reports on 'Bloody Thursday'. It was generally regarded as only the tip of the iceberg, and subsequently reporters directed all attention to what was below the surface. Follow-up reports on investigations of corruption in the civil servants admission tests appeared separately from the articles on the violence.

*Explanation three: part of long series of endemic riots*

The third narrative is the long term local explanation that puts the events within a series of endemic riots that continued even after 'Bloody Thursday'. In June 2005 I interviewed two Sumbanese men from Anakalang, both about 35-years-old, who were close witnesses to the events in Waikabubak in November 1998 and sharp observers of what happened afterwards.<sup>28</sup> One of them, Paulus, took the disputed civil servants admission test of 1998 himself and could testify that his fellow participant who's name was on the desk beside him, was absent during the exam but was admitted afterwards, and he belonged to the Wewewa clan. The other, Daniel, is NGO activist in West Sumba, involved in informal adult education. They claimed that the violence on 'Bloody Thursday' was carefully planned, as is common in traditional endemic riots. These are referred to as *perang suku*, inter-ethnic war, in which one person from each side who is the *kepala perang*, head of war, decides the strategy, including a list of what is to be attacked and destroyed and whom is to be killed. The counter-demonstrators who came to defend the *bupati*'s honour, had their meal at *bupati* Malo's house, whereas the Loli party was invited at Pak Lero's home, giving both of them a position as *kepala perang*. Those people who are not on the black list are not the object of violence, and they are safe. They can watch the battle from a distance, some even enjoy the spectacle.<sup>29</sup> Both informants told that, a few years before 'Bloody Thursday', there was a war between Wewewa and Loli close to Waikabubak, called *perang* Wone. The reason for that fight was a dispute about land, and what escalated it was frustration of the Loli clan about continually losing their land to state officials and Chinese businessmen, who settled in the district's capital, on originally Loli land. At that occasion 17 people were killed, and

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Paulus Saga Anakaka SSos and Daniel Umbu Ledy.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel said in the interview enthusiastically that he would go and watch when there was a *perang suku* going on.

police stood by. 'Bloody Thursday' was also a sequel to *perang Wone*, an opportunity to settle debts. But warfare is not confined to Loli and Wewea. Daniel and Paulus said that even after 'Bloody Thursday' there had been four *perang suku*: Lamboya-Loli, Loura-Tanarighu, Laura-Wewewa Timur and one among the Loli themselves. The latter fact, that the Loli clan members could have such a war amongst themselves questions the ethnic character of these endemic riots. According to Daniel and Paulus, the reason for fighting in these cases was control over land. The other frequently occurring violence in West Sumba since 1998 relates to theft of livestock. Even now if horses are stolen and the owners catch the thieves, the thieves are instantly killed and no one, including the police, seems to object. Reflecting on this analysis of two local experts, it seems that *perang suku* is an important indigenous category of conflict, which is immediately associated with ethnic identities. *Perang suku* is a type of warfare that is carefully planned, has a clear division of tasks, clear traditional leaders, and a well known discourse of mutual hostility that refers back to a long history of inter-ethnic dispute, feeding emotions of grievance and revenge.

*Waikabubak as case of 'post-Suharto violence in Indonesia'*

'Bloody Thursday' was one of the first of a series of mass violence episodes that occurred in Indonesia after May 1998. On 22 November 1998, the 'Ketapang Tragedy' in Jakarta followed, which was reported in the media as a case of communal violence, in which Christians fought Muslims. Closer reading of a Human Rights Watch report on this event reveals that it was a street brawl between security personnel of a gambling house:

Most of the hundreds of security guards employed at the club were from Ambon, and most Ambonese are Christian. One of Jakarta's best-known thugs had been trying to extort a monthly protection fee from the owner, but the latter refused to pay. Beginning in late September, according to one report, groups of young people, allegedly belonging to a student group which no one had ever heard of before or since, began trying to rouse community sentiment against the club on religious grounds. (Human Rights Watch 1998.)

The fight turned into a communal riot in which rioters burnt Christian churches and killed 12 people. The images of burning churches were broadcasted all over Indonesia and also reached the capital of the province Nusa Tenggara Timur, Kupang. It inflamed the emotions of the Christian majority in town. On 30 November 1998, a peaceful protest in the form of an ecumenical mourning service in Kupang's sports stadium turned into another communal riot, afterwards called 'the Kupang Tragedy'. Rioters destroyed and

burned the houses of Muslim immigrants from Bugis or Makassar, several mosques and a market place. News spread to Sulawesi where on 5 December, a church was burnt in Makassar.

After January 1999, when communal violence on Ambon started on a much larger and relatively long lasting scale, discourse on violence in Indonesia centred around Christian-Muslim communal violence, or on violence between ethnic groups in which one claimed to be more indigenous and the other 'immigrant'. After a time lag of two years following these events, academics published their research on violence in Indonesia. Most studies describe and analyse one single event or region. The article on violence in Waikabubak I published in 2001 is one of those studies. By the end of 2006, many studies on post-Suharto violence had been published,<sup>30</sup> which makes comparison between them possible.

'Bloody Thursday' is in many respects an exception in such a comparative framework. It was not communal violence between Christians and Muslims, but between two groups of which many members on both sides were Christians. It was violence between two groups who belong to one ethnic group, namely, Sumbanese, but are only distinguished by sub-ethnic identity. Both groups are indigenous. If this case of communal violence from West Sumba is included in developing a theoretical framework on violence in Indonesia, it complicates matters, because the groups involved do not fit usual typology in religious, ethnic or immigrant-indigenous dichotomies.

Colombijn and Lindblad (2002) and Van Klinken (2005, 2007) undertook comparative studies on violence in Indonesia and reveal national patterns into which 'Bloody Thursday' can fit. The case of 'Bloody Thursday' supports Colombijn and Lindblad's conclusion regarding historical continuities. In West Sumba *perang suku*, wars between people from different traditional domains were reported in the pre-colonial era, and have continued to exist, albeit on much smaller scale, after the 'pacification' by the colonial army in 1912. During the New Order there was a similar battle between Loli and Wewewa in 1991. This does not mean that warfare should be understood in an essentialist way. There is no suggestion here that Sumbanese are a violent people and that their violence is an irrational and emotional feature. By contrast, *perang suku* have always been carefully planned and organized, directed at selective targets, specific interests and used to create a political following. 'Bloody Thursday' also seems to be a continuity of the model of *perang suku* in that way.

Colombijn and Lindblad also conclude that often the opposition group in the violence is dehumanized and under these circumstances, violence takes an exceptionally brutal form. The ritual that substituted orang Wewewa for

<sup>30</sup> A bibliography of studies in this field is composed by Glenn Smith and H  l  ne Bouvier (2004).

wild boar is an example of dehumanising, which facilitates warfare and equates it to hunting, turning the enemies into prey.

Yet, I would argue that 'Bloody Thursday' is not just another case of *perang suku* in West Sumba. Rethinking the local discourses and comparing them with the other cases described in literature, it appears that *perang suku* was always a powerful tool for mobilization. With hindsight, I would argue that, in November 1998, it was used to divert a class conflict into a more manageable ethnic conflict. 'Bloody Thursday' was the first case in West Sumba in which violence was directed at the state. The battle was fought in the streets of the district capital, which is the state domain *par excellence*, and not on a plain somewhere between the groups' territories. The groups involved in the original demonstrations against KKN could be characterized as representatives of the 'political public' demonstrating against the *bupati* and his clique as part of the 'political class'. It was a sign of reform in Indonesia, even in Waikabubak, with a growing political public consisting of 'persons outside the political elite who nevertheless saw themselves as capable of taking action which could affect national (district) government or politics' (Feith 1962:109). With increasing democratization, including fair and direct elections, it was not beneficial for the ruling elite to engage in a conflict so clearly drawn along these new political class lines. The old ethnic war model was much safer for their position, turning them from prominent members of the political class into leaders of ethnic groups that included many people who belong to the political public or to the *tani*-class. Colombijn and Lindblad (2002:6) connect this development to the democratic elections:

The competition for positions in the state bureaucracy, from clerk to mayor or governor, sharply increased at the end of the twentieth century, when the economic crisis simultaneously plunged many families into dire circumstances and forced the state to restrict the number of civil servants. At the same time, access to jobs changed from the established way which was recruitment through patronage, to access based on success in the 1999 general elections, the first free multi party election in decades. Under these circumstances the local elite found it expedient to mobilize mass support for party politics by playing up religion and ethnicity.

The focus on the role of elite in producing violence is also a central issue in Van Klinken's (2005:80) analysis of violence in Sulawesi, Maluku, and Kalimantan. He stresses the importance of seeing the production of violence as process that can only be understood if the agency involved in every step of the process is clearly identified. Democratization forces the local elite to find new strategies to stay in office and remain in power. West Sumba's political elite have multiple identities that they can use in composing new strategies. Chapters VIII and IX show how these strategies are shaped in two parts of the democratization process: decentralization and direct regional head elections.

*Consequences for the 1999 bupati elections*

From a local Sumbanese perspective the protests in Waikabubak in October 1998 were aimed at toppling the local dictator. The protesters had not foreseen that mass violence and a high death toll would be the consequence. Yet, their protests were a new phenomenon and afterwards *bupati* and district government knew their days of practicing KKN without any public criticism were over. However, the protesters did not succeed in bringing *bupati* Malo down. He remained in office until his term was over in 2000, because the governor, focusing on restoring order and protecting the dignity of the government, did not want to replace him (Mitchell and Gunawan 2000b:2), and in 1999 the Habibie government introduced many changes directly affecting the district governance system.

In 1999 there were free elections for the parliament from district to the national level. A total of 48 political parties participated nationally. In West Sumba, Megawati's PDI-P and the new Christian party PDKB (Party for Democracy and Love for the Nation) were the important new competitors for Golkar. In 1999 many people on Sumba had access to televisions, so national issues were important in the West Sumbanese elections. Although nearly all elite and civil servants were connected with Golkar, there was enormous support to vote for change, to get rid of KKN and to start a new democratic future.

The older generation remembered how PDI-P was the successor of parties that were historically strong in Eastern Indonesia, like the Christian party Parkindo and the nationalist PDI. Civil servants who had felt forced into the Golkar regiments were free to follow their own political preferences now. Many young people were attracted to the promise of change. PDI-P won the 1999 elections in West Sumba with 46 per cent of the votes, whereas Golkar received only 28 per cent. The third party was PDKB. It was the party of Professor Manasse Malo, son of Sumba's first reverend Herman Malo. Manasse Malo was a professor at the Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta. In his home area, West Waijewa, his party PDKB earned 31.2 per cent of the votes and in total 17,000 people in West Sumba voted for this party. Voting for him could be regarded as an ethnic vote for Christian network politics.

Another significant change in the laws regarding governance was that the new parliaments would choose the *bupati* and his deputy; this was no longer a matter of assignments from the centre. PDI-P, with 15 seats in parliament did not have a majority (the total number being 35 seats). They had to find a candidate for *bupati* that would attract votes from the other parties as well. Then the 75-year-old party leader in Waikabubak chose the candidate who in 1995 was selected as the most competent and clean candidate by Golkar: Thimotius Langgar (Mitchell and Gunawan 2000b:12). For his deputy they

asked Julianus Pote Leba who had similar characteristics: he was young, intelligent, a career bureaucrat and uncontaminated by any KKN. Umbu Bintang was their main opponent, supported by Golkar. Being the son of raja Anakalang and former *bupati* (1965-1975) Umbu Remu Samapati, as well as the Golkar candidate, he was a more traditional type of leader, but that was not an advantage in 1999. Thimotius Langgar and Julianus Pote Leba personified a new balance in areas of ethnic tension, bringing cooperation between Wewewa and Loli, the domains that had been opponents in Bloody Thursday.



## CHAPTER VII

# Growing political public

While most discussions on local politics in post-Suharto Indonesia focused on effects of decentralization and elections, there were other changes that simultaneously influenced political developments and democratization on Sumba. For example, an increasing part of the Sumbanese population received access to electricity, and everywhere people started watching television. Communications with other areas in Indonesia became easier due to introduction and availability of cell phones on Sumba. Many young people went to study on Java or in Kupang, and since not all of them succeeded in finding employment elsewhere, a considerable group returned to Sumba. They did not want to become farmers; they were more ambitious, they had in mind preferably a position as state official. Regional autonomy and direct elections involved people in politics. In terms of class stratification, the political public has been growing since 1998. That intermediate class, 'consisting of persons of a middle range of political effectiveness, persons outside the political elite who nevertheless saw themselves as capable of taking action which could affect national (district) government or politics' (Feith 1962:109) could only emerge after preconditions of access to media (information), freedom of speech and freedom to assemble were established. What determines membership of this political public is 'the state of mind which requires a man to communicate with others than those to whom he is tied within his traditional society' (Feith 1962:110).

This chapter focuses on the actors and developments that stimulated that state of mind, in which Sumbanese people became incorporated into national or global discourses. It describes emerging activities of actors other than the state officials and politicians: international development agencies, local NGOs, and 'civil society'. They changed the context in which democratization is taking place.



*International development aid for political reform*

After the fall of Suharto international actors became involved in the process of political reform in Indonesia, even on Sumba. They promoted their own agenda or interpretation of desired reforms by setting specific preconditions to international aid. The Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia was officially established in October 2000, creating organized cooperation between international donors and lenders on the issue of democracy and good governance, with an ostensibly large extent of ownership and control in the hands of the Indonesian government. The total budget of this partnership was around 53 million US dollars (Partnership 2005:63), of which a third was financed by the Netherlands. The priorities of the Partnership (as measured in magnitude of budget) suggested a link between the international agenda of economic liberalization, the concerns of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in particular. The Partnership focused its work on six priority sectors, which are fundamentally interconnected. These consist of four programs, of which the relative importance is indicated in the percentage of the budget spent on these programs during the period 2000-2004: legal and judicial reform (5 per cent), electoral reform (19 per cent), security and police reform (7 per cent) and civil service reform (3 per cent); and two crosscutting programs of decentralization and regional autonomy (20 per cent) and anti-corruption (11 per cent) (Partnership 2005:63-4). In their conclusion, Crawford and Hermawan (2002:224) criticize the Partnership arguing:

Despite ostensibly being about democratic reform, it is posited here that the Governance Partnership is primarily oriented to the building and strengthening of such an institutional framework, one which offers an improved environment for international capital, including foreign direct investment, and provides safeguards for its profit-seeking activities.

In Sumba, the largest international programme on governance reform was concentrated in East Sumba. The German Technical Cooperation (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, GTZ) started a programme in East Sumba called 'Support for Decentralization Measures'. The activities of that programme focussed on advisory services for the refinement and consolidation of the regulatory framework for decentralization and local governance, capacity building to support decentralization, and the dissemination of information about regional autonomy to all stakeholders.<sup>1</sup>

Programmes like GTZ's in East Sumba are based on normative definitions of what decentralization as a vital part of democratization should encompass.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.gtzsfdm.or.id/a\\_about.htm](http://www.gtzsfdm.or.id/a_about.htm) (accessed on 16-12-2005).

In that perception, the work to be done is to clarify the laws and ideologies, including the meaning of civil liberties, to provide information and to increase the capacities of stakeholders. The latter activity was defined in 2001 in the policy paper 'The National Framework for capacity building to support decentralization' by the Indonesian government:

Capacity building refers to the need to adjust policies and regulations, to reform institutions, to modify working procedures and coordination mechanisms, to increase the skills and qualifications of people, to change value systems and attitudes in a way that meets the demands and needs of regional autonomy as a new approach towards governing and administering as well as developing proper participatory mechanisms to meet the demand for more democracy (GTZ 2001).

Without any doubt this is important work, because the new laws on regional autonomy are drastically different from earlier legislation on governance; studying and understanding the content is necessary for all involved. Yet, what this approach does not take into account is, first of all, that the new measures might not land in a blank environment. It is a different perspective to envisage stakeholders as knowledgeable actors who might not be aware of the details of the new laws, but who will evaluate them in terms of their own interests and fit them into their own political agendas. Predatory interests and strategies cannot be neglected (Hadiz 2004:705). Secondly, changing bureaucratic culture is not a matter of making new laws or providing knowledge alone. In his study on the Indonesian bureaucracy, Rainer Rohdewohld (2003:266) concluded that until 2002 there were only minor changes in policy and that instead there was continuity of thinking and culture, despite the shift to a democratic system in 1998. He also suggested that the role of the bureaucracy is not a function of specific regime types (authoritarian versus democratic), but rather the result of context-specific configurations of political and administrative elites. Instead of anticipating a 'blank situation' on which new models of decentralization can be installed by training, it is more realistic to use the existing political culture, including the strategies for the control of the state by the elite, as point of departure for any programmes aimed at moving in a democratic direction, from less accountable to more accountable government. I have not come across a report of impact evaluation of the support for decentralization measures programme, but at least it has contributed to dissemination of the language of planned democratization. After five years, in 2006, the project was ended, following the logic of donor agencies' programs and financing. The processes that the project addressed – democratization and decentralization – had just started.

*Civil society on Sumba*

The protesting students in 1998 could never have imagined that from 2000 onwards the bureaucracy would be the main engine of democratization, and that its meaning could be converted into the execution of laws and procedures. A real democracy can only function well if the citizens are participating. I prefer to call the participating citizens the 'political public', because this term does not have an a priori normative content. The political public can vote in elections and can organize themselves to promote the group's interests using the democratic means, but they can also resort to violence or create a secession movement. Yet, since the late 1980s, when people in NGOs and political parties started their discourse on 'strengthening civil society' (Wolters 2002:132), the more common term is 'civil society'. The term civil society turned out to be highly normative. In general, civil society is a core concept in the ideology of democratization:

Civil society is an intermediate realm situated between the state and the household, populated by organized groups or associations which are separate from both the state and the market, enjoy some autonomy in relations with the state and are formed (voluntarily) by members of society to protect and extend their interests, values or identities (Manor 1999:4).

In this definition there is emphasis on organized groups, and in Indonesia especially there is a strong tendency to equate 'civil society' with NGOs (Wolters 2002:141). Long before the term 'civil society' was used in Indonesia, religious organizations were engaged in civil society activities. On Java the Islamic organizations were active. Nahdlatul Ulama is the largest of these organizations, with around 35 million members in 2000. During the New Order the NU could perform civil society activities because the organization aimed at participating in the building of a just and prosperous national (and not exclusively Islamic) society, and it emphasized that its members should be good and responsible citizens who promote the right, duties vis-à-vis the state and their fellow citizens (Wolters 2002:139).

In a similar way, Christian organizations were, until the end of the 1990s, the only organizations on Sumba that would fit the definition of 'civil society'. The largest organized non-state organizations were the churches, with the GKS in leading position, followed by the Catholic Church. Church social economic activities concentrated on poverty alleviation (Vel and Van Veldhuizen 1995:196). Most of those activities were local in focus and directed at improving results in agriculture and marketing of agricultural products. Political organization at the local level was not allowed during the New Order, and consequently it was hard for farmers, women or other groups to create an organized lobby. In our own work in the programme Propelmas of

the GKS, what came closest to civil society organizations aimed to represent interests facing the state were joint meetings of farmers' organizations' representatives, which were called *musyawarah kontak tani*, a term associated with nationalism, tradition and harmony. Participants in those meetings mostly shared experiences in agriculture and marketing. Occasionally they acted as representatives, negotiating with traders in town or applying for services of the agricultural departments.

The only non-church related organization that worked on Sumba long before the Reformasi was Tananua Foundation. Tananua started its activities in 1985 and focused on environmental issues, including especially anti-erosion programmes. It was funded by international donor organizations from the US and Canada. Its approach is harmonious and egalitarian:

*Non-religious civil society organization during the New Order*

'Tananua' comes from the traditional proverb in Eastern Sumbanese, which says '*Tananua watu lihi, palimba latang, padhira wokangu, ndalaru kabhihu, djuru watu uma*'. The literal translation is 'lands connected, rocks lie close to each other, gardens lie on mountain tops, paddy fields in the valley, neighbors live next to our lot' that means 'fraternity, kinship, family'. Tananua is thus meant to portray and to underline the spirit of commonality and kinship that the organization strives to establish. The name is intended to represent the principle of its founders and its staff that the relationship between the organization and the community is not of a patron-client or superior-subordinate, but it is an equal partnership based on friendship. The name also implies that, though the society is compartmentalized due to geographical differences, ethnicities, religions, and other social structures, we are in fact brothers and sisters who should help each other in our life struggles. Tananua makes every effort to pursue this noble goal now and in the future.<sup>2</sup>

After 1998, opportunities for civil society organizations increased dramatically. The major developments in this arena in Sumba were an increase in number of registered NGOs, an increase in international funds for 'civil society' or 'capacity development programmes', cooperation between civil society organizations through national umbrella organizations or geographically organized fora, and a decreasing role for the church organizations in socio-economic development work. The changes in NGO activity and position on Sumba are aptly reflected in the history of Yayasan Wahana Komunikasi Wanita, an NGO that was most prominent in West Sumba from 1998 until 2004:

<sup>2</sup> <http://www2.eastwestcenter.org/environment/ethics/Tananua%20profile.htm> (accessed on 2-2-2006).

*The history of Yayasan Wahana Komunikasi Wanita*

In 1990 Wiyati and Gany Wulang were senior staff members of Propelmas, the development organization of the GKS in Lawonda, West Sumba. They both had a long experience in community development, Wiyati starting as a young volunteer from Java in the motivators programme of the Indonesian Council of Churches, and Gany Wulang starting as assistant of Dutch missionary development workers in the 1970s. In 1993, when they had left Propelmas after an internal crisis, they founded a new organization in a new area, not linked to the church, and focused on women's interests in particular. They cooperated with Karin Rutgers, a Dutch VSO volunteer, who acted as their advisor. Wiyati had become a women's rights activist and gender development expert, and valuable experiences from the past were put to practice for new groups of women in rural areas. With this new thematic specialization and being the only organization of its kind in Sumba they attracted international funds. Their experience in working with foreigners and project administration formats for international donors turned out to be very useful. Gany Wulang worked behind the scenes as the brains of the organization, since his allegedly communist past withheld him from public positions.

In a few years they expanded their organization and its agenda. In 1998, they had shifted to Anakalang in central Sumba, where he had one office building for a few years. At the time they were busy building a new office on their own land further east. The themes covered included women's rights, gender issues, poverty alleviation and adult illiteracy. There was also a program at the time for revitalization of adat institutions, sponsored by an international program for indigenous people's rights. Yayasan Wahana was very popular with donor organizations, since it was hard for them to find the local human resources for the programmes they targeted in Indonesia's most isolated and backward areas, like Sumba. Wiyati and Gany Wulang faced the same problem themselves, when they tried to find staff for their expanding programmes. They could choose between Sumbanese activists who were experienced with development projects but lacked sufficient formal education, and well educated youth lacking experience in development work and whose motivation was sometimes rather ambiguous.

Yayasan Wahana became a respected member of several thematic, national networks for women's issues, for example The East Indonesian Women's Health Network (JKPIT). Several times Wiyati was invited to be one of the Indonesian representatives in international congresses on AIDS prevention. She was chosen to be the chairwomen of the NGO forum in West Sumba, Forum Tambolaka, which was founded in 1998 and cooperated in the distribution of relief aid after Kamis Berdarah in Waikabubak.<sup>3</sup> Gany Wulang was coordinator of the NGO consortium of Sumba for the programme 'Sumba Integrated Development (SID)', which was sponsored by Oxfam. This consortium was a network of four local NGOs working in East and West Sumba; their main activity was strengthening and organising farmers on community-based economic

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter VI.

development at the local level. Yayasan Wahana Komunikasi Wanita was one of the three Sumbanese NGOs participating in the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI – Friends of the Earth Indonesia) which is the largest forum of non-government and community-based organizations in Indonesia.<sup>4</sup> The period 1998-2000 was the peak in Yayasan Wahana's existence with regard to the size of the budget, the range of programmes and the number of people involved as official or semi-official staff. When Gany Wulang began to fall ill frequently, it became hard to maintain the activities running at the pace of the top years. He passed away in 2003, leaving his wife Wiyati, as well as the NGO, widowed. Since 1998 many new NGOs had been founded in West Sumba, some of them as the local branches of national or even international organizations. Some of Yayasan Wahana's programmes were granted to other new NGOs, when the first term had expired and a second term had to be tendered for. Wiyati's role became increasingly advisory, being the nestor of West Sumba's civil society.

According to government statistics there were 29 NGOs in West Sumba in 2002. Only six were considered eligible to participate in the Australian Community Development and Civil Society Strengthening Scheme (ACCESS).<sup>5</sup> For East Sumba, I heard similar figures: in total about 30 registered NGO's in 2004 of which six were reported to function well. The latter type of organizations has programmes for development or social purposes, and a staff that is dedicated to the work. Another type of NGO that has emerged since the Reformasi is instead aimed at attracting donor money or employment for private gain.

NGOs might be the most obvious example of civil society organizations, but civil society can include much more. On the 14 September 2004 there was a meeting organized in East Sumba's capital by the YAPPIKA Foundation<sup>6</sup> in cooperation with East Sumba's government in Waingapu's best hotel to discuss civil liberalism in Sumbanese context. 'Civil society' is a foreign concept, which cannot be easily translated in Bahasa Indonesia. The translation *masyarakat sipil* is too much associated with the opposition army-civilians, whereas the translation *masyarakat mandani*, used by Islamic organizations, is associated with the tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims (Wolters 2002:140). It is a theoretical concept that only receives practical meaning after

<sup>4</sup> Walhi is represented in 25 provinces and has over 438 member organizations (as of June 2004). It stands for social transformation, people's sovereignty, and sustainability of life and livelihoods. WALHI works to defend Indonesia's natural world and local communities from injustice carried out in the name of economic development. Source: <http://www.eng.walhi.or.id/ttgkami/> (accessed on 2-1-2006).

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.access-indo.or.id/documents/NGOs\\_participating\\_in\\_Generic\\_Capacity\\_Building.pdf](http://www.access-indo.or.id/documents/NGOs_participating_in_Generic_Capacity_Building.pdf) (accessed on 2-1-2006), Australian Community Development and Civil Society Strengthening Scheme (ACCESS).

<sup>6</sup> YAPPIKA is the Civil Society Alliance for Democracy (Jakarta). <http://www.yappika.or.id/en/> (accessed on 10-9-2007).

it has been translated into terms that make sense in a local context. In the Waingapu meeting the participants concluded:

A definition of civil society à la Sumba is: an arena outside the household, state and market where people organize themselves to serve their shared interests. Examples of civil society organizations are: adat agencies, NGOs, traditional adat groups (indigenous people), religious organizations, farmers' organizations, community based organizations, fishermen's organizations, union of Indonesian midwives, association of motorcycle taxi drivers, co-operations, youth organizations, PKK, rotating savings and credit groups, the forum for communication between the religious communities, the press, and the association of veterinarians.<sup>7</sup>

This list is very heterogeneous. The organizations mentioned are based on religious adherence, on profession, on internal communal criteria, on gender, on generation, or on economic status. Sumbanese society is not homogeneous, so it can be differentiated in many ways, so that individuals can be members of several different groups. These categories can be organized politically, either to serve the group's interests or to promote the cause of its leader. People will join in if they identify with the marker of the group, and consequently they will support the leader. In the next chapter the 'social movement' to create a new district will be regarded as such a newly created civil society organization.

### *Adat revival*

In the list of organizations mentioned in the Waingapu meeting to discuss 'civil society à la Sumba' there were two types of organizations linked to adat. Sumbanese connect adat to particular clans and to forefathers. Adat associations are by definition communal groups, exclusive in character. Adat groups in Sumba are hierarchical, male dominated and geographically bounded. This is in contrast to the democratic ideals of egalitarianism and individual civil liberty. The fact that adat organizations enter this list of civil society organizations echoes the national discourse of adat that emerged in 1998, and not the local meaning of the word.

The term *masyarakat adat* was introduced by NGOs as a translation of the term indigenous people and associated with a distinct political agenda focused mainly on access to land (Li 2007:343). Tania Li has argued that the ideal community imagined by the Reformasi activists could be phrased in

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.indonesia.com/poskup/2004/09/15/edisi15/1509hum2.htm> (accessed on 17-9-2004).

terms of adat communities that lived in harmony with nature, following their own traditional culture and undisturbed by anything vicious, such as the predatory influences of the New Order. However, this type of harmonious societal 'adat' was hard to find. The indigenous people's movement created a sphere in modern society where it was fashionable to speak positively about traditional culture, including the rituals that were part of the communal religions that were considered backward during the New Order (Li 2007:343; Acciaioli 2001). Only a very small group of people on Sumba were aware of this national discourse on adat revival. The idea reached those who participated in national NGO networks or attended thematic workshops. Encouraged by available funding, NGO staff translated indigenous people's discourse into programmes that are appealing in the local context of their own region. Yayasan Wahana's 1998-1999 programme to revive the adat association in Memboro in order to redirect all decision-making power with regard to land matters to the adat elders is an example of translated indigenous people's ideas.<sup>8</sup> The local community enjoyed the revival ceremonies very much, feasting on a budget provided from an international donor's programme for indigenous people. Yet, after half a year, the newly formed adat institution did not function any more and the whole idea died a silent death.

For other parts of Indonesia some authors argue that Reformasi stimulated the revival of adat, and not only in connection to land rights issues. Maribeth Erb (2007:247) wrote how Reformasi stimulated revival of adat rituals in west Flores and she interpreted this revival of 'traditional culture' as protest against the Catholic Church. According to Erb (2007:259) the Catholic Church in Flores was very strict and inflexible until the early 1960s when the Vatican II Council proposed a different relationship between the Church and the community. 'Theoretically this meant that the Church was to work more at adapting itself locally to merge with the customs of village life, rather than vice versa, a process called 'inculturation' (Erb 2007:263).

On Sumba there was no such break point in the sixties in the relationship between the Protestant Church and society, but it changed more gradually along with the increasing numbers of baptized Church members. By the end of the eighties many Sumbanese customs that were prohibited by the Church in its earlier days were now allowed and even accompanied by new Christian rituals, such as *ucapan syukur*, which is small home services to thank the Lord.<sup>9</sup> One example that Erb mentions in the context of adat revival due

<sup>8</sup> Sources of information on this programme are: private discussions with Wiyati of Yayasan Wahana Komunikasi Wanita and a video of the revival ceremony recorded by Winda Veldman in December 1998.

<sup>9</sup> See Holtrop and Vel (1995) for a more elaborate chapter on contextualization of the Protestant Christian religion on Sumba, with examples of restored customs that were formerly prohibited by the Church.



to Reformasi is the reburial of the bones of a deceased school teacher, who had originally been buried at the Catholic public cemetery, located at the outskirts of the town. She describes that the children of this man thought they would no longer be harassed by bad luck when he would be buried in their own village according to local custom. Erb ascribes this action to the spirit of Reformasi, which loosens the strict dogma of the Church and allows belief in the power of the supernatural and the traditions of the Manggaraian ancestors. In Sumba the same type of reburial happened much earlier. The explanations I heard there were partly derived from traditional religion: a public cemetery outside the village is a 'hot' place to be buried and the spirit of the deceased will haunt the living until it is buried properly. Another explanation said that there were connections between land inheritance rights of the children of the deceased and the place of burial. The latter could be named 'custom' and more easily adjusted to Christian life.

This example of reburials gives us some reservations for accepting that Reformasi created the climate for adat revival. The changes after 1998 did open up space for adat in politics, such as using kinship or marriage relations to create political ties or referring to traditional symbols to create constituency or political identity. That type of adat politics will be further discussed in Chapters VIII and IX.

### *In touch with the rest of the world*

If membership of the political public is determined by 'the state of mind which requires a man to communicate with those others than those to whom he is tied within his traditional society', then improvement in the media of communication will stimulate the growth of a political public. State investments in infrastructure and electricity supply facilitated transport and use of electronic media. Freedom of speech and press made it possible for local or regional newspapers to emerge and present critical commentary on political activities.

The first way of getting in touch with the rest of the world is by travelling. West Sumba has one harbour, Waikalo, situated on the north side of the island. In the 1990s many roads in Sumba were considerably improved, broadened and paved so that more vehicles could enter the interior of the island. In 2005 it took one hour to travel by bus from the airport Tambolaka to the capital Waikabubak. The number of buses and minibuses rose, making public transport to town more frequent and easier for many people in the countryside.

Table 7.1 Increase in inter-island transportation 2002-2004

	2002	2004	Increase in %
Ship passengers Waikalo (West Sumba)			
disembarking	9,214	59,687	545
embarking	11.132	39,778	257
and Waingapu (East Sumba)			
disembarking	94.147	225,344	139
embarking	134.125	215,021	60
Air passengers from Mau Hau Waingapu (East Sumba)			
Disembarking	11.701	19,764	69
Embarking	5.015	21,443	328
Tambolaka (West Sumba)			
Disembarking	1.869	15,372	722
Embarking	1.785	11,224	528

Source: Indonesian Statistics Office (BPS), <http://ntt.bps.go.id/tran/at01.htm> (accessed on 11-10-2005 and 14-9-2007).

The figures in Table 7.1 show a general trend of sharply increasing inter-island transport to and from Sumba. In 2003 the government of West Sumba enlarged the airport Tambolaka making it possible for larger airplanes to land, and subsequently the number of annual passengers rose dramatically to over 15,000 in 2004.<sup>10</sup> Another reason for this increase in passengers could be the newly gained regional autonomy, which attracted Sumbanese living elsewhere back to their home island, and also brought more money to be spent for the district government. For transport by sea, Waingapu is the most important harbour, where the ferry to the provincial capital Kupang embarks. Young people who study on other islands usually take the ferry, because it is cheaper than flying.

The number of vehicles on Sumba is still very low compared to national averages. The high figures for East Sumba mostly make up the capital's traffic. The large number of government employees in Waingapu translates into a high motorcycle density per capita, especially because one third of the population lives in town and the rest of the district is very sparsely populated. Since about 2002, *ojek*, motorcycle taxis, have become the easiest mode of transport in town and along Sumba's main roads.

<sup>10</sup> Source: <http://www.indomedia.com/poskup/2003/01/10/EDISI10/h04.htm> and <http://ntt.bps.go.id/tran/at01.htm>

Table 7.2 Transportation means on Sumba in 2002.

Transportation indicator, in 2002	West Sumba	East Sumba	NTT	Indonesia
Population x 1000 (2002)	366	190	3,925	230,000
Motorcycles per 1000 inhabitants	4	33	21	739
Station wagon, minibus, trucks per 1000 inhabitants	3.3	9	8	260

When I visited Sumba in November 1998 a striking difference was the increase in electricity facilities. All houses along the main road were connected to the electricity network of PLN (Perusahaan Listrik Negara, Indonesia's state-run electricity company) and many villages in the interior had solar electricity facilities. In 2002 only 17 per cent of West Sumba's households had permanent electricity, but these household are spread along the main road over the island and therefore its influence is spread all over the island, especially through increased reach of mass media.

Table 7.3 Electricity on Sumba in 2001 and 2005

	West Sumba	East Sumba
Number of customers electrical supply in 2001	7,392	10,007
in 2005	8,089	10,453
Percentage of households without electricity	83%	70%

Source: <http://ntt.bps.go.id/enrg/en02.htm>

When houses get connected to the electricity network the first and most simple use of electricity is for lighting lamps. A few people outside town who could afford it bought a television set with a satellite receiver. Yayasan Wahana had a set in its office in 1998 and every evening a crowd of people showed up to watch TV. In Sumba guests and visitors are always welcome, but some hosts had not foreseen that their new TV would turn their house into a public meeting place. When Yayasan Wahana's satellite receiver broke down, it was not repaired and evenings were much more peaceful again. In 2004, apparently television had become more common in Anakalang. More people owned a set, and they could watch it privately.

With the increase of television sets on Sumba, people became much more aware of the national events, and they saw a modern Indonesian culture in the popular programmes in their homes. In the 2005 election rallies discussed in Chapter IX, the influence of television was clear in election candidates' performances. Their use of language and style was partly derived from

examples in Java, or from karaoke CDs. Television will also have a large influence on language in Sumba, promoting the use of the national language Bahasa Indonesia. Wherever there is a television in the house, it seems to be permanently switched on. People living in the house are thus permanently exposed to TV language.

In West Sumba, telephone service is only available in Waikabubak. In 2002 there were about 1000 business connections and 1322 telephone connections in private homes. In 2003 cell phones were introduced in Sumba, which by the end of 2005 could only be used in and around the two capital towns. As everywhere else in the world, mobile phones have become the top communication medium for youth, who use the phones to send and receive text messages. In 2005, cell phones had become common in Waingapu and Waikabubak for that sector of the elite and young people who could afford one. Text messages make communication with people outside Sumba easy and cheap. People in Anakalang have been able to use cell phones since September 2006.

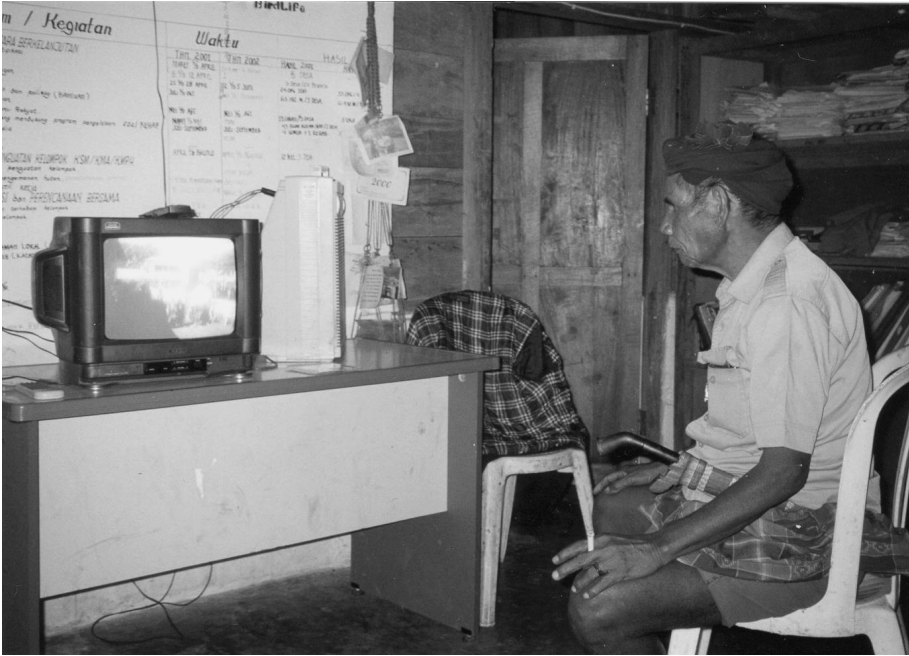
### *Radio and newspapers*

Since 1998 the number of radio stations is increasing. Until 2002 there were only the government radio stations, Radio Suara Pemda Sumba Barat/Timur. A new type of radio broadcast is the Christian programme. Radio Pelita Kasih started in Februari 2001 in Waikabubak. It is one of the activities of the Pelita Kasih Foundation, a new NGO directed by the reverend of Waikabubak GKS (Protestant Church of Sumba) congregation, Alfred Samani. Although this is a local initiative, it also fits in global missionary movements. Multi-billionaire James Riady, an Indonesian Chinese businessman based in the United States and Jakarta, sponsors a radio station with the same name in Jakarta. According to Muslim activists' allegations sponsoring radio stations all over Indonesia is part of Riady's mega-programme for Christianization.<sup>11</sup> This project also includes Christian televisions, such as, Cahaya Bagi Negeri (CBN). Another world-wide missionary organization, HCJB World Radio, which originates from Ecuador and is 'partnering internationally with local radio stations to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ',<sup>12</sup> opened their radio station in February 2004 station in Waikabubak.<sup>13</sup> In East Sumba, radios can receive sim-

<sup>11</sup> [http://forum.swaramuslim.net/threads.php?id=3656\\_0\\_15\\_0\\_C](http://forum.swaramuslim.net/threads.php?id=3656_0_15_0_C) (accessed on 6-1-2006).

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.hcjb.org/mass\\_media/radio/overview.html](http://www.hcjb.org/mass_media/radio/overview.html)

<sup>13</sup> FM, 250 watts (plan to upgrade to 500 watts), 100.5 MHz; [http://www.hcjb.org/about\\_us/summary\\_of\\_ministries/asia\\_pacific\\_6.html](http://www.hcjb.org/about_us/summary_of_ministries/asia_pacific_6.html)



A ratu from the Anakalang area watched the national news in 2004, and afterwards discussed corruption allegations of the national parliament chairman

ilar broadcasts from Kupang.<sup>14</sup> There are also new programmes broadcasted in English through the government radio station in Waingapu on Sundays.<sup>15</sup> Kang Guru Radio English (KGRE) produces these programmes with the support of Australian Aid Indonesia for English language learners, and also to provide information of the Australian Aid development programmes.<sup>16</sup> In 2005, Radio Dian Mandiri, a new radio station in Waikabubak was asked to broadcast KGRE, 'because Radio Pelita Kasih was no longer on air'.<sup>17</sup> The Head of the Station, Filemon Neno, is also heading an orphan home and Christian community centre under the umbrella of Warm Blankets Orphan Care International.<sup>18</sup> The NGO Stimulant, founded in 2006 in Waingapu, is the

<sup>14</sup> *Lisabeth FM*, 500 watts. Began in July 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Waingapu RSPD (Radio Siaran Pemerintah Daerah) Sumba Timur AM 720 kHz.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.kangguru.org/index.htm>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.kangguru.org/travel/kgretravel2005ntntnb.htm> (accessed on 6-1-2006).

<sup>18</sup> <http://homes.warmblankets.org/waikabubak/>

first to organize 'talk shows' on the radio in which they publicly discuss district policies and problems with regard to basic services like electricity supply, water supply and access to documents like identity card and birth certificates. In reality, many people do not have access to these public services because procedures are not transparent and state officials corrupt.

Before 2000, the only newspaper that covered news from Sumba was Pos Kupang. Its main Sumbanese audience consisted of Sumbanese living in and around Kupang, who could afford to spend money on a newspaper, and for whom the paper was easily available. Only a few copies of this newspaper make their way to Sumba. Since 1997 Pos Kupang is also available through the internet (MacDougall 1997), although this facility was off line again for some time in 2000-2001 due to financial problems. Pos Kupang online is especially important for people interested in the news of NTT, who live elsewhere in Indonesia or abroad in a place where internet access is easy. On Sumba, by the end of 2005, there were only good internet connections in a few Waingapu offices, which makes the audience on Sumba for online newspapers very small.

The first Sumbanese newspapers and weekly tabloids appeared in 2000. In East Sumba, Sumba Post and Wunang Post were launched. Sabana, based in Waikabubak, started in 2001 with its first edition issued on 9 April. It aimed at providing news and monitoring developments with regard to democratization and human rights. It is the only systematic written source of information on West Sumba since 2000, full of descriptions and analysis of district politics. In June 2002 Tabloid Pelita Kasih started as a complementary to their radio station, publishing more Christian news. In 2004, Tambur started as a 'democratic and independent' weekly newspaper. It is based in Waingapu, but it covers news on politics in both East and West Sumba. All these new and regular newspapers on Sumba are a valuable source of information. Yet, they only reach a relatively small, urban, well-educated audience.

Radio is a better means than newspapers to spread information in 'oral societies' like that of Sumba. Yet, it is not the best, because whenever there were new developments or events on Sumba, the radio never seemed to be the source of the news. Direct personal communication, including text messages and rumours, remains the most important source of information. Television could become a powerful medium too, but Sumbanese news and events are usually not covered by the TV stations, at least not yet.

### *Voices of the political public*

The political public consists of people outside the political elite who see themselves capable of taking action which could affect national (district) government or politics. That means that they have opinions on what their

government in the village, district or nation, should do or on how to change it in order to serve their interests better. The activities of Stimulant mentioned above, namely, lobbying for improved access to basic state services, were based on 'voices of the local political public'. Those included, for example, complaints about lengthy procedures for obtaining a document, the mandatory bribes, and the unpredictability and irregularity of electricity supply from the state company PLN which is nevertheless strict and very regular in sending payment bills.

Lack of security was a theme I have often heard during my visits to Sumba since 1998. In Anakalang it specifically referred to theft and robbery. More often than before, thieves tried to steal livestock and apparently it is not difficult to sell the stolen horses, cows and buffaloes. Vanilla branches, fruits and plants were a new and favourite object of theft as long as the prices of this agricultural commodity were high. Police did not seem to do much about both types of theft and subsequently the owners of the livestock or vanilla orchard often would seek justice themselves, going after the thieves and, if they were caught, killing them.

An even more general concern that many people shared with me was about the rising costs of education. As detailed in Chapter II, people in Sumba invest preferentially in the education of their children to find a way out of poverty for themselves and their family. The amounts of money required for paying fees do not correspond with the revenues from the agricultural economy; only selling livestock is a way out. The burden is even heavier when a student has to pay bribes in addition to the regular fees. Although I have no quantitative proof for this statement, it seems like both the frequency of and the amount involved in bribing has increased considerably over the last few years.

In 2002, NGO staff told me reports about increase of illegal logging. Especially the precious trees, like sandalwood, which belong to officially protected species, have been logged and exported to Bali where the price is around thirty times as much as what is paid to the local loggers. Allegedly, the forest police were involved in this illegal trade, logging themselves and organising transport. When traders in town were caught with a stock of illegal logged wood they were fined, but the wood was not confiscated. In this way the authorities benefited from the trade as well. In West Sumba the scale of these illegal activities is probably modest, but the ways and style in which natural resources are appropriated could be similar to what happened elsewhere in Indonesia. Anna Lowenhaupt-Tsing (2005:27) characterized Kalimantan in the same period as a 'frontier area', free and open for predatory capitalists to take whatever they could use to make quick profit.

In general, freedom to pursue private economic interests is growing in Sumba. Land issues are getting more important. In Sumba most of the land is

not registered as private property. It is relatively easy for government officials to appropriate a patch of land and sell it to a third party without the consent of those who claim traditional rights on that land, or with the involvement of just a few people among a larger group who shares those common rights.<sup>19</sup> Sabana newspaper reported several instances in which people who felt their land was threatened by 'projects' of the government or private investors, brought their case to the district parliament. Those cases reflect that land disputes are no longer just between individuals or groups of the local population but involve state or third parties. They also show that members of the political public resort to democratic institutions to find a way out to solve conflicts.

A great concern for all Sumbanese, and most of all for the farmers, was the locust plague that hit Sumba in the period after 1998. In 2003, the plague destroyed 500 ha of the rice crop and 200 ha of maize.<sup>20</sup> Eight of the 15 sub-districts in West Sumba were particularly affected badly. Head of the Agricultural Service in West Sumba Obed Umbu Ngailu estimated in 2004 a total damage of 20 per cent of the rice and maize harvest. A plague of this size and sort requires coordination between the governments of all of the regions where the locusts are found. Decentralization hampers coordination of region-wide insect control.

Apart from complaining about lack of state activities or malfunctioning of services there are also more active and constructive initiatives for members of the political public. The next chapter discusses in details one of those initiatives, in which 'persons of a middle range of political effectiveness, persons outside the political elite' started a campaign to create their own district in central Sumba. The centre of that movement and the envisaged capital of the new district is a small town called Anakalang.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.jatam.org/indonesia/newsletter/uploaded/gg5.html> (accessed on 5-1-2006) reports of the threat of gold mining to the forest land and the inhabitants near Wanggameti.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Ir Obed Umbu Ngailu in Pos Kupang 23-4-2004, <http://www.indonesia.com/poskup/2004/04/23/edisi23/2304hum1.htm> (accessed on 1-6-2006).



## Small town

Half-way through a trip from East Sumba's capital Waingapu to Waikabubak in West Sumba, the road leads through a large forest. There are hardly any settlements here and the traveller has a beautiful view of Sumba's highest mountain. When the road descends and the first settlements along the road pop up, we enter Anakalang. The name refers both to a fairly large area and to the ancestral village of many of its elite: kampong Anakalang. The kampong is built on the highest hill, from where you can see the surrounding plains. Some descendants from this kampong have completely abandoned it, whereas others still have poorer relatives who live in the old kampong. They work the fields and take care of the houses and tombs in front. The families that were more successful and gained wealth and good positions through their social status and education moved to lower, new kampongs that are built close to the main road. Government officials from Anakalang drive up to their house in their four-wheel drive jeep or *kijang*. The new houses in the lower and wealthier kampongs have the traditional shape, but they are constructed with modern materials, at least with zink roofs.

South of the main road is a large plain. Part of it, is used to cultivate rice and the rest is a grazing field for livestock. I often heard complaints that the herds of water buffalo and horses were getting smaller each year. The introduction of hand tractors has certainly made a difference, since they offer a new and more individual way of working the land. Rice cultivation traditionally involved herding groups that all year round took care of the buffaloes. It also involved groups of women who would collectively transplant rice in the planting season until all fields of the group members were planted. Commoditization of rice cultivation brought the end of this type of mutual assistance and introduced paid land labour. With the improvements of the roads, not only the main road, but also the road to the interior land, more and different people became available for land labour. In 2004, the number of cars, busses and trucks that come to Anakalang has increased; additionally, the frequency of transport trips is much higher than ten years ago. From early morning until about 8 p.m. there are small buses looking for passengers to Waikabubak. There is a big bus to Waingapu, at least three times a day.

Continuing along the road from the east, the first side road to the north leads to and eventually ends in Memboro, on the north coast. Close to the junction is Pak Indy's house and shop. He has lived there for a long time and has tried to earn an income from the shop, his fields and any other short term job he can get, while his wife works as senior teacher in the primary school. He is a very intelligent man, but his career was blocked in 1965 after he was accused of being a communist. Their children have all moved to Java where they pursued a university education. From 2000 onwards the heavy burden of education fees disappeared and Pak Indy invested in a new house. He finished it in 2005 and it stands proudly at the junction, ready to be Anakalang's first tourist hotel. Pak Indy's shop is more or less taken over by a local policeman, who has turned the place in a shop annex café and meeting place. Allegedly it is the place where men gather at night and drink. Alcohol abuse has become a problem in Sumba only recently, but on such a large scale that it is now known with the Indonesian acronym *miras* (*minuman keras*, strong alcoholic drinks) and there are programmes to tame it. Local commentators suggest that the police who should control the *miras* problem are the ones who organize and benefit financially from it.

Anakalang administratively consists of several *desa* of which Anajiaka and Wai Bakul are closest to the main road. Each of these *desa* has its own primary school. Since the early twentieth century there have been schools in this area, and the result is that in the twenty-first century many people from Anakalang are well educated. The missionaries invited the children of nobility to attend their schools and children from Anakalang were among the first elected. Subsequently they received high positions in government, church or schools. The clearest example is Umbu Remu Samapati, who was the second *bupati* of West Sumba after independence. His *kampung* is one kilometre south from the main road that passes the marketplace. Its name is Kabunduk, and it is most conspicuous due to the enormous tomb of Umbu Remu at the entrance of the *kampung*. It is extremely large, yet modern in materials (black tiles) and traditional in shape. Umbu Remu's father's tomb is located at the other end of the plaza in this *kampung*. It is the largest tomb on the island. It is made of rock carved from the mountains and dragged by hundreds of people and it is 'forthrightly named 'Most Macho' (Rasi Moni) (Keane 1997:42). Umbu Remu's heavy modern tomb characterizes the type of power which is prominent in the twenty-first century, based on tradition but completely adapted to modern times.

Closer to the main road is the market place. Since the 1950s there are two markets a week. People from villages in a wide circle around Anakalang come early in the morning. They bring their produce: vegetables, eggs, areca nut, chicken and in times of trouble and when they desperately need money, they bring pigs and dogs to the market. Teenage girls from the interior villages love

going to the market, because it is the only place where they can freely meet boys. At the market traders from town sell industrial products: cheap clothes and cosmetics, soap, sugar, kerosene. They buy the eggs and chicken to sell them again in Waikabubak. There are only a few small shops in Anakalang. Even though there are many people who linger for hours around the market, there are no restaurants or small food stalls (*warung*). When I asked unemployed youth why they did not start a *warung*, they explained that there are plenty of people in Anakalang who like to eat, but no one will pay.

The best opportunity to eat out is at feasts or funerals. When I stayed in Anakalang in 2004 an old lady had died and the funeral was set to take place in a few days. It is custom for neighbours and relatives to visit the house of the deceased and stay there for a death wake (originally to keep bad spirits away). In that week, every night around eleven youth from the neighbourhood would gather in the house officially for death wake, but allegedly also to meet each other and drink alcohol.

In Anakalang there are no facilities for middle class and modern Indonesian youth. Their number is increasing since 2000. Many children from this area studied on Java or in Kupang, the provincial capital in West-Timor. Yet, it is hard to find employment after graduation. Those who do not succeed in finding a job outside Sumba return to their parents in Anakalang. They have experienced a totally different life on Java and have problems readjusting to the simple rural life in Anakalang. Some of them turn to agriculture and make use of their time to produce as much as they can. Some work as volunteer teachers, and others just wait for a chance to get a position in a government office. These vocal youngsters at times scare the older generation. They brought *ojek* to Anakalang, the motorcycle taxi, along with an acceleration of the pace of life.

Further west along the road to Waikabubak is the new GKS church (see p. 37). It has been built over the last ten years and still not completely finished. What strikes every by passer is the enormous size of the building, especially compared to the houses and other buildings in Anakalang. Its design reflects the ambition of the congregations' building committee, chaired by Umbu Djima. He was able to collect donations for building the church from his wide network, in and outside Sumba. The result is a modern-shaped status symbol both for the GKS and Umbu Djima (Vel forthcoming).

Just before the northwest road junction, there used to be a post office where in the mid-twentieth century, Anakalang had telephone connection. The post office was still operative in the 1980s. Now the only post office left in West Sumba is the main one in Waikabubak. It is cheaper, faster and more reliable to give a note or a message with the busses going to town than to send a letter. The lucky few owners of cell phones send text messages instead of letters as soon as they are close to Waikabubak where there is a commu-

nity antenna. In September 2006 such an antenna was installed in Anakalang. The post office building was converted into a private house. A young couple, a civil servant and the granddaughter of a former raja, live here with their children. They love to watch TV and since it is on whenever the electricity works, their children learn the television language faster than the vernacular language of Anakalang.



## CHAPTER VIII

# Creating a new district

In Anakalang, there were mixed feelings about politics in 2000. Although 47 per cent of the voters in the sub-district Katikutana had voted in the 1999 general elections for Megawati's PDI-P, they had not foreseen that the parliament members would chose a *bupati* who may not be their preferred choice, and that the PDI-P candidate would be Thimotius Langgar, a man from Wewewa. Anakalang's own politicians were on the list for Golkar. Langgar was elected as *bupati* from 2000 until 2005. In 2000, there was a common complaint that 'Anakalang lost'. In particular Umbu Bintang had lost the *bupati* elections, but more generally, the influence of politicians from Anakalang had decreased considerably compared to the days when Umbu Djima was still *bupati* of West Sumba. What could they do about this? In 2001, a great opportunity emerged with the new phenomenon *pemekaran*: creating a new district. 'Central Sumba'<sup>1</sup> as an autonomous district could be a positive turn for frustrated political ambitions.

### *Decentralization and pemekaran*

The Habibie government passed two new laws in 1999 that provided regional autonomy to the districts (*kabupaten*) starting in 1 January 2001. Laws 22 and 25 of 1999 provided the administrative and fiscal framework for a process that seemed to change the very foundation of the unitary nation-state. Law 22 devolved power from the centre to the districts in the policy areas of public works, education and culture, health care, agriculture, transport, industry, trade, investments, environmental issues, co-operations, labour and land (Ray and Goodpaster 2003). The central government would remain responsible for national defence and security, foreign policy, fiscal and monetary mat-

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is a modified version of a chapter I wrote for the edited volume *Renegotiating boundaries; Local politics in post-Suharto Indonesia* (Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken 2007; Vel 2007). I thank Gerry van Klinken for giving permission to reprint and for his elaborate comments.

ters, macro-economic planning, natural resources, justice and religion. Law 25 concerned the fiscal elaboration of decentralization and in particular the division of tax incomes between the centre and the regions where this income was generated. It also included the regulation that all districts would receive funds according to a preset formula, called Dana Alokasi Umum, the General Allocation Fund. This fund would now be a main source of income for the autonomous district governments, who could spend the budget according to their own priorities.

One of the main reasons why the government wanted to accelerate this process was to accommodate the anti-Jakarta sentiments in many regions outside Java while the still-ruling Golkar party, which was on Java under political fire, tried to maintain its power bases in the outer islands by supporting regional autonomy. The sense of panic about their own future led policy makers to take drastic action (Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken 2007:10).

Bureaucrats and politicians all over Indonesia followed these developments anxiously, and thought about the opportunities these laws provided for their own regions and their own careers. West Sumbanese in Jakarta, in the provincial capital Kupang, in Waikabubak and in the villages and small towns could all imagine themselves in positions somewhere in this new, decentralized setting. One of the opportunities provided by Law 22 was *pemekaran*, the creation of new administrative units, such as, new provinces, districts or sub-districts. This led to a huge increase in the number of administrative districts, from 300 in 1999 to 440 in 2004, a feature that Henk Schulte Nordholt and Gerry van Klinken (2007:2) describe as 'administrative involution'.

Throughout Indonesia, three main reasons are always mentioned for creating a new district: it brings the government closer to the people, it will be beneficial to economic prosperity, and it is the wish of the people to have their own district. A new district will have its own bureaucracy with a budget to spend according to its own priorities, which is one good reason for local politicians and aspiring civil servants to want to create their own district. Setting up a new district bureaucracy promises a large number of jobs for well-educated but presently underemployed locals.

#### *Enthusiasm for Sumba Tengah*

Thousands of people gathered on the plain of Laikaruda in the middle of Sumba on 31 January 2003 to celebrate the new district of Central Sumba. Trucks and small buses had gone early in the morning to the villages gathering passengers and spreading the word that a delegation from Jakarta was coming to inaugurate the new district. It would be a feast, with gong music and meals with meat. The honoured guests from Jakarta received traditional gifts, such as beautiful hand woven cloth. Traditional dance performances stressed the local population's commitment to the new district and the strong culture

and tradition of the area. Banners over the road proclaimed the creation of Central Sumba as an act of pure democracy – *Vox populi, vox Dei: suara rakyat adalah suara Tuhan* (The voice of the people is the voice of God) – and the slogan would locally be interpreted as a sign of (the Christian) God's blessing over the campaign. The crowd only learned afterwards that this was just one step in a very long process of creating a new district. They had been mobilized to assure the visiting delegation of the Central Parliament in Jakarta that Central Sumba above all rested on the genuine wishes of the people (*aspirasi masyarakat*).

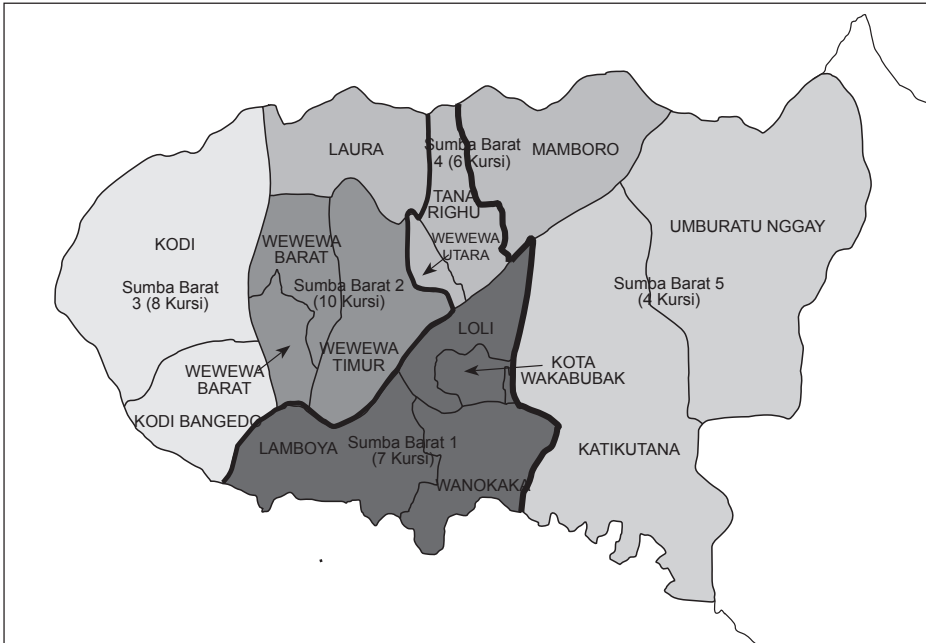
In 2003, a number of people in Anakalang were wholly occupied with the idea of making their own *kabupaten*. A 'private' government budget for Anakalang would bring wealth to its elite and jobs for their well-educated children. Creating Central Sumba was proposed as part of the plan to divide West Sumba in three: Central Sumba and Southwest Sumba, and what remained of West Sumba, concentrated around the capital Waikabubak.<sup>2</sup> Creating a new district needs actors who engage in political struggle to reach this goal. These people are connected to each other through networks deploying shared histories and cultures. For the purpose of lobbying for their cause of creating Central Sumba, they created a shared political identity. Two important elements of this political identity are the boundaries that separate 'us' from 'them', and the stories about those boundaries (Tilly 2003:32).

When the opportunity appeared, the idea of *pemekaran* in West Sumba still had to be worked out in details. A new district needs a territory with boundaries, it needs explanation of those boundaries, it needs inhabitants who identify themselves in terms of a community linked to the territory, and it needs leaders who can convince all the stakeholders of the necessity of the new district. Map 8.1 shows the final proposal on the map of West Sumba. The old *kabupaten* is to be divided in three.

The original map onto which the new lines are drawn in map 8.1 is the map of election districts. It shows the sub-districts and also the number of parliament seats assigned from each area, which reflects the number of inhabitants. If we take the parliament seats as measurement criterion, and divide area 4 in three parts of two seats, the ratio of seats is 20 to 9 to 6 for Southwest Sumba, West Sumba, and Central Sumba, respectively. Central Sumba's bad legislative position under a one-man-one-vote regime in West Sumba is clear, because its population is only 17 per cent of total population. A new district consisting only of Central Sumba would neatly sidestep this statistic, and allow for a more targeted representation of its inhabitants.

<sup>2</sup> The names of the proposed districts are: Sumba Tengah, Sumba Barat and Sumba Barat Daya.





Map 8.1 The proposed map of West Sumba after *pemekaran* in three new districts

The arguments of Central Sumba's lobbying committee were phrased in terms of administrative history, linguistic divisions and in cultural and religious terms. The type of rhetoric and theatre in the campaign strengthened the arguments. Sumbanese holding good positions in the bureaucracy, army and business on Java and in Kupang involved themselves in the campaign and strengthened the lobby in terms of access to those who decide on matters of *pemekaran*. These factors will be elaborated below while narrating the campaign that started in 1999 in Kupang and Jakarta.

#### *Economic stakes*

Since Law 22 of 1999 on decentralisation was enacted, the government budget increased 300 percent or even more in the two districts on Sumba. Starting in 2001, the district government had the autonomy to spend that budget as it saw fit. Clearly district state offices became more attractive than ever, and local competition for these offices became more intense.

People in Anakalang envisaged that through creating their own *kabupaten* Sumba Tengah, they would receive their own revenues from the central gov-

Table 8.1 Government revenues in East and West Sumba in the period 2000-2005

In billions of Rupiah	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
West Sumba					
District Government Original					
Revenues ( <i>pendapatan asli daerah</i> )	1.8	4.7	8,3	10.3	11.4
Revenues from Central government ( <i>dana perimbangan</i> )	46.6	143.2	153.2	196.8	210
East Sumba					
District Government Original					
Revenues ( <i>pendapatan asli daerah</i> )	1.4	3.8	7.7	10.5	10.6
Revenues from Central Government ( <i>dana perimbangan</i> )	34.6	135.1	137.3	173	181.8

Source: East Sumba: *Laporan Keterangan pertanggungjawaban akhir masa jabatan bupati Sumba Timur, periode 2000-2005 (pada Sidang DPRD Sumba Timur)*, ir. Umu Mehang Kunda, bupati Sumba Timur, 2005, p. 173

West Sumba: *Memori pelaksanaan tugas bupati Sumba Barat tahun 2000-2005*, Sekretariat Daerah Kabupaten Sumba Barat, 2005, pp. 157-8.

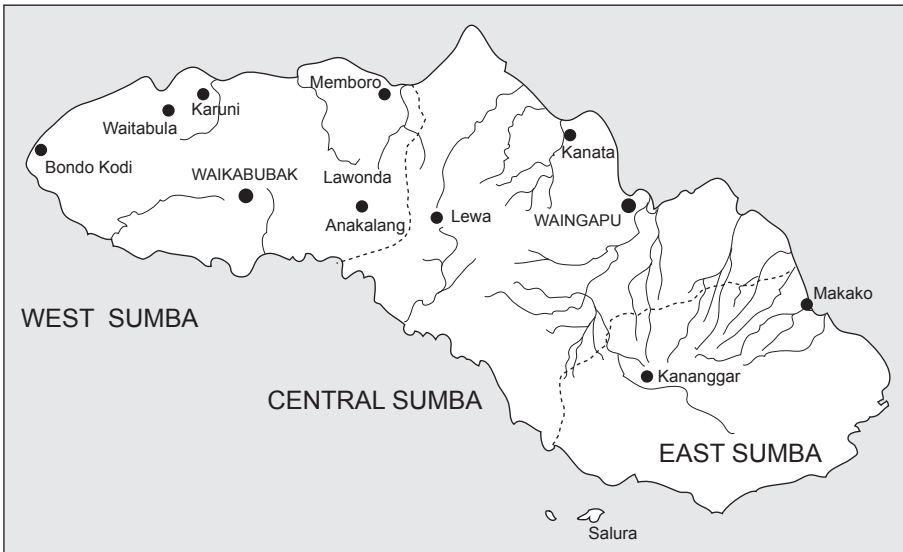
ernment (*dana perimbangan*). Their assumption was that the district budget for Central Sumba would be more than what was spent on the area under the current system, including what was spent on the salaries of government officials working in or originating from this area. They also argued that when West Sumba would be divided in three districts, the sum of their three budgets would be more than the present West Sumba district budget. It would be a win-win situation for all, they claimed.

#### *Historical arguments for pemekaran*

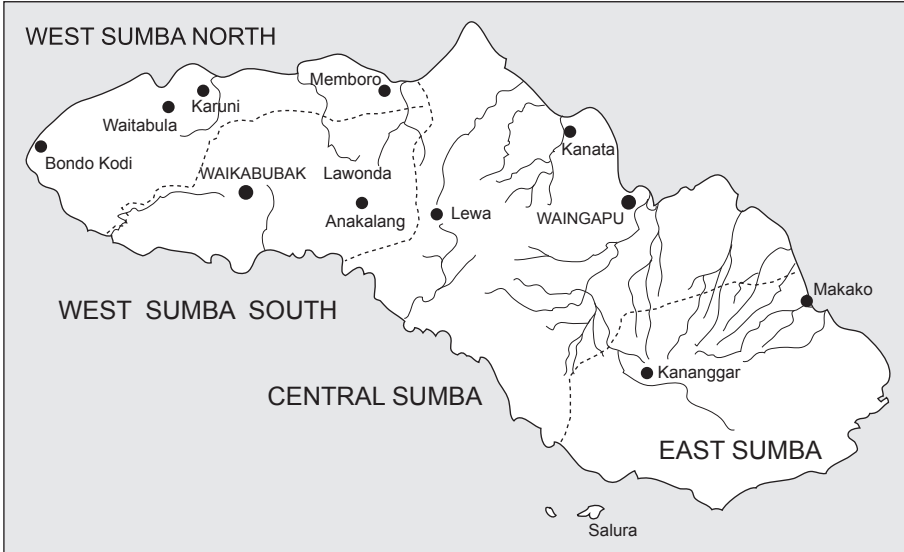
In the debate for or against the new district, many historical arguments were also put forward. What would make Central Sumba a meaningful entity? A study of the history of administrative boundaries using state sources and writings of Christian missionaries does not reveal that what is now considered West Sumba would be a natural social or geographical entity. The administrative boundaries involved in the discussion about *pemekaran* were created in the past by state officials, and these boundaries shifted every once in a while. In Chapter III, the traditional domain was already described as the most constant type of cohesive area in Sumba. This has always been the area referred to when Sumbanese explain the identity of a fellow Sumbanese to a third party: '*orang Lawonda*', '*orang Loli*'.

From the earliest accounts, Sumba is described as an island with permanent internal warfare. The object of warfare was to capture food, horses and people. In the pre-colonial era land could have been a cause of internal disputes, but not the object of warfare between two domains. The sharp borders drawn on maps of traditional domains are imaginary. A domain is defined by its centre and not by its borders. Taro Goh (1991) registered 16 domains in West Sumba and another eight in East Sumba. Other sources mention more: Meijering et al. (1927:8) mention 29, whereas Oemboe Hina Kapita (1976b:51-3) offers a more detailed sub-division when he describes the history of administrative distinctions. While living in Lawonda I noticed that people who originate from the domain Umbu Ratu Nggai still make a distinction between at least four domains within that area, which supports the larger number mentioned by Oemboe Hina Kapita.

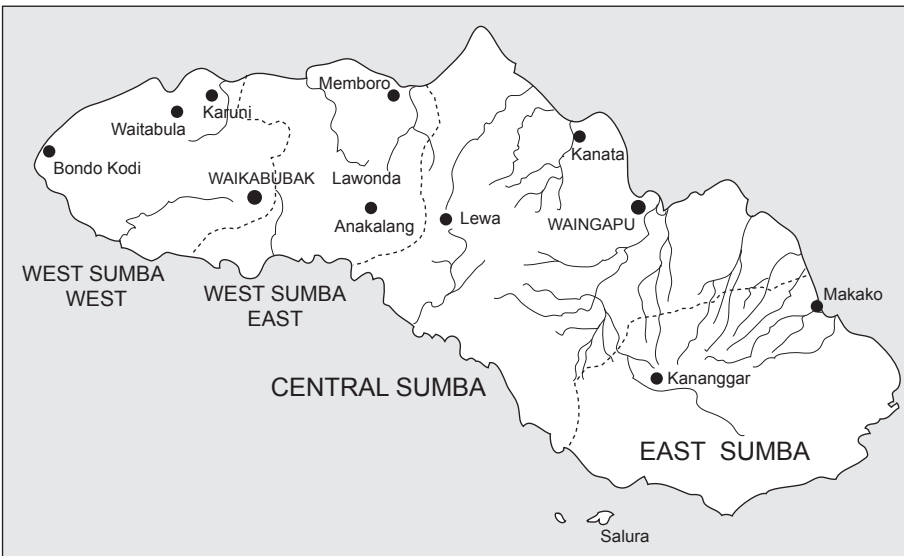
What is important within the context of finding stories to support the idea of creating a new district is that districts can be made up of several traditional domains. Stories about the connection between these domains serve as an argument for their presence within one administrative area. In the course of history many different larger administrative units were constructed on Sumba. Consequently, domains shifted from one unit to another.



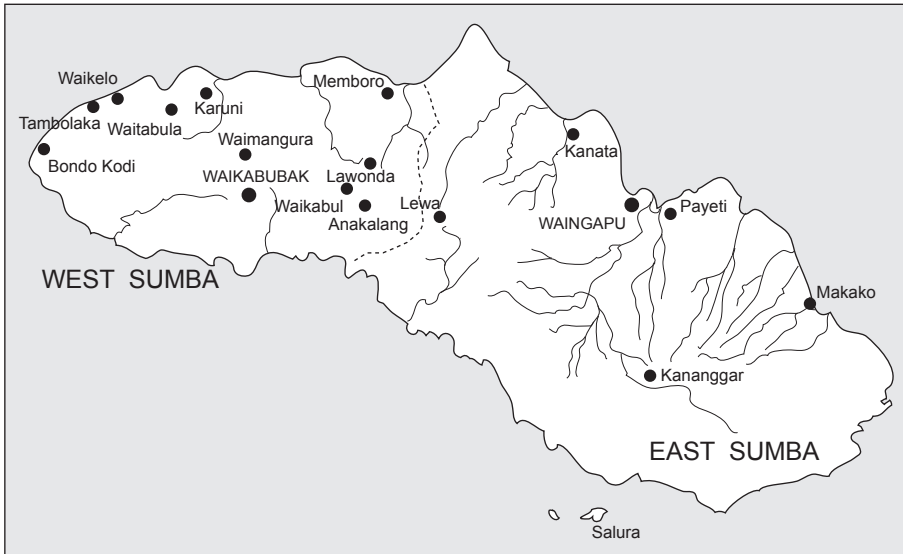
Map 8.2 I: Sumba before 1915



Map 8.2 II: Sumba 1915-1922



Map 8.2 III: Sumba 1922-1946 and 1958-2004



Map 8.2 IV: Sumba 1930: mission's division

Under colonial rule, which started on Sumba in 1912, the whole island of Sumba was one *afdeeling* (similar to today's district) of the Residency of Timor within the Dutch Indies administration. The colonial administrators considered the many traditional domains on Sumba, and chose one among the aristocrats (*maramba*) of each area to be appointed as king (*raja*), and this person subsequently acted as an indirect ruler (*zelfbestuurder*) for the colonial government. Sumba was divided before 1915 into three sub-districts, named *onderafdeelingen* (see Map 8.2 I). These in turn contained smaller sub-units called, in colonial terms, kingdoms or territories (*kerajaan* or *landschappen*). If one *landschap* comprised more than one traditional domain, the colonial government would appoint a raja from one domain with raja-assistants from the other domains. Although traditional domains were autonomous, they were linked in various ways. Cooperation in warfare, or protection against slave raiders from outside, created bonds. Marriage alliance was the most important traditional method of creating ties between members of various domains. Oemboe Hina Kapita (1976b:33) describes how the raja of Lewa Kambera in the mid- nineteenth century was in control of the whole area of Central and East Sumba, because of marriage alliances with the aristocracy of all the domains in that area. The first administrative units in Sumba corresponded with the area of influence of the major raja at that time. In 1915, West Sumba was split in two after Assistant Resident A. Couvreur studied the social structure in Sumba and decided to create Northwest Sumba and Southwest Sumba (see Map 8.2

II). In 1922 the two parts of West Sumba were reunited, and what was called Central Sumba in those days merged into East Sumba (see Map 8.2 III).

The Dutch Protestant Christian missionaries also divided the island into several territories for their work. In 1930 they decided to subdivide West Sumba into West Sumba West and West Sumba East, following the linguistic boundary that divides the area where the East Sumbanese language Kambera is spoken by one side and the West Sumbanese languages by the other (see Map 8.2 IV) (Wielenga 1949:189). The area which the missionaries designated as West Sumba East corresponds most closely to what was intended to become the district of Central Sumba in 2002, except the sub-district Tana Righu is not included in the plans. Wielenga (1949:43) argued that the linguistic boundary separating West Sumba West from the rest of the island was also the boundary east of which 'the landscape is more mountainous, sparsely populated, where animal husbandry is the main economic activity and which is less accessible for bringing the Gospel'.

After the Second World War Sumba was one of the 16 member states of the federation of Eastern Indonesian States, created by the colonial government to counterbalance the nationalist movement in Indonesia. Sumba was at that time divided into 16 *kerajaan*. In 1950, the Federation of Eastern Indonesian States ceased to exist and became part of the Indonesian Republic. The former Federation was divided into several provinces. The province of which Sumba was part became Sunda Kecil, which was renamed Nusa Tenggara in 1954. The province consisted of Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Sumba, Flores and Timor. In 1958 Nusa Tenggara was again divided, this time into three: Bali, East Nusa Tenggara and West Nusa Tenggara. At the same time, Sumba was divided into two districts (*tingkat II*), East Sumba and West Sumba, just as it was before.

In 1962 the Indonesian government introduced a uniform administration in every part of the nation, finalized with Law 18/1965 on Local Administration. West Sumba was called Daswati II Sumba Barat and was subdivided into several sub-districts that replaced the former *kerajaan* or *landschappen* (also known as *swapraja*). At first, there were only four sub-districts, one of which, 'Mau', was exactly the region that is now proposed as the new district of Central Sumba. Kapita (1976b:74) writes that 'for some reason or the other this division was not making governance easier'. The sub-district's borders were shifted and two sub-districts added, so that Memboro afterwards belonged to another sub-districts.

In the New Order period the internal administrative boundaries in West Sumba did not change. In 1999, the six sub-districts of West Sumba were divided into smaller sub-districts, resulting in the present total of 15 sub-districts. The most recent administrative division of West Sumba was for the general elections. The General Election Committee constructed five electoral areas (*wilayah pemilu*), and for each included two to four sub-districts, from

which locally registered representatives would be chosen in West Sumba's parliament (see Map 8.1). The fourth election area contains sub-districts that belong to three proposed new districts: Laura and Wewewa Utara to Southwest Sumba, Tana Righu to West Sumba and Memboro to Central Sumba. It is safe to conclude from this overview of Sumbanese administrative history that boundaries of administrative territories were constantly changing throughout history. Therefore the idea of *pemekaran* as part of the decentralisation discourse is nothing new. It seems to be just a new name for a practice that has been common for nearly a century.

### *Cultural and religious arguments*

Sumba Tengah's activists also used cultural and religious arguments for creating a new district. Elsewhere in Indonesia, local identity politics are often played out in terms of religion and ethnicity. In Central Sumba this is not easy to do, because the area is rather homogeneous. Instead, as we shall see, local leaders conjure up identities out of less tangible materials. To do that, they need to possess highly refined oratorical skills.

Religious affiliation and ethnicity can both provide strong labels for creating political identity. Studies on violence in Indonesia give many examples of how these labels were used in defining the parties in violent battles (Colombijn and Lindblad 2002; Van Klinken 2007). Labels can only be helpful as markers of political identity when they provide a name for the shared characteristic of a group in opposition to other, neighbouring groups are often involved in contentious politics.

Religious adherence as it is registered on the official identity card shows that more than eighty per cent of the population of West Sumba adheres to one of the five religions officially recognized in Indonesia (see Table 2.2), with 52 per cent of the population Protestant Christian in 2002, 27 per cent Catholic, 3 per cent Muslim. Christianity is a unifying characteristic of modern, educated Sumbanese, who are well connected to the Indonesian state. Catholics are found mostly in the western part of the island. If West Sumba is to be divided into three new districts, Central Sumba will be relatively more Protestant Christian and Southwest Sumba more Catholic. This argument was not used openly in the campaigns, but it came up often in private conversation.

Ethnicity is a useful concept when Sumba is studied within the larger framework of the Indonesian nation-state. In a similar effort to deal with ethnicity in Sulawesi, Aragon (2000:52) speaks of 'the fluid and concentric layering of self-identities'. The further a people are from their homeland, the more their ethnic identity is formulated in outsider's terms. Yet, in Sumba it is hard to make external ethnic labels other than 'Sumbanese'. Exceptions to

that rule are Muslim immigrants from other islands, and people originating from other islands who are living permanently on Sumba. For example the Savunese have their own language and in some villages in East Sumba they have their own hamlets, but their ethnic background was in 2004 not (yet) converted into a political identity.

One external definition of ethnicity on Sumba is found in the ethno-linguistic literature. According to an international team of ethno-linguists at the Artha Wacana Christian University in Kupang, who published *A guide to the people and languages of Nusa Tenggara*, there are eight Sumbanese languages, which they associate with eight different ethnic groups (Grimes et al. 1997:67-75). Violence in West Sumba's capital Waikabubak in 1998 took place between *orang Wewewa* and *orang Loli*. However, according to the language guide, these two groups are both part of the Wewewa language area; Loli is mentioned as a dialect of Wewewa and its speakers consequently are not regarded as a different ethnic group. As argued in Chapter III, the only 'ethnic' distinction that appeals to the Sumbanese population is that based on traditional domain, connected to the main clans of that domain. When politicians constructed arguments to support the campaign for Central Sumba, they would include entire domains in the envisaged new district and explain the coherence and links between them.

### *Rhetoric and theatre*

While the activists for new districts on Sumba did not have very sound arguments in favour of *pemekaran*, they relied heavily on performance to convince their audience and create constituency. Political rhetoric in local election campaigns on Sumba and in the lobby for creating new districts was made of a combination of Christian sanctimonious talk, New Order jargon, quasi-ritual speech, colloquial talk and fashionable television language. The 'People's congress for Sumba Jaya' on 29 April 2003 provides a beautiful example. the campaign for seats in congress was at its peak for the new district Sumba Barat Daya, which was still called Sumba Jaya at that time.

People from seven sub-districts gathered in Waitabula, West Sumba's second largest town after Waikabubak, and Sumba's Catholic centre. On this day representatives of all seven sub-districts delivered a declaration supporting and urging the foundation of their new district, Sumba Jaya. They offered the signed declaration to the members of the Jakarta Committee for Sumba Jaya with the request to take this 'will of the people' (*aspirasi masyarakat*) further upwards in the decision making process. At the event no representatives from the decision-making bodies, whether from Waikabubak, Kupang or Jakarta, were present, but the ceremony was carefully orchestrated with these people



in mind as the audience. The Sumba Jaya committee made a VCD recording of the event, serving as a modern and lasting proof of the strength of their 'social movement'. The VCD captured the political symbols and rhetoric that politicians on Sumba use in contemporary campaigns.

The documentary starts with the arrival on 25 April 2003 of the Jakarta delegation at the (only) airport of West Sumba, Tambolaka, which will be an important asset of the new district. The Jakarta Committee consisted of six members, four middle-aged men and two women, who were all born on Sumba, in the area that they hope will become Sumba Jaya. They pursued their education and careers on Java. The committee included an army officer who is a bodyguard of a recently retired general in Jakarta, a private businessman and two university lecturers. It has good strategic access to people in the Ministry of Domestic Affairs.<sup>3</sup> Upon arrival they wore suit-jackets made of West Sumbanese hand-woven cloth that looked so similar that they appeared dressed in 'uniforms of the traditional representatives'. The group set out to Waitabula in a convoy of jeeps, preceded by a cavalcade of motorcycles, reminiscent of the traditional horse riders' welcoming escort but also resembling a modern motorcycle youth gang. The documentary shows that shortly after their arrival, the Jakarta Committee, together with the chairman of the local committee for the new district, set up a meeting with representatives from all areas in the new district to explain the strategies and agenda for the People's Congress. They reminded the audience that this was the fiftieth meeting in preparation of Sumba Jaya, a landmark, and an additional reason why the Jakarta Committee's presence was justified. When the Jakarta delegation entered the field for the event on 29 April, they wore traditional dress combined with modern shirts. Although in a way they were the hosts of the ceremony, they sat in front as the guests of honour.

The groups from each of the seven districts arrived in trucks and small buses. Apparently the villagers were asked to come in traditional dress, and each group was preceded by dancers, who danced and shouted like they were going off to war. The official ceremony started with the Indonesian National Anthem. Then a Protestant Christian reverend explained to the audience in the local language that success can only come with the blessing of the Lord; he said a prayer in Indonesian, in which he asked the Lord for support for the campaign for Sumba Jaya and his blessing on the People's Congress. Representatives of each of the seven sub-districts read their declaration in Indonesian, after which there were a few minutes of dancing and cheers, called *spontanitas*.

The shared summary declaration of pursuit of the new district of Sumba

<sup>3</sup> The next section gives a short profile of the committee chairman, Markus Dairo Talu.

Jaya was the core of the event. *Pemekaran* is a goal that needs to be established within the framework of the State, and this calls for state-like procedures. A female member of the organizing committee read the declaration with the monotonous and theatrical voice of a well-trained Indonesian school teacher. After each part of a sentence she paused and all sub-district representatives and citizens present repeated the words, as if they were saying the Lord's Prayer (Paternoster) in Church.

*Deklarasi Kongres Rakyat Sumba Jaya*

Dengan ini,  
seluruh masyarakat dari tujuh kecamatan :  
Laura, Kodi, Kodi Bangedu, Wewewa  
Barat, Wewewa Selatan, Wewewa Timur  
dan Wewewa Utara menyatakan :

Satu :  
Bertekad mekar kabupaten Sumba Barat,

dengan nama 'kabupaten Sumba Jaya',  
dan ibu kota Tambolaka.

Dua :  
Bertekad untuk membangun  
dan mensejahterakan seluruh masyarakat  
dengan menggunakan potensi yang kami  
miliki

Tiga:  
Bertekad menyiapkan sarana dan prasara-  
na operasional bagi kabupaten Sumba  
Jaya.

Empat:  
Mendesak agar DPRD dan bupati Sumba  
Barat  
untuk segera mengeluarkan rekomendasi  
bahkan kabupaten  
.....Sumba Jaya!

Waitabula, 29 April 2003  
atas nama masyarakat tujuh kecamatan

Laura, Kodi, Kodi Bangedu, Wewewa  
Barat, Wewewa Selatan, Wewewa Timur  
dan Wewewa Utara,  
dengan tandatangan

*Declaration of the People's Congress for  
Sumba Jaya*

Hereby  
the whole people of seven sub-districts:  
Laura, Kodi, Kodi Bangedu, Wewewa  
Barat, Wewewa Selatan, Wewewa Timur  
and Wewewa Utara  
declare (their):

One:  
strong wish to split from district Sumba  
Barat,

under the name 'district Sumba Jaya'  
with the capital: Tambolaka.

Two:  
Strong wish to develop  
and increase the welfare of the whole  
population  
using the potentials we have.

Three:  
Strong will to take care of all general  
and operational preparations for district  
Sumba Jaya.

Four:  
Urge the district parliament and the  
district Head of West Sumba to imme-  
diately issue their recommendation for  
the district

.....Sumba Jaya!  
Waitabula, 29 April 2003  
on behalf of the people of seven sub-  
districts:

Laura, Kodi, Kodi Bangedu, Wewewa  
Barat, Wewewa Selatan, Wewewa Timur  
dan Wewewa Utara.  
signed

After reading the declaration the master of ceremonies called the audience to

cheer the traditional *yawoungu* to show their approval.

As Joel Kuipers (1990:i) points out in the opening statement of his book *Power in performance*, which asserts that on the island of Sumba, a vibrant form of ritual speech is required in all ceremonial events, the organising committee of the People's Congress in Waitabula invited a specialist in ritual speech to give a performance after the reading of the declaration. The few Indonesian words incorporated into the couplet-style monologue indicated that the speaker had composed it especially for this occasion, to frame the message of the declaration in the vernacular Wewewa. On the one hand this was rather similar to the complete domestication of traditional culture which was a mark of the New Order, as it is described by Bowen (1986) with regard to the appropriation of the concept of traditional self help, *gotong royong*. On the other hand it was also a way to add a type of rhetoric to the ceremony that livens up the audience and increases their commitment. Generally, political leaders rarely win support by rhetorical tactics and strategies that employ reason and rationality. Reason is dull and rarely moves people to action. Instead, according to Bailey (1983), 'it is passion that sways people'.

Most of all, the People's Congress in Waitabula was an orchestrated display of the grass roots involvement that is formally the primary basis for *pemekaran*. Political leaders display 'grass roots involvement' by getting a large crowd to attend the event. Leaders everywhere in the world use large crowds as the visible sign of support, to strengthen their political power. Joel Kuipers (1998:74-5) calls this feature in the context of Sumbanese political culture 'the ideology of audience completeness'. Audience completeness confirms the authority of the leader. Conversely, a key image of a leader's social influence, prestige and status is the capacity to create a 'complete audience'. The completeness is demonstrated by the number of people who attend, in their evaluation of the way they are received at the event. It is most concretely measured in how many heads of livestock are slaughtered for the meals served to the audience and in the volume and number of the verbal responses they produce during the leader's oration.

Campaigning for a new district is partly just rhetoric and theatre, set up by the initiators of the campaign, who need to do this to be acknowledged as leaders. The spectators enjoy it because it provides entertainment, good meals and fun. A people's congress or any other large gathering on Sumba does not necessarily imply that all the people present know what the event is about, let alone that they come because they support the officially stated cause.

*Social forces behind pemekaran*

What kind of people are behind this movement for creating new districts in Sumba? Why are they so engaged in these campaigns? At first, when I heard about the campaign in 2003, and was dragged along in the enthusiasm of the chairman of the local committee, I thought it was a broad movement in Central Sumba. Yet, after closer analysis of local newspapers, many discussions and interviews, I concluded that in fact it is only a rather small group of people who are actively and continuously involved in the campaign and whose interests would be served directly with a new district. They make up three categories. First there are the Sumbanese who reside outside their home island, usually on Java or in Kupang. I call them 'overseas Sumbanese', a group originating from Sumba, who actively retain their culture, self-identify with Sumbanese culture or acknowledge Sumbanese origin, and are not indigenous to their current place of residence.<sup>4</sup> Among them are a number of men who have both the desire to return to their home island in a glorious way and the urge to contribute to Sumba's economic development. The second category is composed of a few dozen local activists, sub-elite, who see this as opportunity to gain status, power or wealth. The third category consists of at most 100 well-educated but unemployed youth originating from Anakalang.<sup>5</sup> The large majority of the population is rather indifferent. Outspoken opponents are a small number of highly educated senior persons from West Sumba, and Umbu Djima (see Chapter II) is amongst them. The well-established members of the political class, who already have good positions and could not gain much from this initiative, are silent.

*Overseas Sumbanese*

The Jakarta Lobbying Committee for the cause of Sumba, Barat Daya, was very important in the campaign for the western district. They organised, they initiated, they provided money, they provided campaigning materials, they lobbied the decision making institutions in Jakarta and they returned to Sumba every once in a while. Who are they and why were they interested in a new district on Sumba? Three examples present at least part of the answer. Manasse Malo<sup>6</sup> lives in Jakarta, where he is professor of sociology at the University of Indonesia. He was member of the national parliament (DPR) until October 2004. He was born on West Sumba (Waijewa) in 1941 as

<sup>4</sup> In analogy with the term 'overseas Chinese', see for example <http://www.huayinet.org>

<sup>5</sup> My own estimation.

<sup>6</sup> Manasse Malo passed away on 6 January 2007.

the son of the first Sumbanese reverend of the Protestant Christian Church. He was a bright student and received a church fellowship first to study at the Christian University in Salatiga, Central Java, and to study theology in Jakarta. He was then lucky enough to get the chance, through international church connections, to study in the United States, and finally he earned his PhD degree at the University of Wisconsin. His wife is not Sumbanese, but born in Manado.

Manasse Malo has written and spoken widely on decentralization policy in Indonesia (Malo 1996). In 1998, fired by Reformasi, Manasse Malo was one of the founders of the Partai Demokrasi Kasih Bangsa (the Love the Nation Democratic Party (PDKB)), a mainly Christian Party with a constituency predominantly in Eastern Indonesia. He was elected its chairman. In the 1999 elections PDKB won three seats out of 35 in the district parliament in West Sumba, and five seats in the national parliament. In 1998, I heard about discussions among the Kupang members of the new party which indicated that they were then in favour of making Indonesia a federation again.<sup>7</sup> Eastern Indonesia would be one of the member states, East Timor possibly another.

From 1999 until the recent 2004 election period Manasse Malo was deputy chairman of the national parliament's Sub-Commission on Domestic Affairs and Regional Autonomy, and a member of the parliamentary committee that deals with regional autonomy. Now he is retired. He is a strong supporter of turning Sumba into a province, and the law requires a province to have at least three districts. He is the main source of information on this topic and the gatekeeper to all useful contacts for Sumbanese in the bureaucracy in Jakarta. In an interview in December 2004, he told me that now that he was retired he would not mind returning to Sumba, and be head of one of the new districts, or perhaps even Governor of the Province of Sumba, 'if the people ask me to'.<sup>8</sup>

In 1999 Manasse Malo had a discussion with Umbu Dedu Ngara about their ideas on *pemekaran* in Sumba. The latter was staff member of the provincial Planning Board Bappeda NTT in Kupang, and also heading for retirement. He is known as a good bureaucrat, but he rarely visited Sumba over the past decades. His home village is Lawonda in Central Sumba. His family is not the raja's, but certainly noble. The family members of his and younger generations are well-educated, and most of them live on Java. Umbu Dedu Ngara studied in Salatiga and was a board member of the Indonesian Christian Student Movement (GMKI), just as Manasse Malo had been. Umbu Dedu

<sup>7</sup> Personal communication with Dr Nico Woly, Kupang, December 1998.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Manasse Malo on 16-12-2004, Jakarta.

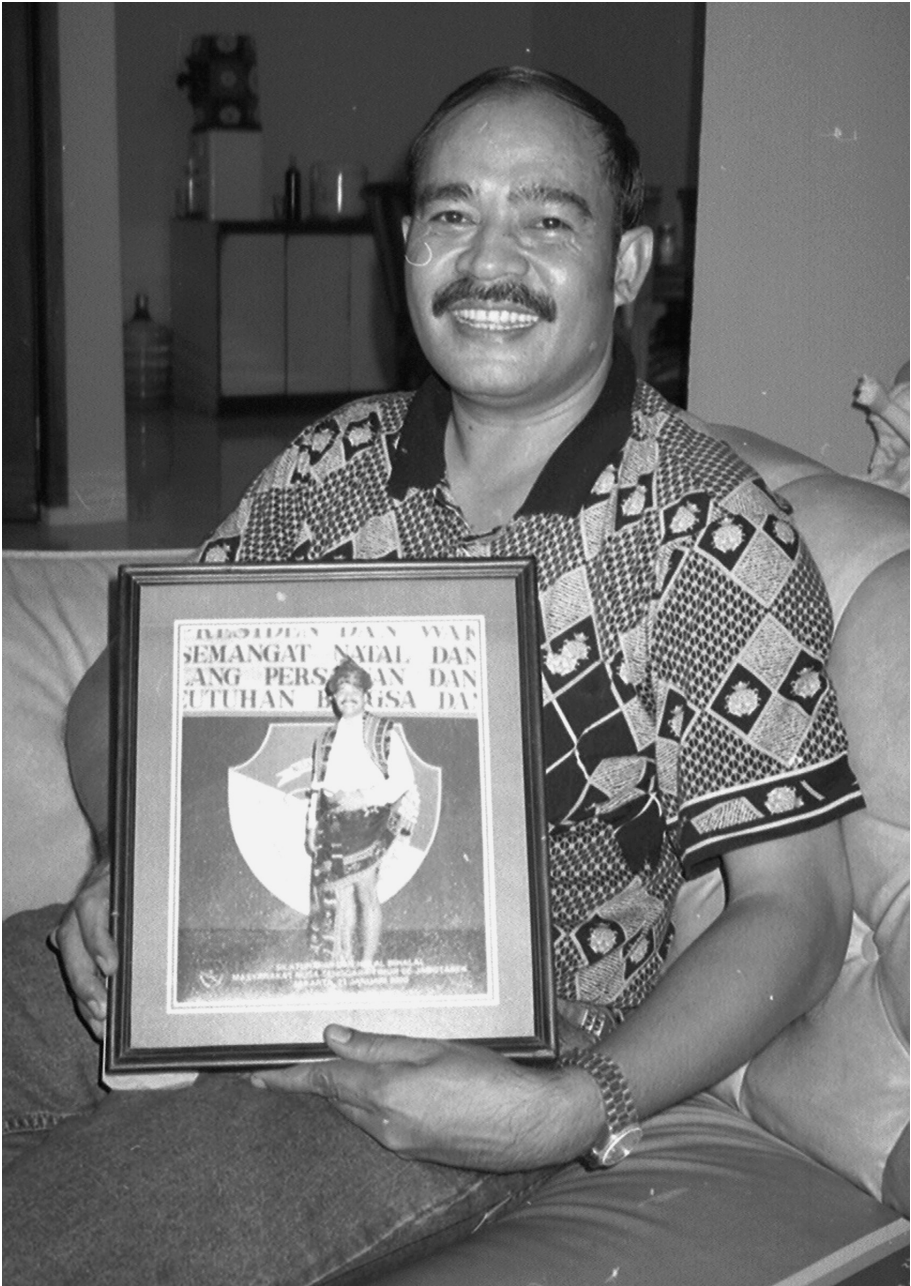
Ngara conveyed the idea to create a new district of Central Sumba to several other provincial officials who came from central Sumba, and they began together to lobby for it. They put the idea on the agenda at meetings of the Union of Sumbanese residing in Kupang (*Ikatan Keluarga Asal Sumba di Kupang* or IKAS).<sup>9</sup> In the new decentralised structure, the district has budgetary autonomy, and more decision-making power over many issues has been transferred to the district level, leaving the province with a mostly coordinating and a less powerful and rewarding role. So the provincial elite had good reasons for moving one step downwards in the administrative hierarchy. Moreover many Sumbanese who have reached the autumn of their careers look forward to returning to Sumba, where they can be cared for by their relatives and appreciated because of their status and relative wealth, and where they can die in peace and be buried in accordance with the prescriptions of tradition.

Markus Dairo Talu is not retired yet, since he is just in his early forties.<sup>10</sup> He is an army officer with the modest position of adjutant, but with the rewarding task of being a bodyguard for a major general, who was his commander for many years. Guarding his general, Markus served in the Presidential palace for some years. He is also a freelance security specialist, who has acted as bodyguard or 'debt collector' for businessmen on their request, and as doorman for a fancy discotheque in Jakarta. This part of his identity is not well known in Sumba. When Markus returned to Sumba from Jakarta in 2003 and 2004, he was the benefactor for the campaign for Southwest Sumba, and chairman of its Jakarta Lobby Committee. Sumbanese spectators saw his love for the homeland and observe the signs of his wealth as he distributes T-shirts, caps and money. His life history is an attractive success story for those who do not belong to the aristocracy. Having lost his father, he lived with his mother and siblings in poverty in Wewewa (Waimangura). He was able to attend the Catholic school, and received a scholarship to attend a mechanics course on Java. There he met an army officer who became his mentor and introduced him to the army. In Jakarta he owns four houses, and provides housing and work for around 50 boys from his home area in Sumba.

What these three main actors campaigning for the new districts have in common is that they were born on Sumba, received a good education and, with or without a church scholarship, pursued their education on Java. Consequently they had a successful career, after which they wanted to return to their home

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Manasse Malo on 16-12-2004, Jakarta.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Markus Dairo Talu at his home, Jakarta, 18-12-2004.



Markus Dairo Tallo proudly showing his Sumbanese identity in his house close to Jakarta, December 2004

island, where they enjoy high prestige, status and social security provided by their relatives. They are connected through various modern networks: the political parties, student alumni organisations, the Christian Church or the unions of emigrant Sumbanese in cities outside Sumba. In terms of Bourdieu's forms of capital, they all have accumulated a considerable amount. Yet, what they lack is domestic social capital and traditional type of cultural capital. Their 'overseas' capital could be transformed into status and old age security in Sumba, and leading a successful campaign could be a way to accomplish that.

#### *Local campaign leaders*

In the area that is proposed as Central Sumba, the successive raja from Anakalang and Lawonda were the most famous local leaders. They serve as icons of the glorious past and their careers are proof of the superiority of the people of these domains. Some of their descendants are now active leaders in the campaign for Central Sumba, though many others are not, and some even oppose the idea of *pemekaran*. Those who are active for the new district in one way or another have something to gain, which means that in 2003 they may have not been satisfied with their social positions.

The 'mother' in the lobbying committee for Central Sumba is a daughter of Habil Hudang, who was raja of the area Umbu Ratu Nggai from 1949 until 1962. He reached this office after the most famous of the raja Lawonda and an icon of the people of Lawonda, Umbu Tipuk Marisi, delegated governance to him. Umbu Marisi studied at the Academy for Government Sciences in Jakarta. Upon his return to Sumba after the war, he became Sumba's highest government official, chairman of the council of raja, in 1949.

Habil Hudang held the position until the system of governance was changed in 1962 (Oemboe Hina Kapita 1976:51). The chairman of the committee for Central Sumba is linked to Habil Hudang's family through marriage alliance. The most senior member of Propelmas, and the leader of the NGO Wahana, grew up in his house. His great grandson is one of the youth leaders in Anakalang. Umbu Marisi moved to the provincial capital Kupang on nearby Timor island in 1958 to become deputy governor (*Pembantu Kepala Daerah Tingkat I untuk Sumba*). His children did not return to Sumba to be active in politics.

The raja Anakalang's rule was restricted to *swapraja* Anakalang, until 1962 when Umbu Remu Samapati was elected to be West Sumba's *bupati*. He delegated his task as raja to his brother in law Umbu Sulung Ibilona, who was Umbu Djima's father. Both Umbu Sulung and Umbu Remu sent their sons for education to Java.



Umbu Remu's son, Umbu Sappi Pateduk, also known as Umbu Bintang, came back to Sumba in 1990 from Java. He wanted to live in his home area, to be able to combine his government career with his tasks as leader of his clan. He became the head of district planning board (Bappeda) in West Sumba. After the 1999 elections, district heads were to be elected by the district parliament for the first time since 1958. He has not been successful in the last elections, because he was just one among several Golkar candidates from Anakalang, struggling for the support of the same constituency. Support was divided and in the end the PDI-P candidate from further West in Sumba, Thimotius Langgar, won the position.<sup>11</sup> Frustration that 'Anakalang has lost power' is therefore among the motives behind creating Central Sumba district. Umbu Bintang was appointed in 2000 as a member of the district head's staff (*asisten II*). He was mentioned as the top candidate for district head of Central Sumba, but he does not show any official and open commitment to the campaign.

Burhan Magenda (1989:60-1) argued in his study of local aristocracies in the Outer Islands of Indonesia that they survive all changes in national politics and remain in power locally. In the recent literature on decentralization in Indonesia, all cases of *pemekaran* which are discussed reveal the strong interests of local elites, who act as initiators of the secession process, head the lobbying committees, and if successful, occupy the offices of power in the new provinces or districts (Quinn 2003). Yet a more detailed analysis is necessary to reveal which members of the local elite are involved in campaigns for *pemekaran*, and which ones are not. The ones active in the campaign on Sumba were actually only a few. Closer analysis suggests that the older participants in the campaign were marginal or former members of political class who were losing their positions so that they would be just members of the political public. They had sufficient status in traditional terms to be accepted as leaders, but occupied positions in government or the private sector that did not satisfy them, or put them outside the decision-making circuit. Leaders of the Central Sumba movement included a nearly-retired village head, a reverend suspended from his church office because of a long history of larger and smaller conflicts, and several retired civil servants.

#### *Well-educated but unemployed youths*

The senior campaign leaders were supported by a large group of relatively well-educated, unemployed youths, who did not want to work in agriculture.

<sup>11</sup> Previously Th. Langgar was district secretary (Sekwilda) in the district of North Central Timor, had always been a Golkar member but switched in time to PDI-P.

They received their education in Kupang or on Java, and then returned to Sumba with bachelor degrees but no jobs. These youths see the new district as an opportunity to get the positions for which they hoped and studied. Their relatives have invested in their education for many years and they hope to see some return on their investment, which is hard to accomplish through working in agriculture. In the short term, the campaigning itself provided the youths with lots of excitement, which is otherwise hard to get in Sumba. They are very vocal and could become more powerful in their capacity to use violence and enforce social exclusion for political opponents. Older people in Anakalang complain that these youths cause a lot of problems because many have the habit of drinking alcohol, and when drunk they easily turn aggressive. Another complaint of the older generation is that groups of youth have also appropriated the cultural custom of death wake. Whenever a person in Anakalang dies, the custom is to guard the body through the night, beating the drum and holding wake. Now, youths use these occasions to gather and drink. Death wakes are local public events for which no invitation is necessary.

### *Women*

There are not many women involved as activists for Central Sumba, at least not at the surface. Ibu John is an exception, who will be discussed below. The school teacher who read the declarations for Sumba Barat Daya was another performer on stage. Engaging actively in politics and being a public leader is on Sumba still regarded as men's terrain. However, behind the scenes, many women are active. Gathering people, telling others about events, preparing meals and organizing gatherings are important parts of campaigns. Many well-educated, unemployed female youths have studied theology, which means that they are educated to be local leaders. Yet, they are not prominent in the movement for Sumba Tengah.

### *Campaigning for Central Sumba*

After Umbu Dedu Ngara and two fellow provincial officials paid a visit to Waibakul,<sup>12</sup> the capital of Katikutana sub-district (Anakalang), the members of the local elite set up an organisation to lobby for the new district, called Forum Komunikasi Pembangunan Desa (Consulting Committee on Village

<sup>12</sup> Umbu Dedu Ngara (Bappeda), Umbu Giku (Livestock Service, Dinas Peternakan), Agus Umbu Sorung (Bappeda) from Kupang. Interview with Gany Wulang, Waihibur, 4-2-2003.

Development), usually called simply 'the Forum'. Agustinus Umbu Sabarua, village head of Anajiaka (bordering the sub-district capital) became head of the forum. Its members consist of invited representatives of youth and women's organisations, village and church leaders, in short 'leaders of every segment of the population'. The Forum's task was to obtain (a) proof of the *aspirasi masyarakat* (popular wish), and recommendations from (b) the head of West Sumba, (c) the district parliament, (d) the provincial governor, and finally (e) from the national parliament in Jakarta.

The Forum started by inviting representatives of all kinds of civil society organizations and local leaders around Anakalang to a workshop. The Forum's chairman said that the purpose of the workshop was to 'socialise regional autonomy', and explained the arguments for creating a new district. The main argument was that a new and smaller district would bring government services closer to the people, implicitly suggesting that those new services would correspond better to the population's needs and would be delivered faster and more efficiently. In this first workshop the participants discussed which other sub-districts could be invited to join in the new district of Central Sumba, since regulations at that time required a minimum of three sub-districts per district. The Forum's chairman phrased the main prerequisites for inclusion as: a shared culture, which he specified as linguistic unity, and marriage alliances.

To the west the linguistic border is a real barrier dividing the people that speak Kambera from the people who speak the different west Sumbanese languages. But language less strikingly demarcates the eastern border of Central Sumba, since eastwards everyone also speaks (a type of) Kambera. All the Sumbanese actors involved in the lobby for Central Sumba were connected by kinship and marriage alliances, including the campaign's most important man in Jakarta, Manasse Malo, whose sister lives in the same village as the chairman of Central Sumba's Forum.

The second step in the process of the 'socialisation of regional autonomy' was a workshop to inform and consult the leaders of all four sub-districts, or in the words of the Forum's chairman: 'to see whether they accept the conclusions that we already drew in the first workshop'.<sup>13</sup> The workshops were held in cooperation with NGOs working on democratization in 2001 and 2002.<sup>14</sup> The social work of these development organisations focuses on teaching local government officials and village communities about procedures and rights that the decentralisation law has given them. The NGO staff is well aware of the difference between their civil education and the 'political games' of those who

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Agustinus Umbu Sabarua and Gany Wulang, Waihibur, 4-2-2003.

<sup>14</sup> In the area around Anakalang workshops were organized by Yayasan Wahana Komunikasi Wanita (Waihibur/Waikabubak, Sumba) and Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (Maumere, Flores).

primarily seek personal benefit by creating new districts. Yet, local NGO staff is part of local society, and subject to pressure from the local elite. The Forum's chairman considered the leaders of the NGO Wahana as relatives of lower rank to whom he could simply assign the task of promoting Central Sumba.

The third step was a seminar with provincial government officials to assess the feasibility of a new district. The decentralisation laws, especially Government Decree 129 of 2000, specify a set of measurable criteria to decide whether a new district can be created or not. Important criteria include the availability of both natural and human resources, the number of inhabitants, the surface area, the economic potential, the presence of civil society institutions and people's political participation, as well as the level of infrastructural development and social services.<sup>15</sup> In November 2001, a Sumbanese lecturer at the Satya Wacana University in Salatiga, Umbu Tagela, wrote:

Law 22/1999 and the Government Decree 129/2000, which provide all the rules with regard to the number of inhabitants and the level of economic growth and the way this should be calculated mathematically, surely leave no option for splitting up Sumba into several new districts. Yet, if the number of inhabitants is decisive, the Sumbanese could easily fulfil the criteria by just putting off the present family planning policy. [But] would not that be an offence against national policy? And if low economic growth is the reason for not allowing a split-up, would that mean that in terms of politics Sumba is expected to be poor forever? The real reason [for granting permission to new districts] is whether the ones in power have the political will to support the development of Sumba.<sup>16</sup>

In July 2001 the local Sabana newspaper opened with headlines reviving the age-old rumour of gold resources in mount Tanadaru, in the interior of Sumba. The fact that this mountain is situated in Central Sumba made the news favourable to the prospect of the new district. Until this presumed gold reservoir is actually exploited, it will do nothing to alter the unfavourable conclusion as regards to feasibility of a new district, namely that there is no economic potential for Central Sumba.<sup>17</sup> Only 3 per cent of the government's income in West Sumba is derived from local taxes; the rest originates from Jakarta. There is one phrase in Government Decree 129 of 2000 that can still be of support to the Central Sumba lobby. Chapter III, section three, which formulates the criteria for the formation of a new district, in the final sentence adds the possibility of 'other considerations that enable the execution of regional autonomy'.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter III of Government Decree no. 129/2000.

<sup>16</sup> *Sabana* 7(10-25 November 2001):5.

<sup>17</sup> This was firmly stated in an interview with one of Waikabubak's leading Chinese businessmen.

<sup>18</sup> 'Pertimbangan lain yang memungkinkan terselenggaranya Otonomi Daerah', pp. 129-200, Chapter III, section 3.

Because the generally bad score of feasibility, the Central Sumba case was thus not closed, one concludes that *pemekaran* must not be considered merely in terms of the administrative execution of a set of decentralisation laws, but rather as a political activity. In May 2001, the Forum wrote a petition and a proposal, added a large number of supporters' signatures, and sent it to the district government of West Sumba, the Province, and to the national Parliament (DPR-RI) in Jakarta. Manasse Malo received the petition and stimulated the campaigners to continue their struggle, adding his advice on how to make the campaign more effective. He seemed dedicated to realising *pemekaran* on his home island. Indeed, rumour was that he hoped to become the governor of Sumba, which would need the creation of another district first and afterwards a separate province. He suggested that in the early stage of lobbying the Forum should pay a visit to Jakarta to convince the commission's members personally of Central Sumba's viability. A group of 25 men and three women of the Forum therefore set off to Jakarta. At home the number of cynics was growing, but the delegation itself was wildly enthusiastic.

*Mother of the lobbying mission*

Ibu John was one of the three women in the party heading for Jakarta.<sup>19</sup> At 66 years of age she was the mother-figure of the group. She is a daughter of the last raja Umbu Ratu Nggai, Habil Hudang. As a girl she was selected to be educated in the mission's school in Payeti, which was the best education available at the time and a guarantee for membership of the Sumbanese elite. Some of Protestant Christian youngsters went for further studies to Salatiga. Ibu John and her husband both studied to be teachers, and after their return they set up the Christian Senior High School (SMA) in Waikabubak. Many of the current politicians, government officials and members of Central Sumba's Forum are her former pupils, including the present district head. Ibu John has known Manasse Malo since they were young, he is her 'little brother' in the Sumbanese, educated Protestant Christian elite. More recently, Ibu John and Manasse Malo had been in touch because they were both involved in Malo's political party PDKB. In December 2002 Ibu John attended the congress of this party in Jakarta and spoke about Central Sumba with Manasse Malo. He urged her to join the lobbying party to Jakarta.

They set off to Denpasar in Bali by ferry on 11 January 2003. There they went to Rocky Umbu Pekudjawang, a successful tourism businessman born in Anakalang,<sup>20</sup> to ask him for transport money to Jakarta. Ibu John related that upon seeing the tourist coach full of uncles, cousins and aunts, he decided to sponsor more than half of the costs of the trip. The party rested in Semarang, Central Java, where they were received by close relatives living there. They got a meal and food to go and an additional contribution of two million Rupiah.

<sup>19</sup> This section is based on my interview with Ibu John (Rambu Moha) in Waikabubak, 20-2-2004.

<sup>20</sup> Rocky Umbu Pekudjawang is also number one on the Golkar list for the national parliament in NTT in the April 2004 elections.

In Jakarta Ibu John was invited to give a speech to the members of the sub-commission on *pemekaran*. She told them, dressed in traditional Sumbanese style, about the hardship of the people living in this remote area to be named Central Sumba, and how far they were from essential government services, about their genuine wish to develop themselves, of the great potential of the land, and that the will of God was behind them. Touched by this emotional speech, and assured that their tickets would be paid, the commission members promised that their inspection team would pay a visit to Sumba within a short time.

The parliamentary inspection team from Jakarta visited Sumba on 31 January and 1 February 2003. When they landed in the capital of East Sumba, they were very politely received by the district head of East Sumba. He had already made it clear from the start that Central Sumba could never include part of the present East Sumba district, with the formal argument that *pemekaran* means dividing one administrative unit into two, not recombining bits of two districts. It was in his interest to make sure that no part of his territory would be claimed by the new district. Subsequently the team was welcomed by thousands of people in Laikaruda, for the event with which this chapter started. The Forum had 'motivated' the crowd to come and offer the best of traditional presents. The crowd's presence reassured the Jakarta team of the local people's wish for autonomy, and in traditional terms it stressed the Forum members' leadership and legitimacy to represent the population.

By lobbying directly to Jakarta, Central Sumba's Forum by-passed and therefore offended the district parliament. Thus one obstacle remained, for the final application procedure a recommendation from all levels was required. Whereas the national parliament's team was ready to give its approval and the governor and parliament at provincial level were ready to issue the recommendation, the district parliament and the head of West Sumba were not. In Waikabubak, on 1 February 2004, the offended parliament of West Sumba treated the team impolitely, without a proper reception, and the district head remained absent, claiming that he had been summoned by the governor in Kupang.

In the meantime the West Sumba district government had also received a proposal for *pemekaran* by another part of the district. Sumba Jaya would unite seven sub-districts in the western part of West Sumba.<sup>21</sup> This part of West Sumba is relatively more developed. The capital of Sumba Jaya would be Tambolaka, now known as the location of West Sumba's airport. Sumba Jaya would also include West Sumba's major harbour at Waikelo. The creation

<sup>21</sup> The seven sub-districts are: Kodi, Kodi Bangedo, Wewewa Barat, Wewewa Timur, Wewewa Selatan, Palla (Wewewa Utara) and Laura.

of Sumba Jaya would split the ever-feuding domains of Loli and Wewewa, and would imply that very little would be left for the remaining part of the original West Sumba. In February 2003, Central Sumba's Forum was confident that Sumba Jaya's chances were poor, 'since 15 October 2002 was the deadline for submitting proposals and they were too late'.<sup>22</sup> But Sumba Jaya's lobby appeared to be very strong, and if the criteria for *pemekaran* from the Government Decree were to be used to assess feasibility, this proposal would stand a much better chance. The proposal for Sumba Jaya, whose name was changed to Southwest Sumba in late 2003, increased the feeling of competition in West Sumba, and behind the stage, the hopes of success in Central Sumba began to decline.

A second complicating factor was protest from Wanukaka, where a movement sprang up which refused participation in the proposed district of Central Sumba. The official argument was that there is no history of Wanukaka being part of the same administrative unit as Anakalang, Umbu Ratu Nggai and Memboro. Trade relationships with the town of Waikabubak are strong. Waibakul as capital instead of Waikabubak would make the distance to government services for the population of Wanukaka even greater. This new development created tensions between Wanukaka and Central Sumba's proponents. A new distinction emerged to explain initial support for Central Sumba by some people from Wanukaka: *Wanuaka atas* (upper) versus *Wanukaka bawah* (lower), where *Wanukaka atas* refers to the 10 per cent of the population residing in the mountainous area adjacent to Anakalang, where marriage alliances are many.<sup>23</sup>

West Sumba's district head Thimotius Langgar decided to create a committee to guide the *pemekaran* process for the proposed new districts. He appointed his deputy district head Yulianus Pote Leba as chairman, and Umbu Djima as vice chairman.<sup>24</sup> Both had been lecturers at the Nusa Cendana University in Kupang, and thus it was a logical approach for them to invite a team from that university ('team Undana') to make a feasibility study on the potential for West Sumba to be split into more than one district, using the criteria from Government Decree 129-2000 to measure the score of potential new districts. Undana's Team recommended three options for West Sumba. The first option was to split West Sumba into West and Central Sumba, the second to split into West Sumba and Southwest Sumba, and the third was to create all three new districts. Apparently, to remain united in one district was not an option. The team formulated positive conclusions, supporting the lobby for creating new districts. Two economists in Waingapu, Siliwoloe Djoeroemana who was born

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Agustinus Umbu Sabaruwa, chairman of the Forum, 5-2-2003.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Muana Nanga, director of STIE in Waingapu, 18-2-2004.

<sup>24</sup> Decree of the district head of West Sumba no. 379/2002, 31-12-2002.

in Anakalang, and Muana Nanga who was born in Wanukaka, wrote a very critical review of the feasibility study.

The team did not assess whether West Sumba fulfils the criteria for *pemekaran*, but instead focused on the new districts, parts of the present district. Government Decree 129–2000 states that already existing data should be used that are compiled by authorized institutions. Instead, the team gathered many new data, or used data from the sub-districts offices. The data themselves show a remarkable bias, positive towards a sufficient score for ability for splitting up the district. Compared to the official statistics published in *Sumba Barat dalam angka 2001* for example the total length of roads has doubled. Moreover, they seem to suggest that there are 15,000 post offices just in Waikabubak, which gives the impression the team counted the letters and not the post offices.<sup>25</sup>

However, the audience for this criticism was lacking. After a number of demonstrations and a road block, organised by youth involved in the campaign and supported by some Forum members in Central Sumba on 22 May 2003, the West Sumba government finally agreed to give its recommendations, opting for three new districts, in what they called a 'win-win solution'. The district parliament added two restrictions before the recommendations would finally be issued. Southwest Sumba had to reconsider its boundaries with West Sumba in order to make the division of resources, inhabitants and infrastructure more equal. Central Sumba had to reconcile with Wanukaka, to decide which of the latter sub-districts would be part of the new and the old district.

By February 2004 it appeared to be very hard to publicly criticise or even question the idea of Central Sumba in Anakalang. Those who did, like the critics of the Undana report, were accused of being disloyal to their place of birth, and in fact were threatened with social expulsion. In Sumba there were not yet, as elsewhere in Indonesia, any private militias who are sent to make people change their opinions. Less severe, but just as effective, are exclusion from mutual help services and bad rumours. Being elite on Sumba makes one by definition dependent on the services of many kinsmen and fellow villagers. Those elite members who live in the capital or even outside Sumba still count on their relatives to provide them with space and material for ceremonies like weddings, and eventually to provide them with a proper grave. Rumours that spread bad stories about alleged illness, accusations of being too old to think positively or being too estranged from Sumba to appreciate *aspirasi masyarakat* are effective in reducing authority. Youth play an important role in spreading these rumours. At the seminar on *pemekaran*

<sup>25</sup> My summary of Siliwoloe Djoeroemana and Muana Nanga, 'Catatan kritis atas draft laporan hasil penelitian Tim Undana tentang pemekaran kabupaten Sumba Barat', *Suara Sumba* 3-6(6-21 June 2003):6-7.



in Waikabubak, youth delegations openly contested the authority of highly educated speakers who were cynical about Central Sumba. The youth groups in Anakalang are strong because of their growing number. The most active members had bachelor degrees from Java or Kupang and did not want to work in agriculture, and therefore cannot find suitable employment. They are hopeful of new districts and good jobs.

In February 2004 it appeared as though the lobby for Central Sumba had become increasingly Christian. The lobbying group that set out to Jakarta comprised one Protestant Christian reverend who said prayers preceding every next step in the process leading to the final positive decision regarding Central Sumba. Calling the creation of the new district the wish of God (*kehendak Tuhan*)<sup>26</sup> made the critics of the *pemekaran* opponents of the Lord. This is another type of threat and a means of social exclusion in a community where being regarded as a good Christian is connected to respect and authority. More ritual and Christian rhetoric also increased the theatrical value of the campaign, which could have been a deliberate strategy to compensate for the absence of sound practical arguments.

On 26 February 2004 Manasse Malo received a delegation of the West Sumba district parliament, the Forum for Central Sumba, and one for Southwest Sumba, as well as several Sumbanese from Jakarta who brought the last requirements for the proposal to create new districts in West Sumba.<sup>27</sup> Officially these requirements included a number of documents with the recommendations of all the offices involved as well as a description of the process of *pemekaran* written by the district parliament. In practice the requirements included bribes at all levels. For Central Sumba this was a serious problem. The secretary of the Youth Organisation for Central Sumba estimated that up to 23 February 2004 the campaign for Sumba Tengah had between 800 and 900 million rupiah on air tickets, food and bribes.<sup>28</sup> For Sumba, this was an incredibly huge amount of money, whereas by Jakarta standards it was 'just cigarette money'.

The result of the meeting in Jakarta was that the proposal to split West Sumba into three, namely Sumba Barat Daya, Sumba Barat and Sumba Tengah (Southwest Sumba, Central Sumba and West Sumba), was officially put on the agenda for the plenary session of the national parliament to decide. Unfortunately for the activists from Sumba, the campaigning period

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Ibu John (Rambu Moha) in Waikabubak, 21-2-2004.

<sup>27</sup> *Sabana* 52:1 (*Sabana Tabloid Berita Mingguan* (weekly newspaper) Waikabubak. Vol. 1 (2002) till 3, total 56 issues).

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Adri Saba Ora, secretary of Forum Komunikasi Pemuda Peduli Sumba Tengah, 23-2-2004. For comparison: Cohen reports that the campaign to create the district Tojo Una-Una in Central Sulawesi required 1,5 billion Rupiah (Cohen 2003).

for the national elections started early that March. The Minister of Internal Affairs dismissed all decisions on matters of regional autonomy until after the new parliament was installed, which would probably be October 2004. On Sumba, as everywhere else in Indonesia, political campaigns from March 2004 onwards concerned the elections. So Central Sumba's activists shifted their attention from *pemekaran* and concentrated on the elections for the district Parliament in April, some of them being assembly candidates themselves.

A second discouraging matter was the revision of Law 22/1999. The minimal number of sub-districts in a new district was now raised to seven districts, which had to have existed for at least five years. For some time there was hope on Sumba that the decision for *pemekaran* in West Sumba would be taken before the changes in Law 22 took effect. However, the law was changed on 10 May by presidential decree. In spite of that, Manasse Malo was still optimistic in December 2004.<sup>29</sup> Other optimists agreed with him that with the current position in the process, the proposal for two new districts would not be affected by the change in the law, and a positive outcome would only be a matter of time.

The campaign for Central Sumba shows that to create a new district involves a long process, and success is not guaranteed. In the same period, since 2000, many other districts were created, which raises the question of why did it take so long for Sumba. That so many people and institutions have to provide their recommendation or decision, and the fact that they have to be 'motivated' to do so, is one explanation for the tardiness. Once the law on a new district is passed, the legislative bodies (and persons) have done their task and lose this opportunity for extra income. It would be interesting to see figures that show the amount of expenditure involved in 'the cost of the campaign'. For example, 1.5 billion rupiah was spent for the campaign of Tojo Una-Una (Cohen 2003:50) as compared to the lesser 900 million of Central Sumba. It would also be interesting to see how the expenditure effected the speed with which the *pemekaran* process took place. The fact that Central Sumba had not yet succeeded in becoming a district by itself (in mid-2006) does not contradict the opinion that all government decisions in Indonesia are for sale, but it could be interpreted as a sign that a district has a minimum price, which is too high for poor and small areas like Central Sumba to pay.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Manasse Malo, 16-12-2004, Jakarta.

*Conclusions*

Until June 2006, the dream of Central Sumba had not come true. 'Not yet' said the most fervent proponents. Their arguments in support of the proposal are weak, especially since there are so little resources on Sumba. Yet, the campaign makes a good case of post-1998 local politics in the context of the new opportunities provided by democratization as legal process. The case involves assessment of the legacy of traditional leadership and the problematic role of religion and ethnicity on Sumba as ingredients for creating political identity, and as labels to distinguish 'us' from 'them'.

Creating a new district also reveals the links between national, provincial and district level politics that concern the district. It involves actors, institutions and decisions from the grass root up to Jakarta. The practices on Sumba in the campaign for a new district show the importance of networks as vehicles in political campaigns. Religious networks, alumni networks, kinship and marriage alliance networks create, much like political parties, connections between people who can provide reciprocal services. Part of this chapter contains a description of three successful Sumbanese men who reside in Jakarta or the provincial capital Kupang and who play a very important role in the attempt to create a new district on their home island. Their position and characteristics reveal a general pattern of connections with the centre.

## CHAPTER IX

# Elections

By the end of 2003, attention in West Sumba's politics shifted from the issue of creating new districts to elections. There were three general elections coming up, namely, the elections for parliaments in April 2004, the presidential elections in June 2004 with a second round in September, and the direct elections for district head in June 2005. The 1999 elections had occurred too quickly after the demise of the New Order to enable local organization of national political parties. In 2004, more people than ever before became involved the process of elections, either as candidates, organizers of meetings, conscious voters or rally participants. The district parliament elections and the elections for district head were most important for the people in Sumba. Those elections concerned the government of Sumba itself and the interests of Sumbanese were directly affected by the outcome of these elections. The first part of this chapter discusses the elections in 2004, whereas the second part focuses on the district head elections, usually referred to with the acronym *pilkada*. Many main characters of this book's previous chapters are also prominent actors in the elections. My conclusion is that these elections contributed considerably to localising district politics, making parliament members and district head more dependent on local support of voters, local businessmen and social networks of Sumbanese. The elections results in Sumba in terms of votes for political parties are totally different from national trends, and reasons behind this diversion from the national tendencies can only be understood within the context of local politics.

### *Local election experience*

In Indonesia the establishment of free and fair elections was a top priority of the Reformasi movement. This demand was a reaction to controlled and unfair elections that had been common for the thirty previous years. In the Indonesian context, democracy (as depicted in Chapter V) had been an unfamiliar concept, except for the period from 1950 to 1957, when Indonesia had a liberal democratic system. Historians argue that it is more fruitful to compare

the current democratization process with what happened during the 1950s, instead of limiting the comparison to the New Order period which, at best, characterized itself as the Pancasila Democracy (Demokrasi Pancasila) (Fealy 2001:97). The large majority of the Indonesian population was born after 1957 and had no personal experience with liberal democracy, so that leading to the 2004 elections they had to develop a new understanding of political parties, parliaments, elections and democratic governance in general, departing from what they were used to.

In the New Order period – from 1966 to 1998 – six general elections were organized. The results were not important, because the outcome was determined beforehand. Those elections were organized ‘in order to provide a degree of international recognition while not constituting a threat to national stability’ (Antlöv 2004:2).

These elections were called ‘democratic festivals’ (*pesta demokrasi*), that served to legitimize the Suharto regime. Antlöv (2004:3) pointed out that despite this fact election-related events were sometimes used locally to express feelings about leaders and to make statements about local issues. I was witness to one of those local stories myself in 1987.

*Using elections to get rid of the village-head*

At the general elections on 23 April 1987 in the village of Sambaliloku in West Sumba a majority of the population voted for the party PDI, one of the two alternatives to the government-supporting party Golkar. This village is located far from the main road, and consists of a number of widely scattered hamlets, some of which are a six-hour walk from the village centre. In 1987 it was very hard to reach even the centre of Sambaliloku by car. The villagers did not like the village-head and saw the elections as a means to get rid of him. They knew that a victory for a party other than Golkar would cause him serious trouble, and therefore they voted for PDI.

At the evening of the election day, an old and rusty bus came up to our house, which was located on the road half-way between the capital of the sub-district, Anakalang, and the village where ‘serious trouble had occurred’ the previous day. From our house onwards to Sambaliloku the road got worse, with many holes and very steep grades. The passengers of the bus were uniformed men, sent by the *camat* (sub-district head). They wanted to go to Sambaliloku to set things straight, and decided to borrow our jeep to go there. One week later, the results of the elections in the sub-district were officially announced: 100 per cent Golkar. The village-head was called to the *camat*'s office where he received a serious reprimand, and lost face. That was at least a one step in the process of getting rid of him, and at that time of political repression not a bad result for the villagers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From my research notes, Lawonda, 4 May 1987.

*Democratic elections in 1999*

The first democratic elections were held in 1999. There was not much time to organize political parties and prepare the population. A major development was that competing local leaders, who previously could only distinguish themselves as factions within Golkar now became more visible, since some of them chose to switch to another party. PDI-P was most popular, being a clear alternative to Golkar, and having the advantage in that period of representing reform. It was also the successor of the party that during the New Order period incorporated Christian parties. Partai Demokrasi Kasih Bangsa (the Love the Nation Democratic Party) also known as PDKB, was founded in 1998, as a mainly Christian Party, with constituency predominantly in Eastern Indonesia and with Manasse Malo as national chairman. It became the third party after Golkar and PDI-P in West Sumba with 3 parliament seats, but in East Sumba it did not get a seat. In the national parliament the party won 5 seats. PDKB's success in West Sumba was largely due to the 31 per cent of the vote the party received in Manasse Malo's home area Wewewa Barat (Mitchell and Gunawan 2000b:11).

The result was a victory for change, a victory for the new parties represented by PDI-P and the PDKB over the old dominating party Golkar that had won 90 per cent of the votes in 1997 general elections. In their analysis of the 1999 elections result Mitchell and Gunawan (2000b:11-2) link the reasons for voting Golkar in West Sumba to the 'Bloody Thursday' violence in Waikabubak in November 1998:

Analysing voting patterns across the [sub-]districts of West Sumba, there was some evidence suggesting how Kamis Berdarah [Bloody Thursday] may have affected voters. The two smallest sub-districts in West Sumba were the town of Waikabubak itself and the sub-district of Loli, which surrounds the town. These were the only two electorates in which Golkar won a majority of votes. This may be because of the high concentration of civil servants in Waikabubak who followed the pattern of other towns in NTT in tending to favour Golkar. Loli sub-district also includes some areas with a high proportion of civil servants, but the loyalty to Golkar Chairman Lero Ora must also have been an important factor. On the other hand Wewewa had voted very heavily for PDI-P. Golkar only won 20 per cent of the votes in East Wewewa, and fell as low as 12 per cent in West Wewewa, which is the home basis of Professor Manasse Malo. None of the parties were actively supportive of [*bupati*] Rudolf Malo but we may speculate that PDI-P may have provided a home for some who felt they could not vote for a Golkar led by Chairman Lero Ora.

This analysis stresses the argument that election results should be understood in their local historical context which lends meaning to persons, symbols and political parties that can differ from national party election propaganda.



The clearest indicator of election rally success is the number of plastic chairs that were used, June 2005

### *Parliament elections in 2004*

The 2004 elections were the first elections on Sumba for which there was ample preparation time. The elections were very well organized by the Regional General Election Committee (Komisi Pemilihan Umum Daerah, KPUD), from the preparations, to the scheduling of the process, to the screening of candidates and guarantee for honest and open actual elections. On 5 April the first elections were held, to elect new members for the district, regional and national parliaments.

The 2004 general elections were extremely regulated. Individuals could only become a candidate for the parliament if they belonged to a political party. A political party had to compose a list of at least 35 candidates, with an internal ranking. Only candidates who fulfilled an elaborate list of criteria were accepted; of these criteria, a minimal educational level which is secondary school (SMA) diploma, is the hardest to meet on Sumba. With a complete list, the party could apply for registration in the district by the KPUD.

Political parties could only participate in the elections if they succeeded in being registered in two thirds of the Provinces of Indonesia. This rule in

effect excluded regional or local political parties from participation. Even political parties with a clear general minority identity, like Manasse Malo's PDKB could not participate in the 2004 elections because it failed to meet this new election rule.

The consequence of the prescriptions for political party registration on Sumba was in a free market for candidates. Political parties were in need of candidates for their list, so they increased the bargaining power of potential candidates. Political parties tried to get candidates for district parliaments with large constituencies. Church and NGO leaders were therefore subject to many requests.

#### *Parties looking for candidates*

Umbu Dingu, the secretary general of the Protestant Christian Church was invited by Golkar to be their candidate for the national parliament. As leader of the Church and with his personal charisma (see Chapter III) he would contribute a large constituency. He refused, and afterwards was approached by another party, to support the campaign, which would certainly bring him all kinds of personal facilities (hand phones, financial support). He refused because of his conviction is that reverends should refrain from involvement in politics.<sup>2</sup>

The female director of NGO Wahana, which was very successful in development work among women, received two requests from political parties looking for candidates. She was first approached by a party that had women's rights as a program priority, and she accepted because her NGO was working for similar goals. But this party did not meet the registration requirements. Afterwards, another party, PKPI, asked for her support and she did not feel free to refuse.<sup>3</sup> The board members of this party belonged to elite in Anakalang and they regarded her as subordinate in their kinship social network. Lack of traditional cultural capital was her weak point and this party made use of that. Her reputation was cashed in by this party which gave her low ranking on the list, hoping to attract many votes, but preferably just little less than the preferential vote threshold.

The political parties themselves could decide on the ranking of candidates. The General Election Committee had a hard time explaining to voters that although they would vote for their own candidate, the votes would be counted for the party, and if the party would win seats, those would be occupied by the candidates according to their ranking. The only exception was a preferential vote.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Umbu Dingu, Waingapu, 28 February 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Wiyati ws, 20 February 2004.



*Candidate looking for a party*

Lukas Kaborang,<sup>4</sup> the former *bupati* of East Sumba, had splendid bargaining power as potential candidate. He was well known and had a good reputation as *bupati*. He was also a bureaucrat with a very long career. And he claimed to belong to the East Sumbanese nobility, with good alliances with other noblemen. This put him in the position of being free to choose the party that would be most beneficial to his personal goals. He made it publicly clear that he would only sign up as a candidate if his name would be number one on the list, so that he would be in charge. PPDK offered him this position. He was chosen, PPDK received six seats and Lukas Kaborang was elected as vice chairman of the district parliament in East Sumba.

Umbu Dingu and the female NGO director are examples of candidates, who were asked by political parties to be on the list because of their constituencies or other characteristics that would be favourable to the party. Lukas Kaborang was active on the supply side of the market for candidates. He pursued a position in parliament to set things straight with the incumbent *bupati* of East Sumba. He was an example of a candidate, who was on the list because of personal reasons and goals. For them, the April 2004 elections composed a '*pesta demi sebuah kursi*'<sup>5</sup> (festival for seats), referring to the opportunity to gain a seat in the district parliament. The sentiments are nicely conveyed by the Sabana editors who wrote:

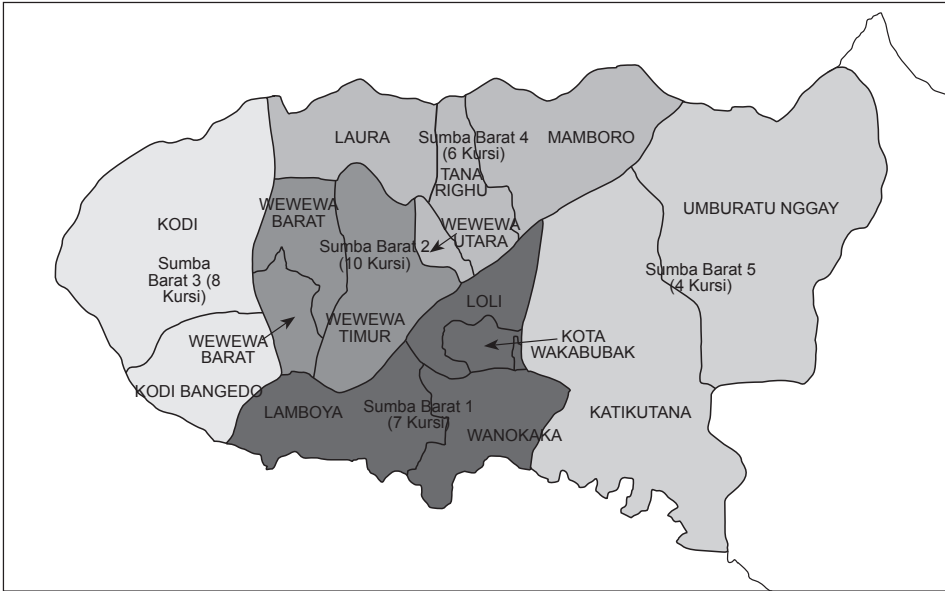
These 2004 elections are not just a festival of democracy, they are also euphoria. Jokingly, a friend compared the 2004 elections with the testing for candidate civil servants. Everyone is allowed to do the test, and who knows will be fortunate to be chosen to as parliament member. That would be great, he said, although not exactly as great as becoming a civil servant, yet the contract is for five years!<sup>6</sup>

That seat would bring elected candidates a huge salary and access to funds, jobs and all kinds of other opportunities for five years. For these candidates it was important to campaign or at least make themselves known to the public. In their campaign they had to concentrate on the election area for which they were listed. The whole country was divided in elections districts. There were five election areas in West Sumba (see the map on the next page), from each a previously fixed number of representatives to the district parliament (DPRD) would be elected, depending on the number of inhabitants in that area.

<sup>4</sup> See the introduction of this book.

<sup>5</sup> *Sabana* 53 (28 March-6 April 2004):2. 'Kampanye di Sumba pesta demi sebuah kursi'.

<sup>6</sup> 'Pemilu 2004 ini, bukan saja merupakan sebuah pesta demokrasi, tetapi juga sebuah euphoria. Secara berseloroh, seorang teman memandang Pemilu 2004 ini sama dengan tes PNS. Setiap orang boleh ikut, siapa tahu nasib beruntung dan terpilih menjadi anggota dewan. Katanya, lumayan lho, walau tidak seperti PNS, tapi kontrak kerjanya lima tahun.' *Sabana* 53(28 March 2004):2.



Source: [http://www.kpu.go.id/peta/files/5301\\_Sumba\\_Barat.pdf](http://www.kpu.go.id/peta/files/5301_Sumba_Barat.pdf) (accessed on 7-10-2004)

Map 9.1 Election areas in West Sumba

The majority of the seats in West Sumba's parliament are awarded to representatives from Kodi, Wewewa and Laura, the areas that are proposed to make up the district Sumba Barat Daya. These democratic rules imply that West Sumba – Kodi and Wewewa – 'govern Anakalang' (West Sumba election area five), if the procedures are interpreted in terms of these traditional domains. Election area five of West Sumba is the larger part of what was intended to be the new district Central Sumba, described in the previous chapter. Only four seats out of the 35 in the parliament of West Sumba are elected in this area.

Agustinus Umbu Sabarua and Umbu Dedu Ngara were candidates for the PDI-P in election area five of West Sumba, and third and second on the party's list in that area, respectively. They were both leaders of the campaign for creating the new district Central Sumba. They had both nearly reached the end of their career. Agustinus Umbu Sabarua, born in 1948, has been village-head for the last 14 years in Anajiaka, one of the villages of Central Sumba, after a career as teacher. Umbu Dedu Ngara, born in Lawonda in 1941, was a lecturer in Salatiga and spent most of his life in Kupang, where he was Head of Bappeda. As a sequel to their campaign for Central Sumba, the elections were a second chance to get a comfortable government position.

A third type of candidate was the professional parliament member, who had been parliament member in the last term and, in some cases, in earlier terms as well. Their names were found high on the list of the PDI-P and Golkar, because they had well-established relationships with the political parties's boards, or were members of those boards. Golkar's chairman T. Lero Ora is such an example; he was elected again in 2004.

The fourth type of candidate was invited by the party's local top officials because their names were necessary to meet the prescriptions of the General Election Committee. This category is made of well educated youths, because they had the necessary educational level. They were not serious candidates, ranked at the bottom of the list, but being on that list fed their hopes for the future.

During the whole election campaign on Sumba in 2004 there was very little attention paid to party programmes. All attention was geared to the candidates, to their personal identity. The advertisement of PDI-P was completely filled with short curricula vitae of all candidates in West Sumba, mentioning date and place of birth, place of residence, religious affiliation, all their professional positions, membership of civil society organizations, and educational level.

When I was visiting Sumba in February 2004, I expected a situation different from 1987, with much more enthusiasm for the upcoming free elections. Yet, many people from the *tani*-class seemed to be not particularly interested in these elections. Most were very cynical as to whether voting would make any difference in their lives. But even with that attitude people enjoyed the excitement and entertainment the elections brought to their neighbourhood. The candidates knew that the majority of voters belonged to the *tani*-class and thus they had to find ways to attract their attention and votes.

The campaigning period was set for one month before the elections, from 11 March until 1 April. The campaigns were completely scheduled by the General Election Committee, separating the parties' campaigns in time and venue, in order to avoid clashes between rival supporters. The consequence was that voters did not get a chance to hear a debate between competing candidates. The content of the speeches was summarized in Sabana newspaper as: 'Vote for me, vote my party, my party wants the best for you...'.<sup>7</sup> The Sabana editors also criticized the campaigns for being just performance of monologues, where the audience was expected to be silent or invited, only once in a while, to shout their consent '*setuju!*' ('we agree!').

<sup>7</sup> Sabana 55(16-24 May 2004):2.

In West Sumba, 18 political parties participated in the elections, with 382 candidates in total. Not all the parties were on the list in every election area. In Area five of West Sumba there were only 11 parties. The number of candidates on a party's list was already a sign of local support: a party with only one candidate apparently had troubles in finding members and representatives. I asked some well informed people in Anakalang to explain the list of parties to me. They explained some of the parties by referring to the national leader: PD was Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's party, PKPI was Edi Sudrajat's party with local background support of Umbu Bintang, PKPB was Tutut and Hartono's party, PKB was Gus Dur's party and in Jakarta the fraction in Parliament of Manasse Malo, since his small Christian party PDKB had to merge with larger parties. Golkar and PDI-P did not need further explanation. Their national leaders were widely known, and these parties also had a clear local identity. My informants could not explain the identity of Partai Persatuan Daerah (PPD), and Partai Persatuan Demokrasi Kebangsaan (PPDK) but they could tell me about some of their candidates. Partai Patriot Pancasila was dismissed as the party for gangsters, and Partai Pelopor was, judging by their candidates, a party for (educated) youth. The last one, the Christian Partai Damai Sejahtera was assessed as too Christian, because they prohibited smoking and drinking alcohol.

The fact that official names, as registered for administrative purposes, were put on the list made it sometimes difficult for voters to recognize the candidate, since many people are only known in Sumba by their nicknames, or professional titles, and have different names depending on the person who addresses them.<sup>8</sup>

All parties in the Indonesian elections have modern symbols that are distributed during the campaign of which flags, T-shirts, and caps are the most typical. During the rallies in March 2004 parties paid small amounts of money to people who then would participate in a rally. This resulted in 'professional ralliers', who turned up at each event, whether it was organized by Golkar, PDI-P or another party.<sup>9</sup> They received money and T-shirts, and did not feel committed to vote for the political party concerned.<sup>10</sup> In West Sumba political parties invited people for mass meetings, rented transport to ferry them to and from their homes, and provided all who attended with a meal with meat. Yet, this all had little to do with the result of the elections. The total result of the 2004 parliament elections in West Sumba showed a remarkable decrease in seats for

<sup>8</sup> See Kuipers (1998: 95) on the ideologies of personal naming in Sumba.

<sup>9</sup> *Sabana* 53(28 March-6 April 2004):2. 'Kampanye di Sumba pesta demi sebuah kursi.

<sup>10</sup> See also 'Experts lament supporters' behaviour' in the Jakarta Post of 19 March 2004, in which a fee of Rp 50.000 per person per day is mentioned as common for 'supporter's' participation on Java.

PDI-P, and an increase in the number of political parties that gained a seat.

Table 9.1 Results of the 2004 and 1999 elections in West Sumba in parliament seats\*

Party	Number of Seats in DPRD in 1999	Seats in 2004
PPP	1	0
PDI-P	15	10
PDKB	3	-
PNI-Front Marhaenisme	1	1
Partai Republik	1	-
PDI	1	1
Golkar	9	9
(Seats for the Armed Forces)	4	-
PKB		3
PKPI		4
Partai Pelopor		1
PPDK		4
PDS		2
Total	<u>35</u>	<u>35</u>

\* Source: 1. *Sumba Barat dalam angka 2002*, Badan Pusat Statistik, Kabupaten Sumba Barat, Province NTT. 2. *Sabana* 56(May 2004).

In election area five of West Sumba which is the core of Central Sumba, PDI-P won the elections with about 50 per cent of the votes. The two seats for PDI-P were to be occupied by an incumbent member of parliament, number one on the list, Andreas Kadubu Galimara, and Umbu Dedu Ngara. Agustinus U. Sabarua, the Chairman of the lobby for Central Sumba, had to remain village-head or really become what his profile in the PDI-P advertisement in Sabana newspaper said: *pekerjaan tani*, occupation farmer.

Golkar won only one seat in this area, and Umbu Remu Samapati, a cousin of Umbu Djima, gained another term in parliament. The only surprise was the seat for Markus Umbu Manung Pawolung, candidate of the PPDK. He is a cousin of the secretary general of the GKS, Umbu Dingu, the reverend with traditional charisma. He was selected as candidate for PPDK because he is member of the network of former pupils of Ryaas Rashid, the national leader of the PPDK, former Minister of Decentralization, and former rector of the Institute for Domestic Governance in Jakarta. Umbu Pawolung had a long bureaucratic career, starting as a sub-district head and subsequently serving as head of several departments in West Sumba. He refused Golkar candidacy.

In central Sumba, there were no new type of candidates, no young people, women, or lower status candidates nor elected as parliament members. West Sumba's new parliament had 24 new members after the 2004 elections, and 11 members already had a term in the previous parliament.<sup>11</sup>

At the same day in April there were also elections for the national parliament, but there were hardly any discussions about the result in Sumba. On the website of the general election committee KPU the results were published for the whole province, and they are presented in Annex I.

### *Presidential elections*

On 5 July 2004, the first round of the Presidential elections took place. In Sumba people were not very involved in national politics, and presidential elections seem to have little connection with Sumba. In spite of that, there was a voter turn out of 80 per cent.

A large majority of the votes in both East and West Sumba was for the incumbent president Megawati Sukarnoputri of the PDI-P. There is a remarkable difference between the result of the parliamentary elections and the presidential elections when analysed only in terms of political parties. In the April

Table 9.2. Results of the presidential elections on Sumba in July and September 2004 in percentage of the total number of votes\*

party	Wiranto Golkar	Mega- Hazyim PDI-P	Amien PAN	SBY PD	Hamzah PPP	invalid	Total number votes
<i>Percentage of votes</i>							
NTT	20	62	3	14	0	1	2,183,718
East Sumba	23	66	2	9	0	0	105,331
West Sumba	14	74	2	8	0	2	179,374
<i>Second round</i>							
East Sumba		80		20			102,327
West Sumba		81		19			155,252

\* Source: *Sabana* 59(24-31 July 2004) and website of General Election Committee: <http://tnp.kpu.go.id/kabupaten/26/6/index.html> (accessed on 12-10-2004).

<sup>11</sup> *Sabana* 60(21-28 August 2004):10.

elections for the DPRD in West Sumba PDI-P and Golkar received 29 per cent and 26 per cent of the votes, respectively, whereas in these presidential elections PDI-P received more than twice the number of votes than did Golkar.

Because nationally, the first round did not result in an immediate majority for one of the candidates, the second round was held on 26 September 2004. In East and West Sumba the Golkar votes of the first round were divided over the two candidate pairs and resulted in an eighty percent victory for Megawati, who lost nationally. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was elected as the new President of the Republic of Indonesia.

### *Pilkada*

June 2005 was the month of *pilkada*,<sup>12</sup> regional head elections, in seven provinces and 159 towns and districts all over Indonesia. For the first time in history, Indonesian citizens could elect their own district head, mayor, or governor directly. It was the most recent step in the process of decentralization, and one of the most remarkable powers that Indonesia's central government surrendered to the regions since 1999 (Malley 2003:102). The Indonesian weekly news magazine, *Tempo*, wrote in its special issue on these elections:

For many people this is a cause for cheer: now is the time for people to speak out and choose their leaders themselves. Others are horrified to see the negative excesses of local elections: clashes between supporters, money politics, and the emergence of antagonistic figures. Excesses are inevitable, but general elections are better than none at all. Without *pilkada*, corrupt leaders, their money politics, and conflicts remain. Times have changed – the era when regional leaders were assigned by Jakarta has ended. Now is the moment for people to speak.<sup>13</sup>

This quote is far more optimistic about the possibilities for the establishment of democracy in Indonesia than recent academic literature; there, the general conclusion up to 2004 seems to be that old political-administrative elites have effectively remained in control. Vedi Hadiz argued that 'old predatory interests incubated under the New Order's vast system of patronage have successfully reconstituted themselves within the new [democratic] regime. Through new alliances, they have effectively captured the institutions of democracy' (Hadiz 2003:119). Judgements such as these prompt us to ask whether the established elites and interests would also be able to get elected as *bupati*,

<sup>12</sup> Some parts about *pilkada* in this chapter were also part of the article '*Pilkada* in East Sumba: an old rivalry in a new democratic setting' (Vel 2005) originally published in the journal *Indonesia*. I thank the editors of *Indonesia* for their permission to reprint.

<sup>13</sup> *Tempo* (13-6-2005):12.

governor, or mayor in the new decentralized districts and provinces.

Compared to the 2004 parliament elections, *pilkada* was a more intense event. Attention in West Sumba concentrated on ten candidates instead of on 382 parliament candidates dispersed over five election areas. Rallies became larger in scale and business investment in campaigns increased. With enhanced regional autonomy and the increased budget, the position of *bupati* had become very attractive. The most significant innovation affecting the 2005 *pilkada* was that *bupati* and mayors were no longer chosen by local assembly members, but directly by the voters. The question for those aspiring to be *bupati* was no longer how to win the support of assembly members, but how to win the votes of the electorate. What were the candidates' election campaign strategies under these new conditions? Did the entrenched political-administrative elites also succeed in capturing this latest institution of democracy, or did direct election open up opportunities for new candidates?

The idea to have direct elections of regional<sup>14</sup> heads of government emerged as part of the revisions of Law 22 of 1999 on decentralization in 2004. Law 34 of 2004, enacted in September, also said in section 233 that in all regions where the current term of the district head, mayor, or governor would end before June 2005, direct elections would be held in June 2005. Both West and East Sumba were included in this category, which ultimately comprised a total of 159 districts and cities, and seven provinces. The date for the elections on Sumba was set for 30 June 2005.

The new system of direct elections turned the candidates' attention from assembly members towards the electorate, on the one hand, and to the central and regional boards of political parties, on the other. People who wanted to become candidates had to take four preparatory steps. Firstly, they had to find a political party to nominate them as aspirant candidate. Only the political parties that hold seats in the regional assembly are authorized to nominate candidates for regional head. For a single nomination, support of at least 15 per cent of the assembly seats is required, which makes it necessary for small parties to form a coalition. Secondly, the political party would create pairs of candidates, a regional head and his deputy, because only pairs can enter the elections. Thirdly, the political party's board chose between aspiring pairs and selected only one of them to stand as the final candidates. Fourth, each pair had to pass the screening of the KPUD to make sure that they meet all criteria outlined in section 58 of Law 32 of 2004. These criteria refer to, among other issues, the candidate's health, age, and educational level, his or her criminal record, and his or her reputation and knowledge of the region. The candidates also have

<sup>14</sup> The term 'regional' is used here as a translation of *daerah*, which can refer both to the provincial level (*daerah tingkat 1, propinsi*) and the district level (*daerah tingkat 2, kabupaten*).



to submit an overview of their personal assets and wealth to the KPUD and agree that they will raise no objection to these data being published. Finally, they had to obey the procedural election rules, which require, for instance, that they submit their nomination on time and refrain from engaging in campaign activities before the official campaign period, which is scheduled only 14 days prior to Election Day, with a rest of three days in between.

Money politics in these elections involved payments to the political party boards to assure their willingness to support certain candidates. A newspaper editorial commented that this practice is more and more regarded as a standard 'political cost,' giving such bribes a more acceptable and neutral name (Regus 2005). To raise these funds, every candidate was surrounded by investors, who were euphemistically called *tim sukses* ('success teams'). Political parties generally create campaign teams to assist the candidates in their election campaigns. In Indonesia, Golkar is the most successful party in that respect, since 'it is still the best organized political machine – it had 32 years of history and is much better off than other parties financially' (Suryadinata 2002:207).

Once a pair's official candidacy was assured, they could divert their attention to the electorate. The challenge was how to present their political identity in a way that would attract as many votes as possible. During the official election campaign, the KPUD set up a schedule to indicate when and where the five pairs of candidates could hold their election meetings, trying to avoid clashes between supporters. Popular assessment of the success of these meetings was first of all influenced by the number of people present. The size of the audience was measured by the number of plastic seats available and occupied (see photo p. 204), and the number of trucks and busses used to transport spectators to the site of the campaign event. In the reports which I heard, no one spoke about who was present; they just tallied up the size of the audience. In June 2005, the campaign audience was referred to with the term *romantis* an abbreviation for *rombongan makan gratis* (a group that attends to get a free meal). Those referred to as *romantis* remained anonymous, they were presumed to be weakly committed to the candidates whose events they enjoyed, and could easily attend another candidate's campaign meeting the next day in order to get another meal.

#### *West Sumba's pilkada candidates*

In West Sumba there were five candidate pairs. In the table below I list their names and party affiliation for this occasion and the last professional position they held before becoming a candidate. Only Golkar and PDI-P had enough seats to propose a candidate couple by themselves, whereas three other couples were proposed by coalitions of parties. Sabana newspaper

published an article in December 2004 in which all the names of the eventual candidates were mentioned as potential running mates for the incumbent Deputy District Head, which means as Golkar candidate. This suggests that these persons were not eligible as candidate because of their party affiliation, but apparently because of other criteria.

There were three types of candidates: (a) bureaucrats who were most of all Sumbanese nobility and who would boast about the importance of their (fore) fathers as *raja* or *bupati* (four of ten); (b) successful and wealthy Sumbanese living elsewhere (Jakarta, Kupang) who promised to bring prosperity, in

Table 9.3 West Sumba Pilkada candidate pairs, June 2005

no.	Candidate District Head	Candidate Deputy	Political Party	Last position
1	Jubilate Pieter Pandango, SPd (son raja Tana Righu)	Markus Dairo Talu SH	PPDK, PNI, PDI, PPelopor	Head Transport Department Sumba Barat – Army (TNI) in Jakarta
2	Drs. Julianus Pote Leba, M.Si	Dr. Kornelius Kodi Mete	Golkar	last Deputy District Head – Director General Hospital Waikabubak
3	Julius Bobo, SE, MM	Drs. Umbu Dedu Ngara	PDI-P	Businessman Jakarta – Parliament member SB, before Bappeda Kupang
4	Drs. Umbu Sappi Pateduk (=Umbu Bintang*) (son raja Anakalang)	Immanuel Horo, SH (Son raja Kodi)	PKPI, PKB, PPDI	Staff District Government (Assisten II) – Head of Transport Department East Sumba
5	Thimotius Langgar, SH	Drs. Agustinus Niga Dapawole (grandson raja Loli)	PAN, PDS, PBB, PKBP, PPP, PD, Patriot Pancasila, PNU, PPD**	last District Head – Sub-district Head

\* The difference between the official name and the name he uses is explained in the section on tradition.

\*\* This is a coalition of nine parties that did not get a seat in parliament, but together only 15% of the votes in the parliament elections in April 2004. This was a new rule, invented to make more candidacies possible.

form of business and industrialization, to Sumba (three of ten), and (c) well-educated, relatively young and clean politicians from lower social status who stressed their competence to deliver public services to the population of West Sumba (three of ten).

It is illuminating to assess the candidates in terms of Bourdieu's forms of capital, as explained in Chapter II. Cultural capital could be divided into traditional cultural capital that appears in social ranking and familiarity with Sumbanese adat, and secondly the cultural capital that is acquired through education and appears in academic titles and professional experience. Fame with regard to religion could also be regarded as part of cultural capital. All candidates in the *pilkada* are Christians, but for some their religious affiliation is an asset played out in the election campaign, whereas for others it is only a statistical fact. Kornelius Mete was most prominent in this respect because he had a reputation a good and active Catholic, and therefore he could attract the votes of the Catholic part of the electorate, which was nearly fifty percent.

Economic capital is hard to assess. The KPUD's rules required overviews of the candidates' personal assets and wealth, but these can be very incomplete, since businesses run in the name of family members are not covered and informal revenues will not be reported. Economic assets traditionally are measured in terms of land, livestock and labour, and it is the type of wealth associated with the higher nobility. That type of wealth is in this context incorporated into traditional cultural capital, since land and labour on Sumba cannot really be valued in monetary terms. Livestock can be sold and so it is a form of economic capital, but none of the candidates owns a large herd kept for commercial purposes. The assets of the two candidates from Jakarta who have earned their fortunes in trade (Julius Bobo) and the security business (Markus Dairo Talu) are more obvious. A strategic position in the bureaucracy or at a knot in corruption networks can also lead to considerable economic capital, and that is what is indicated in the second column of economic capital.

Social capital can also be divided into social capital on Sumba, and capital derived from networks outside Sumba that support political power. Both are required to gain high political positions. The candidates from Jakarta have excellent networks outside Sumba: Markus Dairu Talu is the chairman of the Union of Sumbanese in Jabotabek, the larger area around Jakarta, and Julius Bobo was member of the national Parliament for PDI-P since 1999. What these candidates lack is good networks on Sumba. By contrast, the candidates who spent most of their lives on Sumba have sufficient social capital on Sumba, but lack necessary and up-to-date connections outside the island.

Table 9.4 presents characteristics of West Sumba's *pilkada* candidates in terms of their forms of capital. The scores are only roughly indicated in terms of a plus and minus and are based in my interpretation of many types of informa-



Immanuel Horo and his father, June 2005

Table 9.4 Characteristics of the *pilkada* candidates in West Sumba, June 2005, in terms of the forms of capital (rough indication)

Name candidate	Cultural capital		Economic capital			Social capital		Capital accumulated (+)
	Traditional	Modern education and professional experience	Religion	Estimation assets	Due to previous/current position	On Sumba	Outside Sumba	
1a Jubilate Pieter Pandango, SPd	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	4
1b Markus Dairo Talu	--	-	+	++	++	-	++	7
2a Drs. Julianus Pote Leba, M.Si	-	++	+	-	+	+	+	6
2b Dr. Kornelius Kodi Mete	+	++	++	-	+	++	?	8
3a Julius Bobo, SE, MM	--	+	-	++	++	-	++	7
3b Drs. Uumbu Dedu Ngara	+	++	+	-	-	-	+	5
4a Drs. Uumbu Sappi Pateduk (=Uumbu Bintang*)	++	+	+	-	-	++	-	6
4b Imanuel Horo, SH	++	+	+	-	+	+	?	6
5a Thimotius Langgar, SH	-	++	+	-	+	+	?	5
5b Drs. A.N.Dapa-wole	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	4

\* The difference between the official name and the name he uses is explained in the section on tradition.

tion. The scores are not based on any precise type of measurement, but indicate relative positions of the candidates only. The last column shows the cumulated score, as a way to assess the candidates' status and political power.

Following the assessment in this table, pair two, Pote Leba and doctor Nelis, get the highest ranking. Pair four, Umbu Bintang and Imanuel Horo, and pair three are in second position. With hindsight it appears that not only the quantity of capital is decisive in winning elections, but also whether the amount is a balanced composition of the different types of capital. It must not be just based on economic capital, as in the argument that '*bupati* positions are for sale', nor just on cultural capital, as it is argued when saying that traditional elite capture the state positions. The real result of the elections was a victory for pair two with 33 per cent of the votes and second pair four with nearly 20 per cent. The next sections centre on these two pairs detailing the competition between old and new types of rule in Sumba.

#### *Umbu Bintang: the performing prince*

Umbu Bintang is the son of Umbu Remu Samapati, who was raja Anakalang and in 1962 became the second *bupati* of West Sumba until he died in 1973 (Kapita 1976b:61). His official name is Umbu Sappi Pateduk, just like his grandfather's. The nickname Umbu Bintang refers to the sign of decoration his grandfather received from the Colonial Government: from the paraphernalia of local leaders, he was honoured with a star, *bintang* in Indonesian, and subsequently called *raja bintang*.

In the previous chapters Umbu Bintang was already mentioned several times. Both he and his cousin Umbu Djima were sent from Anakalang to Java for further education. Umbu Bintang came back to Sumba in 1990. He wanted to live in his home area, to be able to combine his government career with his tasks as leader of his clan. He became the head of BAPPEDA in West Sumba, and already wanted to be District Head in 1995, but was not appointed. After the 1999 elections it was the first time since 1958 that the District Head was to be elected by the regional parliament. It was chance for Umbu Bintang to get the position 'he was raised and educated for'.<sup>15</sup> As he regarded himself part of the establishment it was only natural that he was a candidate of Golkar and not PDI-P, the party of change in 1999. Several ambitious Golkar members competed for the highest district position and the result was that the PDI-P single candidate from Wewewa, Thimotius Langgar received the

<sup>15</sup>

Expression from his *pilkada* speech in Kabunduk, see next section.



Umu Bintang at his election rally in Anakalang, June 2005

position,<sup>16</sup> leaving Umu Bintang with the minor position of second assistant of the District Head. Umu Bintang was frustrated after he missed his second chance to become *bupati*. His followers felt that 'Anakalang lost power', and that was among the motives to start the campaign for Central Sumba, as described in Chapter VIII.

Umu Bintang thus did not have – in Weber's terms – the legal legitimacy of the state to be the leader of West Sumba, a position he always wanted to have. The June 2005 elections were a new opportunity for him to cash his legitimacy in other spheres in order to get democratically elected as district head, the highest state office. Traditional cultural capital was his strongest point, and his senior position in one of the leading clans in Anakalang also brought him ample social capital on Sumba. His social capital could have been much larger were he not a stubborn man who was embroiled with Umu Djima and with his own brother Umu Kupang, who is a political broker in Jakarta. Another factor undermining his claims to be the most Sumbanese of all candidates was the fact that he was married to a Javanese woman, which places a Sumbanese man as an outsider in the local kinship system. He tried to solve the problem of her ethnicity by constructing fic-

<sup>16</sup> Previously Th. Langgar SH was Sekwilda in the district Timor Tengah Utara, had always been Golkar member but switched in time to PDI-P.

tive kinship. T. Lero Ora, the Golkar chairman and main character in Bloody Thursday violence in Waikabubak, who already had a relationship with Umbu Bintang's family which made him bride-giver, acted in the name of his father as Umbu Bintang's father-in-law. This might have been a solution to the kinship problem, but it did not end rumours that Umbu Bintang's wife was very dominant, was more successful because she held a position as Head of a Department and that she was more than just an advisor to her husband.

In 2005, Golkar supported the incumbent Deputy District Head, Pote Leba, as their candidate. Umbu Bintang found support from PKPI, and additionally PKB and PPDI. He chose Imanuel Horo as his candidate deputy, who was, just like Umbu Bintang himself, known as the son of a raja in West Sumba. Horo's home area is Kodi and that area counts for 22 per cent of the total electorate of West Sumba. However, Imanuel Horo does not live in Kodi, since he is head of the Transport Department in East Sumba. Their heritage became their hallmark and they stressed their knowledge of the culture and the needs of the people in West Sumba. How to convey this message to the electorate was their main challenge and the strategy they chose to achieve this was to perform in huge rallies

#### *Election rally in Kabunduk, Central Sumba*

On 21 June 2005, Umbu Bintang and Imanuel Horo held their largest campaign feast in Umbu Bintang's home village Kabunduk, Anakalang. West Sumba's General Election Committee had made a schedule for the 14 days of campaigning, and on this day couple number four was scheduled in the Anakalang area. The usual programme of a campaign meeting in these District Head Elections in West Sumba consisted of several items: welcome by the organising local committee, performance of popular songs by a band, speeches of political party representatives, a speech by a member of the local elite, a speech by the candidate Deputy District Head, and lastly, a speech by the candidate District Head. Somewhere during the event a meal of rice and meat would be served, preferably at the end. Campaign meetings are open for everyone; there are no private invitations.

What made the event in Kabunduk different from other campaign meetings was that this one was held in the traditional village of Umbu Bintang's ancestors, and that the election campaigning was mixed with a type of traditional feasting with Umbu Bintang and his relatives as host. The character of the meeting changed, the audience was no longer anonymous, and people came as Umbu Bintang's visitors, paying respect and tribute to him. Umbu Bintang's coordinating team had distributed oral invitations, for example to the staff of primary schools, so that they and the pupils would be able to



come. The local organising committee was mixed too: chairman coordinator was Umbu Siwa, head of the village Kabunduk, retired sub-district Head and Umbu Bintang's brother within the clan; members of Anakalang's youth association took care of many practical management tasks, whereas the village women and men of lower social status had been working for days to prepare the meals.

Kabunduk is a *paraingu*, a traditional village, with about ten large traditional houses, built in two rows along a 300 meter-long rectangular square. In the middle, there is a road. A smaller sort of house on the left catches the eye when entering Kabunduk: it covers the huge tomb erected for Umbu Remu Samapati, former raja of Anakalang and *bupati* in West Sumba, and Umbu Bintang's father. Just behind it is Umbu Bintang's ancestral house, where his father's youngest wife still resides. Each house in Kabunduk was assigned a special task for the event on 21 June, including hosting duties for one of the groups representing a specific part of the area, in this case election area five. These groups started to arrive from early morning on, many of them carrying a banner in front of them indicating the administrative area they represented, they were singing songs as if they were adat groups on their way to a traditional ceremony.<sup>17</sup>

Although Umbu Bintang actually was the host for this event, he came by in mid-day from his residence in the capital Waikabubak after two-thirds of the visitors had arrived already. He left his car outside the gate and walked up to his house, together with his wife and children, dressed in traditional costume, including sword. He climbed up the house to greet his mother, as he was weeping. There he awaited the arrival of his election companion Imanuel Horo, who would come with his own following of people from Kodi. That took a long time. Umbu Bintang and his wife told the coordinating committee to announce that the groups from far could start eating, because most of them had been travelling since early in the morning. Youth members of the coordinating committee persuaded Umbu Bintang and his wife to entertain the crowds by performing some songs. At the podium in the middle of the Kabunduk square a popular band had been playing since early in the morning, and the musicians were ready to accompany any singer. Umbu Bintang started with a few popular Christian songs, and together with his wife he sang their special campaign song, addressing the audience with the chorus 'vote for number four'.

When Imanuel Horo was reported to be close to Kabunduk, people rushed to the gate to witness the welcome ceremony. The spectators measured Horo's

<sup>17</sup> Adat groups (*rombongan adat*) consist of people who belong to a certain clan (*kabilu*) and are heading for a ceremony. The groups arriving in Kabunduk identified themselves with the names of their *desa*, the village unit of administration.

following from Kodi by counting the number of trucks and busses arriving with him. Imanuel Horo is one of the youngest children of the former (late) raja of Kodi, son of raja Horo's fifth wife. He was only 10 years old when his father died. The traditional relationship between the clans puts Horo in the position of bride-giver and Umbu Bintang, bride-receiver. Accordingly Imanuel Horo brought a large pig, the appropriate gift of a bride-giver, and Umbu Bintang's party responded with giving a buffalo. An adat speaker conducted the welcoming ceremony in ritual speech, amplified because of the crowds, and extremely shortened because of the tight schedule of the programme. After that, Imanuel Horo and the core of his following walked over to Umbu Remu's tomb and met Umbu Bintang there. They walked over in front of the tomb, and a short ceremony of ritual crying, calling the name and spirit of the venerated father. Then they said a short prayer, placed hand woven cloth on top of the tomb as a sign of respect, and scattered flower petals. All members of the core group in this ceremony lit a candle for Umbu Remu and put it on the inner stone of the tomb. Two kinds of people who would never take part in these intimate adat and *marapu* ceremonies in the past were invited to join the core group: a few Chinese businessmen who obviously belonged to Umbu Bintang's promotion team, and cameramen.<sup>18</sup>

Finally the official programme could start. Reverend Foni Priscilla Papilaya, who was invited to open the meeting with prayer, startled the audience with a loud and clear reprimand. She questioned whether she should ask the Lord for his blessing on this meeting, when half an hour earlier people started eating their feast meal without asking the Lord's blessing over the food. 'If my prayer is just a formality, then what does it mean?' she asked. Afterwards she prayed anyway and included her prayer that the Lord would guide people on 30 June to vote for the right candidates, and prayed the Lord would bless this couple of candidates. She thanked the Lord for bringing so many people to Kabunduk to attend the meeting, and thanked for bringing the two families of Umbu Bintang and Imanuel Horo together. Subsequently a teacher from Kabunduk was invited to lead the audience in singing the national anthem. The next item on the agenda was a short ceremony to memorialize the national heroes, an obligatory programme item for every public meeting New Order style, led by Umbu Bintang, as an obedient servant of the nation, who shortened the ceremony to two minutes only.

Next was the usual program of election meetings, the speeches of the party representative and the candidates themselves. In Kabunduk this lasted 45 minutes, which is extremely short in this context. Imanuel Horo stressed his and Umbu Bintang's indigenous qualities: they were raised by their

<sup>18</sup> Including myself: one camera woman.

fathers who were both important leaders on Sumba in the past, sent to Java to receive the best education in preparation to follow their father's footsteps, worked on Sumba for a long time and knew about the needs of the people. 'We do not have to learn about this area, we can immediately start working' Horo said. He also explained that his partnership with Umbu Bintang was no coincidence: they have known each other very well since they were students at the Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, where they shared a room and where they both were board members of the Indonesian Christian Student Movement (GMKI).

Umbu Bintang started his speech with another song, half spoken and half sung, to stress his love for the people of West Sumba. He spoke in a loud staccato style and increasing rhythm, of the shame that there were still so many hungry, unhealthy, illiterate people in West Sumba and that that would change if he were District Head. He responded to his opponents' accusation that he misused the fame of his father by saying: 'I am his son, his blood, so to refer to the great Umbu Remu... that is my right!' The audience yelled and applauded and Umbu Bintang unsheathed his sword and danced a few steps of the traditional war dance. Then he went on warning that if people would scold or hate or curse him, they would surely be punished by the Lord. He ended with the promises not to be focussed on fancy buildings or ways to enrich himself, and that love and concern for the people of West Sumba was his only motivation to become District Head.

At the end of the election ceremony a ritual specialist was invited to close the programme with a traditional vow, *sumpah adat*. The vow actually should have been several couplets of ritual language, followed by a confirming *yewoungu* yell from the audience and women's ululating. But the ritual specialist got confused or inspired by the previous speeches in Indonesian, and started each part of the vow with an explanation in Indonesian that sounded so ridiculous, that the audience's cheers were full of laughter instead of serious confirmations.

Those who belonged to an official group stayed to enjoy their meal, many others who had come to see the spectacle went home without a meal. Umbu Bintang could look back on a successful event, since most estimates said about 20,000 people had attended, which was by far the largest audience of any election campaign event. The audience consisted mostly of ordinary men and women, while members of the elite, or those who belonged to the political class were notably absent. The reason for their absence was that civil servants were not allowed to take part in elections activities, and second, that elite in Anakalang never attend a ceremony without a personal invitation that explains their role in the ceremony. They sent their children and heard their report afterwards.

*Symbols, rhetoric and 'the angry man'*

Umbu Bintang and Imanuel Horo's main strategies to win votes were to present themselves as heirs of famous rulers and use Sumbanese tradition and customs as the basis for their legitimacy as leaders. They dressed in traditional costume. Horo came to Kabunduk in traditional style, *secara adat*, bringing a pig and presenting his followers in terms of kinship politics as bride-givers. This gift exchange underlines the alliance between the two extended clans, reminding onlookers of the exchange ceremonies that take place at weddings or funerals of members of these groups. This exchange on 21 June in Kabunduk was purely symbolic, since it was only a fragment of a ceremony that should last much longer and consist of negotiations between the parties. The message conveyed was that 'Kodi and Anakalang are allies, and we can count on joint support'. Umbu Bintang and Imanuel Horo also wanted to stress how Sumbanese they are and how well they know the people, especially if compared to other candidates who have lived most of their lives in Jakarta or Kupang, or the bureaucrats who never leave their office.

They wanted to be perceived as natural leaders. They assessed that reference to their fathers would reinforce their 'natural' leadership. The ceremony before Umbu Remu's tomb was a compromise ritual: for those who adhere to *marapu*-belief it was a ritual to ask the consent of the deified ancestor, especially the ceremonial weeping part, and presenting woven cloths. For Christians it could be interpreted as paying respect to the memory of the deceased by burning a candle on the tomb. In political terms they appropriated the heritage of a powerful leader, claiming succession and the support of the deceased leader's followers. It was a form of traditional legitimacy.

Most people in Sumba have only limited knowledge of the past, of their traditional religion and *adat*, let alone about the supernatural. Yet, the symbols used by Umbu Bintang and Imanuel Horo are still appeal to many, perhaps because the traditional norms of leadership are unconsciously internalized. The way the traditional vow at the end of the ceremony, *sumpah adat*, was performed and received, shows the dilemma of manipulating tradition: what according to the ritual experts is excellently appropriate might be without effect, because it does not appeal to the audience or because the performance was bad.

Being a successful politician on Sumba is also a matter of being an excellent orator. The style of rhetoric that works best is culturally determined and changes constantly. In 2004-2005, political rhetoric in local election campaigns on Sumba and in the lobby for creating new districts consisted of a combination of Christian sanctimonious talk, New Order jargon, quasi-ritual speech, colloquial talk and fashionable television language, appealing to different groups or different identities in the audience. Joel Kuipers (1990:i) has stated in his book *Power in performance* that on the island of Sumba a vibrant form

of ritual speech is required in all ceremonial events, and that statement could have been part of a manual for election campaigns. Umbu Bintang is no master of ritual speech but he adopted its style in the campaign in Kabunduk. The style of a traditional type of leader is fierce, competitive and masculine. This is the style of the 'angry man' (*kabani mbani*), the word *mbani*, refers to 'anger, daring, threatening, rage' (Kuipers 1998:48-9). The anger involved is not emotional, but instead institutionalized public anger that reveals that the person involved is central, masculine, and defining and exemplary of the social order. When Umbu Bintang addressed the audience in his Kabunduk campaign speech, he displayed himself in his capacity as an 'angry man'. His speech was like all good ritual speech on Sumba, loud with a pulsating flow of words. He drew his sword and danced a few steps of the traditional war dance.

Umbu Bintang simultaneously applied a completely different rhetoric style at the event in Kabunduk: he performed popular songs, which on Sumba have mainly Christian lyrics (in Bahasa Indonesia). A good election campaign in Indonesia should include singing performances, and the best campaigners are those who can sing a song themselves. This feature has been popular in the Philippines for a long time and was introduced in Indonesia during the presidential elections in 2004, where presidential candidates Wiranto and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono turned out to be good singers. Umbu Bintang's wife joined in the singing. Their performance conveyed – in contrast with the aggressive, masculine traditional style of rhetoric – the image of harmonious family life and love for the Lord and the people.

Both Imanuel Horo and Umbu Bintang wanted to stress in their election campaign that they are good Christians. Horo used the fact that his father started his career as village evangelist to underline his Christian education. Because it was the policy of the Dutch protestant missions to ask children of nobility to be the pupils of their school, Umbu Bintang's family also have been educated well for generations. The shared history of going to the Christian schools created alliance between the nobility of different regions in Sumba. They were class mates, and subsequently some of them became fellow members of the GMKI, widening the alliance network with members from other parts of Indonesia. The GMKI functions as an 'old boys network' that helps members from outer regions to get access to power holders in the centre of the country, Jakarta. Being a good Christian on Sumba is still associated with being modern, educated and having access to the larger world of which Sumba is only a small part. Christian pop songs are symbols of modernity on Sumba, associated with mass media and modern electronic equipment.

Reverend Foni's reprimand was an unexpected and unplanned flaw in the rally. Her reprimand could suggest that there was a debate on Sumba regarding the limits of using Christian prayer for campaigns. She openly questioned the political use of her Christian performance. Yet, when I asked

local informants why she gave this reprimand, they explained that it was not a theological or Christian ethical issue. They said it was most of all a way to get back on Umbu Bintang and restore her status a leader within the local Christian hierarchy. The informants said that Reverend Foni had tried her very best to resolve the feud between Umbu Bintang and Umbu Djima, but in spite of all her efforts, the two remained rivals. Reverend Foni was frustrated with the fact that two important members of her congregation were not willing to accept peace.

*Pote Leba: the intellectual bureaucrat*

To many in Anakalang it came as a surprise that the Golkar candidate pair Julianus Pote Leba and Kornelius Kode Mete won the elections in West Sumba.<sup>19</sup> Neither belongs to Sumba's nobility, as did their main competitors. Pote Leba was the vice-*bupati* in the previous term, and known as a competent and modest man. He is not a very charismatic leader, and he did not organize large campaign feasts as Umbu Bintang did. Pote Leba's father was a policeman from Loli, the domain in which Waikabubak is now located, and served a long time as Head of Police (*kapolsek*) in Anakalang. Pote Leba went to school in Waikabubak until graduation in 1974. At the secondary school, Ibu John, the 'mother' of the movement for Central Sumba, was one of his teachers. He continued his studies at the Nusa Cendana University in Kupang, and after graduation he became lecturer in Public Administration at that same University, where Umbu Djima was also lecturer and Dean. He gained some international experience when he enrolled in a course on Academic and Institutional Networking, which brought him to Germany, Switzerland and Austria in 1998.<sup>20</sup> Pote Leba was involved in Christian networks and Golkar during the 24 years he lived in Kupang, where two of his main organizational positions were chairman of the Kupang branch of the GMKI (1979-1981), and vice-secretary of the DPRD II for Golkar in Kupang District. In Kupang he met his wife Leny Henuk, whose ethnic roots lie in the island of Rote; she also studied in Kupang. In Anakalang, people told me that she is a first cousin of Umbu Bintang's half-brother, Umbu Kupang, who is a Sumbanese Golkar broker in Jakarta. This connects her to the kinship structures in Anakalang through marriage alliance.

Why did he win the elections? Part of the answer is that he was a new type of (vice-) *bupati* which emerged after the demise of the New Order. In 1998, the national atmosphere in Indonesia required clearing away the old political elite

<sup>19</sup> This section is also based on an interview with Julianus Pote Leba, Waikabubak, 1-9-2006.

<sup>20</sup> His curriculum vitae was published in 'Memori pelaksanaan tugas *bupati* Sumba Barat tahun 2000-2005', District Secretariat of Kabupaten West Sumba, 2005.

and replacing them by new, 'clean' leaders. As revealed by Bloody Thursday in Waikabubak, *bupati* Malo epitomized the old and deficient leadership, but it was not until after the 1999 parliamentary elections that he could be replaced by a new *bupati*. PDI-P was the largest party in the West Sumbanese parliament with 15 seats out of 35, so its parliament members had a large vote in determining the *bupati* in 2000. They chose Thimotius Langgar to be *bupati*, who was also a clean bureaucrat at the provincial level of government, originating from Wewewa. The fact that Pote Leba originated from Loli was an important argument in his favor, because a *bupati*/vice-*bupati* pair from these two areas could serve a public symbol of reconciliation between the two sub-ethnic groups. Pote Leba's wife became Head of the Department of Social Affairs.

Thimotius Langgar's banner during the June 2005 elections said 'remember all my achievements in the last five years for West Sumba', but whenever I asked people in the road to give examples they could not mention much. Moreover, negative concerns, like the uncooperative attitude in the process of creating new districts, were usually attributed to Langgar's activities, while Pote Leba kept the reputation of competent and clean bureaucrat.

Therefore, it was not surprising that drawing nearer to the *pilkada* in June 2005, Pote Leba was talked about as one of the main candidates in addition to Langgar and Umbu Bintang. PDI-P dropped their own former *bupati* Langgar and opted for a wealthy candidate, Julius Bobo, businessman and politician in Jakarta originating from Wewewa. Langgar gathered nine tiny parties to support him, and he entered the elections as the fifth candidate, together with raja Loli's grandson who was *camat* of *kecamatan* Loli. Golkar had supported Umbu Bintang's candidacy for *bupati* in two previous terms, and both times he lost. In 2004, Golkar decided to choose Pote Leba as their candidate, and Umbu Bintang had to assemble a coalition of smaller parties.

A second reason for Pote Leba's victory was that he chose Kornelius Kode Mete, better known as doctor Nelis, as his deputy. Doctor Nelis was Head of the General Hospital in West Sumba's capital Waikabubak. Like Pote Leba, he was relatively young and 'clean'. His best political characteristics were his reputation and charisma as medical doctor, and his religious and ethnic identity: he was a Catholic from Kodi. In hindsight, those turned out to be important qualities. By partnering with doctor Nelis, Pote Leba gained support of the Catholic Church in Sumba. The only other Catholic candidate was the not very well-known Markus Dairo Talu. The number of Catholics in West Sumba has increased over the last five years and according to the chairman of the KPUD 50 per cent of the voters in West Sumba's *pilkada* were Catholic. Why people converted to Catholicism is hard to judge, but the distribution

of free rice by a Catholic Foundation<sup>21</sup> certainly helped to make poorer people in Sumba feel sympathetic to this church and made a vote for a Catholic candidate an easy reciprocal gift. Through associations with Catholic food aid and the main hospital, this pair of candidates became associated by the poor with health and food.

Doctor Nelis was also a good choice in regards to ethnic voting. Most of West Sumba's population resides in the western domains of this district, and Kodi is one of those domains. After the votes were counted, it turned out that Pote Leba and doctor Nelis had won 34 per cent of the votes and a third of their votes came from Kodi. Doctor Nelis was the one who could win votes with his charisma: not the traditional type of leader's charisma that would appear from loud and angry speeches, but the charisma of a sociable doctor who visits people and cares about them. In the campaign rallies this pair presented themselves as modest and competent; their slogan was *dari rakyat untuk rakyat* (from the people for the people) to distinguish themselves from their noble competitors whose main argument was their 'inherited right' to the throne.

#### *Golkar, bureaucrats and businessmen*

Although it was clear that Pote Leba was one of the main candidate for *bupati*, for a long time it was not clear which political party would nominate him. Golkar seemed to be the only party that selected candidates on their capacity to win the elections. In other cases, the candidates selected parties to nominate them by paying *onkos politik*, the euphemism for bribes to the political party board. Golkar is known among the political parties in Indonesia to have 'the best-organized political machine' (Suryadinata 2002:207). Moreover, having their candidate elected as *bupati* would bring more financial gains in the long run than just the short term benefits of pre-election bribes paid by aspiring candidates.

Umbu Djima hosted Pote Leba's campaign rally in Anakalang, as if he were Pote Leba's father. It was a clear statement in the area where Umbu Bintang was extremely popular, that Golkar did not support Umbu Bintang but Pote Leba. With this rally Pote Leba was drawn into the long rivalry between the two Umbu's from Anakalang and became indebted to Umbu Djima.

Organising campaign rallies in general required support from various networks: from the Church, political party, home community and businessmen.

<sup>21</sup> The Food Aid distributed by Karitas in Waitabula was 300,000 kg in 2005 according to information I obtained in an interview with a Chinese trader in agricultural commodities in Waikabubak, 1-9-2006. Allegedly, this rice is American food aid, since the bags carry American flags.



4

**Mari Bersama Kita Meraih Cita - Cita  
Dalam Bingkai Nurani “Pada Eweta Manda Elu”**



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“ **UMBU BINTANG** ”  
Calon Bupati Sumba Barat  
Periode : 2005 - 2010



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Periode : 2005 - 2010

**BERJUANG BERSAMA RAKYAT MEMBANGUN  
SUMBA BARAT YANG ADIL, SEJAHTERA DAN BERSATU**

Election flyer showing *pilkada* pair 4 in their modern bureaucrat identity

Campaigning was a process of mobilising networks and accumulating funds and support from each of them.

Particularly important was support from bureaucrats: all people employed by the government, and in particular, civil servants. Bureaucrats make up the core of Sumba's political class. Together the bureaucrats form a strong network of vested interests, still closely linked to Golkar. Election law explicitly prohibited civil servants from participating in any election activities.<sup>22</sup> Therefore public discussions concerning the district head elections had to be conducted without public contributions from this educated elite group. They could voice their opinions through others who were allowed to express their support openly, for instance (unemployed) youths, retired civil servants, private entrepreneurs, farmers, NGO workers, and so forth. The bureaucrats also refrained from participating in the election gatherings, except when a candidate happened to be a very close relative. Bureaucrats were not only motivated to maintain a low profile by the law prohibiting their involvement

<sup>22</sup> Law 32 of 2004 about Regional Government, section 79 and 80.

in district head election politics; their private assessments of risk would have also inclined them to keep quiet. Those who openly supported a candidate who then failed to win the election might well have put their professional positions at risk. The district head cannot easily dismiss civil servants, but he can certainly block any upward mobility in their bureaucratic career.

All candidates tried to find organized support in the months previous to the elections. Organized support was arranged through institutions that have their own types of social organization and hierarchies, and their own norms and rules of conduct. In elections, political parties are self-evidently such institutions. In Sumba, the private business sector, the church, the state bureaucracy, and traditional kinship and customary law structures can also be used to acquire support. All pairs of candidates in the district head elections were surrounded by a *tim sukses*, the promotion team, which consisted of advisors, investors, well-known supporters, and party officials. Golkar organized a promotion team in every election area, and its members held meetings with local leaders to inform them about the advantages of choosing their candidate.<sup>23</sup> The other political parties did not have such a well-organized and widespread network. The identities of the investors involved in their promotion teams were not always clear. Some local businessmen, nearly all ethnic Chinese, openly declared their support for one of the candidates, while others reduced their risk by contributing to the campaigns of several candidates. In Sumba, the district head is very influential in all business contracts and contracting projects. Local businessmen are extremely important in an election campaign: they control the whole transport sector in Sumba, and the candidates need their trucks and busses to transport their supporters. Their support is also vital when it comes to handling the logistics involved in campaign feasting, especially for those candidates who could not muster sufficient support and contributions from the local population to help supply all the ingredients necessary to create a commensal feast.

The final election victory was said to be the result of Golkar's party machine. Golkar in Sumba still has a large organization, from the district level down to the villages. In the 'silent week' before the election day, when allegedly, Umbu Binting was already planning his cabinet, the Golkar machine worked at full strength, and party cadres visited all key persons in West Sumba and tried to convince them with gifts and bribes. To stick to Golkar was also a safe choice for people who work as civil servants. Golkar always

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Paulus Saga Anakaka, Golkar Promotion Team member, in Anakalang, 20 June 2005. Paulus S. Anakaka graduated in Malang, was chairman of the Christian Students' Organization in Malang (GMKI), is an active member of Golkar in West Sumba, and is currently unemployed (that is, he has no position in the bureaucracy), yet working in agriculture and as chairman of a farmers' group.

was their organization, and to change would also mean a step outside this network. The Golkar pair won 46 per cent of the votes in the capital and 60 per cent of the votes in Loli, the domain around the capital.

### *The result*

The elections in June 2005 brought a victory for Pote Leba and doctor Nelis, who received a third of the votes in West Sumba. Umbu Bintang and Imanuel Horo were second with 19.6 per cent and the other three candidate pairs all earned between 14 per cent and 16.7 per cent of the votes. Table 9.5 presents the election results per sub-district. That overview shows that all candidates won in their home-area, with the single exception of Umbu Dedu Ngara whose home area voted in majority for Umbu Bintang. Umbu Dedu Ngara never showed much personal affection with his home area Lawonda, nor did he present himself in terms of sub ethnic identity; his real home remained Kupang or his house in Waikabubak. Only four candidates reached a two-thirds majority of the votes or more in their home area: Thimotius Langgar, Umbu Bintang, doctor Nelis, and Julianus Pandango.

Pote Leba clearly won in the capital Waikabubak and surrounding area Loli. After Bloody Thursday Golkar became associated with Loli's (sub-ethnic) identity and the many civil servants who reside in that area.

Pairs one, three and five had roots in Wewewa and therefore they divided the ethnic votes from that area. Thirty-one percent of the votes originate in Wewewa, and if there had been only one candidate from this area, his chances for winning the elections would have been considerable. What happened in 1999 with the Golkar vote, happened now with the sub-ethnic vote, so that in 2005 'Wewewa lost'. Pote Leba and doctor Nelis owed their victory to a large extent to the voters in Kodi and Kodi Bangedo. Annex II presents the results from area as percentage of the total number of votes per pair, and shows that 43.6 per cent of Pote Leba and doctor Nelis's votes were earned in the two Kodi areas. The capital and Loli accounted for 21 per cent of their votes and nearly 20 per cent can be interpreted as Catholic votes from Loura and Wewewa. Only 5.4 per cent of the votes in Umbu Djima's area went to Pote Leba.

One of the reasons why Umbu Bintang lost is that his home area is so sparsely populated. The majority of the three sub-districts that would have/will compose Central Sumba voted for him, but unfortunately only 14.3 per cent of the total electorate of West Sumba resides there.

In August 2005 Pote Leba and doctor Nelis were officially inaugurated as new *bupati* and deputy *bupati* of West Sumba for 2005-2010. After that inauguration another result of the elections became apparent: the debts of the winning pair. They had to reciprocate the 'services' of businessmen who financed

Table 9.5 Results of *pilkada* elections in June 2005 in West Sumba per sub-district in percentage of the total number of votes.

Kecamatan	Home area of	Pair 1	Pair 2	Pair 3	Pair 4	Pair 5	Voters registered 222.002 head
Wewewa							
South	Th. Langgar (5)	9.4	5.8	4.2	0.9	79.7	5.6
East	J. Bobo (3)	11.5	17.4	51.2	3.8	16.0	12.5
West	Markus DT (1)	41.9	14.1	18.3	4.1	21.7	10.4
North	No	30.5	24.6	21.8	4.1	19.0	2.7
Kodi	Doctor Nelis (2)	7.4	67.7	8.5	9.0	7.4	15.5
Kodi Bangedo	I. Horo (4)	6.6	51.2	9.5	18.6	14.1	6.5
Katikutana	U. Bintang (4)	1.3	5.4	12.9	76.8	3.5	8.2
Umbu Ratu							
Nggai	U. Dedu Ngara(3)	7.9	13.4	10.0	54.8	13.8	2.9
Memboro	no	6.0	32.4	23.4	30.3	7.9	3.2
Loli	Pote Leba (2)/ Dapawole (5)	5.4	60.0	6.2	14.4	14.0	6.0
Waikabubak	Pote Leba (2)/ Dapawole (5)	5.8	46.5	5.4	23.6	18.8	7.2
Loura		16.8	43.0	14.1	13.7	12.3	6.7
Lamboya		7.6	17.9	20.6	30.8	23.1	5.4
Wanukaka		1.9	34.4	9.7	34.2	19.8	3.6
Tana Righu	Jubi Pandango (1)	76.8	9.8	5.2	2.7	5.5	3.7
Total West Sumba		14.2	33.3	16.3	19.6	16.7	100

\* Data from KPUD in West Sumba.

their campaign. The common way to do this is to assign large projects. The most supportive contractor in the Catholic centre Waitabula won the tender for the extension of the airport in West Sumba, and one of the best supporters in Waikabubak received the assignment to build or rehabilitate schools. Members of the *bupati's* former *pilkada* 'success team' also faced easier procedures when they were asking for permits.

Ethnic and religious considerations enter the post-*pilkada* politics in the assignments of new heads of departments. Officially this is firmly denied, but it is common knowledge that active support is reciprocated in that way. The political sensitivity of this subject also became apparent when one year after

the inauguration of the new *bupati*, it still was not decided who would be the new heads of departments.

The *bupati's* debt to Golkar is to have a subordinate position in the party's hierarchy and to let party interests at a higher-level influence decisions in West Sumba. Outside investors who are linked with the Golkar network in Sumba or in Jakarta or elsewhere, have an easier access to this area.

### Conclusion

After this overview of general elections on Sumba, the first conclusion to emerge is that direct elections for positions in Sumba's government have brought politics much closer to the people. Nearly 400 local candidates were on the list for the district parliament elections in 2004 in West Sumba, and they all campaigned and discussed politics in their own environment. In that sense direct elections had a positive effect on democratization in Sumba. A second conclusion from the analysis of recent elections is that people in West Sumba, and especially the *tani*-class, tend to vote for persons, not for political parties. At the district parliament elections, social distance seemed to be a decisive criterion, people voted for the candidates of their own group, whether in terms of kinship, neighbourhood, religious affiliation or shared membership of another social network. There was disappointment after the elections that some of the candidates who received a lot of votes did not get a parliament seat because they occupied a low position at the party's list.

Personal identity of the candidates in the *pilkada* elections was also very important. In more abstract terms, their identity can be assessed by the amount of the various forms of capital as defined by Bourdieu and explained in Chapter II. To enact an election campaign strategy, the candidates had to focus on one or two of these capital assets as the main reason behind their alleged superiority. Pote Leba and doctor Nelis, the candidate pair that won the elections, jointly had a large amount of capital. The victory of this pair supports the argument that not just the quantity of capital is decisive in winning elections, but that the amount should be a balanced composition of the different types of capital. If economic capital would be sufficient by itself, then '*bupati* positions would be for sale', and the Jakarta based businessman-politician Julius Bobo would have had the best chance of winning. If traditional capital would be enough, then the traditional elite could capture the state positions because of their nobility and patrimonial status, and Umbu Bintang would surely have won.

There is an exception to the rule that people vote for persons and not for parties, which is a third conclusion with regard to democratic elections in Sumba. Members of the political class, especially civil servants, who belong

to the establishment, tend to vote for the Golkar candidate. They already have good positions and keeping them is their direct interest. Strengthening the Golkar network is favourable to their private goal. The Golkar pair's victory in the capital and Loli, which are two areas of high civil servant density, supports this argument.

The fourth conclusion about elections is that there is strong ethnic voting. All but one candidate won in their own home area, with four of the ten candidates earning more than two-thirds of the votes. Yet, the ethnic vote can never be sufficient for an election victory in West Sumba, and to win votes outside their home area, candidates have to engage other political identities. Being Catholic, for instance, turned out to be an asset, a valuable political identity in an electorate that consists of nearly 50 per cent of Catholics and in a field of competition where only two of the ten candidates adhered to this religion.



## CHAPTER X

# Conclusions

Democratization is a lengthy, contextualized and often unpredictable process in which elements of democratic regime according to plan or theory articulate with long-established patterns of governance and politics in a specific society. This book described that process in West Sumba over the period 1986-2006. Local leaders in Sumba have used the opportunities created by changes in the national political context in Indonesia in that period and have adapted well to these changes. Consequently, the style of local politics changed, as did the criteria for leadership.

Although 21 May 1998 is now always mentioned as the landmark indicating the start of a new period in history in which Indonesia would be quickly transformed into a democracy, introducing democracy was attempted earlier, and also on Sumba. Onvlee (1973:118) narrated about the first democratic period after independence:

In [...] 1946 I attended a meeting between the representative of the Dutch East Indies government and several West Sumbanese leaders at the government office in Waikabubak. The government representative told the leaders that a new era had started; that a regime was bound to be created based on new principles to achieve administration *atas alasan demokrasi*, based on democracy. One of the attendants was so wise to ask *Apakah itu demokrasi?*, what is that democracy? The government representative quickly looked it up in Van Ronkel's dictionary and found: *pemerintah rakyat*, governance by the people. That did not clarify much, but yet it gave the impression to some of the Sumbanese leaders that their long-cherished wishes with regard to their own territories might come true. In one case it instigated people's action led by a member of the new elite for returning their territory to the domain it belonged to previously.

Just after the demise of the Suharto regime, the same question 'what is democracy' was as relevant, urgent and puzzling as it was in 1946. Just as in the case quoted by Onvlee, in 2003 the opportunities of democratization stimulated a people's movement to shift the boundaries of their territory. In 2003 the new word for this process was *pemekaran*. That was not the only practical consequence of democratization, but just one type of administrative and political change that has happened in Sumba over the last 20 years. In



the previous chapters, I described a repertoire of the political strategies of the local leaders: from pragmatically using the opportunities provided by legal pluralism, to resorting to mass-violence, to creating new administrative territories, to competing in democratic elections. Each of these strategies was prominent in one of the phases of recent West Sumbanese political history. The overview of the sequence events allows recognition of continuities in style, and also in the roles of particular individuals. That overview comprises an ethnography of democratization.

### *The local context*

A democratization process in practice can be regarded as articulation of political cultures. Therefore the first chapters started with historical and cultural aspects of Sumbanese leadership and politics. The history of state formation and intervention by both colonial government and Christian missions led to the conclusion that this particular historical combination created a Christian local elite, with members who were part of Sumbanese nobility and owed part of their status and power to the offices they occupied in service of the colonial government. These same Sumbanese men were the most skilled administrators, who also enjoyed considerable local authority due their traditional status, and therefore they continued to rule after Indonesian Independence and also survived the changes of regime between 1945 and 1998. These leaders lived between a modern world outside Sumba, where their superiors resided, and a more traditional world on Sumba, especially in their home villages, where they ruled but were also part of the family. Janet Hoskins (1993:287) observed that in the late colonial period Sumbanese (in Kodi) made a distinction between their own social and geographic sphere of the ancestral village where they worshipped their spirits, and everything beyond the island and those things pertaining to government offices, hospitals and schools belonging to the realm of the foreigners and the Christian religion. Christianity was seen as an entrance to the wider world, and Sumbanese developed the attitude of combining two religions; the connection between Christianity and education resulted in the fact that the administrative elite of Sumba is and has been Christian.

Many anthropological studies on Sumba analyse the traditional aspects of life, with an emphasis on objects of study that fit well into the Eastern Indonesian studies in which structural anthropology dominated (Forth 1981; Geirnaert-Martin 1992). Sumba is also thought to be one of the places on earth where the researcher can encounter the clearest contrast with cultural phenomena in the western world. Janet Hoskins (1993) used this Sumba-Western world tension to analyse concepts of time and history, Webb Keane (1997)

used it to develop a theory on representation, Joel Kuipers (1998) to analyse language change in relation to political marginality, and in my own dissertation economic rationality was the object of comparison (Vel 1994). When data about traditional concepts are required, it makes sense to do empirical research in the remotest parts of the rural area. This book focused on the interface between Indonesian national politics and Sumbanese reality, where the main players speak Bahasa Indonesia, are relatively well-educated, have travelled to other areas and are usually proud being both Indonesians and Sumbanese. It is the mixture or articulation of traditional and modern repertoires used in contemporary political practice that makes this book different from most anthropological studies about Eastern Indonesia.

The local context is not just a matter of traditional or changing ideas, but also the influence of more material changes. Many of those 'technical' changes have taken place in the nearly two decades covered in this book, starting with the end of the 1980s until 2006. In the last decade of the New Order, the government executed programmes for improvement of infrastructure that even reached the interiors of Sumba: many roads were built and paved, so that communication and trade with town became easier and more frequent. Public primary schools were built all over the rural area so that each child could get to school within one hour's walk. Since 1995, there have been government programmes to bring electricity to the country side. Along the main road they installed permanent facilities and people living in the interior villages could get subsidized solar panels. Electricity brought television, and since the end of the 1990s many Sumbanese regularly watch television and see what happens in other parts of their country and in the world. In 2005, a teacher in Anakalang asked my opinion about the acts of war of the Israeli against the Palestinians, and such an issue of discussion would have been unimaginable in 1980s, when conversations on Sumba were still very much internally focused. Transport facilities, media and education brought the Sumbanese much closer to the world outside their island, and inserted new languages, new ideas and new points of reference in their lives. This created a very different world from the Sumba described earlier by the studies mentioned above, for which field work was done in the 1980s.

In the twenty-first century, there are many relatively well-educated Sumbanese. The third or fourth generations of the families that were first selected as pupils in the mission's school have now earned their bachelors' degree or gone farther in Kupang or on Java. Sumbanese parents regard education of their children as top investment in their (own) future. They hope education will lead to a regular job with a good salary, preferably a position as civil servant. On Sumba the state is regarded as the best employer. Those who succeed in getting such a position do not stay in their home village. They move to a house close to their office, so many educated people end up

in town, whereas the permanent inhabitants of villages are the *tani* (farmers) which is a broad, emic category including everyone without a permanent salaried position. Yet, even when living in town, all Sumbanese maintain a link with their home village, with their *Uma*, the small group of people that originated from a particular ancestral house. This is the core social group that is responsible for the main human life ceremonies, in particular weddings and funerals. Even the most professionally successful Sumbanese, who live in Java or abroad, still regard their clan-membership as very important part of their identities. Their place in the kinship system defines relations with other Sumbanese, and in turn the type of exchanges that are considered appropriate. Patrilineal clans, *kabihu*, are exogamous, and relations with other clans are defined as either as bride-giver or bride-receiver, never both. At each ceremonial event, traditionally bride-receivers should bring horses and buffaloes to the bride-givers. Basically, this exchange economy has not changed since the 1980s, but the shape of exchange items is often modernized, especially in town, where the monetary economy is stronger than the barter economy. Nowadays at a wedding in the capital part of the bride dowry can be paid with a *kuda Jepang* (Japanese horse), a motorcycle.

Another way in which the exchange economy is monetized appears when the father of a bride does not collect the cloth he needs for his daughter's dowry from his own kinsmen, but just buys them in a shop in town. The moral economy of exchange as I described in *The Uma economy* (Vel 1994) still exists in 2006, but it is modernized and partly monetized. What remained a major continuity of Sumbanese society up to 2006 is the moral obligation of reciprocity. That important characteristic is part of contemporary strategies to accumulate political power.

To my surprise, I found that many of the successful Sumbanese discussed in the chapters of this book had an exit-option to the obligations of the Sumbanese moral economy. They were married with a woman from outside Sumba, and did not marry at home. With that act they partly excluded themselves from their own kinship system, because they refrained from reciprocating earlier marriage ties. Economically, this could be a favourable escape from expensive bride-prices, and continuous streams of material contributions to the wife's clan's ceremonies. It could also lead to a degree of detachment to Sumba and more freedom to pursue a successful career outside the island.

### *Capital and leadership*

The same stories about exchanges and strategies in avoiding or using reciprocal obligations can be understood in terms of accumulation and transformation of various forms of capital. Bourdieu (1986:243) distinguished between

cultural, economic and social capital. The use of 'capital' is a way of addressing differential resources of power, and of linking an analysis of the cultural to that of the economic. The key theoretical question is how these different forms of capital transform themselves into each other in order to maximize accumulation. In the case of the wealthy father of the bride who bought the dowry cloths in town, dowry becomes economic capital, whereas it used to be transformed into social capital. Sumbanese with a 'foreign' wife have the option to stop investing in social capital and accumulate more economic capital. Sumbanese parents hope that the cultural capital resulting from the education of their children, paid for by their economic capital for years, will be transformed in old age security: a combination of social and economic capital. In the previous chapters I used the notion of accumulation of forms of capital as a way to understand how people in Sumba gain power, and how they manipulate various sources of power to reach their political ends.

The case study in Chapter IV described a power struggle between a village head, who belonged to the local nobility, and the young foreign leader of the development project that worked in the village head's village. Both competitors had accumulated a considerable amount of capital, but in very different ways. There was no conclusion about who was more powerful, who's capital was larger or carried more weight. Both enjoyed power positions in the village, but based on different criteria and addressed at different identities of the village constituency. To win the dispute or power struggle the competitors invented strategies that applied to the normative order in which each of them was superior. Village leaders are actors in the realm of all different normative orders that exist in their village. They are skilled in forum shopping: 'when fields of jurisdiction of different institutions overlap, disputants can choose between these institutions. They base their choice on what they hope the outcome of the dispute will be, however vague and ill-founded their expectations may be' (K. von Benda-Beckmann 1984:37). Questions about preference for a specific normative system or its legitimacy are not so relevant. What matters is how useful the institutions, the networks and the rules and sanctions are for pursuing a particular political goal. Strategic use of hierarchies, networks and rules is a characteristic of Sumbanese politics, starting at village level. This focus on hierarchies is an impediment for women, youth and lower status men from getting involved in politics. Forum shopping is a strategy that is only adoptable by those who have a sufficient amount of capital and therefore access to the different institutions constituting legal pluralism. The consequence for people who lack access is not very favourable. If rights and state services become negotiable and there is no institution or force willing or able to ensure rights and access to state services to all persons, eventually state services or rights will be traded off just like economic or social services. In that case forum shopping requires a

full purse, and people with an empty purse will return empty-handed.

Another conclusion concerning the link between forms of capital and power in Sumba concerns transformation from one type of capital into another for the purpose of increasing status by using opportunities created by decentralization laws. In Chapter VIII three Sumbanese residing outside Sumba were discussed as main actors behind the movement to create a new district in West Sumba. What these actors had in common is that they were born on Sumba, received a good education and, with or without a church scholarship, pursued their education on Java. Consequently they had a successful career, after which they wanted to return to their home island, where they enjoyed high prestige and status and social security provided by their relatives. They were connected through various modern networks: the political party, student alumni organizations, the Christian Church or the unions of emigrant Sumbanese in cities outside Sumba. In terms of forms of capital, they all had accumulated a considerable amount. Yet, what they lacked was domestic social capital and traditional type of cultural capital. Their 'overseas' capital could be transformed into status and old age security in Sumba, and leading a successful campaign could be a further way to accomplish that.

Pote Leba and doctor Nelis, the candidate pair described in Chapter IX that won the elections, jointly had a large amount of capital. The victory of this pair supports the argument that not just the quantity of capital is decisive in winning elections, but the balance of different types of capital. In Sumba, the results of the *pilkada* elections show that wealth as economic capital is not sufficient to win and thus the *bupati* positions are not for sale. Wealth in terms of traditional cultural capital such as attributes of the traditional aristocracy, is still an asset in election campaigns, but it is not sufficient for election victories.

### *Political identity*

Since the independence of Indonesia until 1995, all *bupati* in West Sumba were sons of former raja. During the New Order they were appointed by the Minister of Home Affairs. As Umbu Djima's biography in Chapter II showed, the Governor considered it better that a Sumbanese be the *bupati* on Sumba, but the competition over these offices was between the Military and Golkar at provincial and national level rather than between elite on Sumba. The strength of a *bupati* depended on his protection by superiors outside Sumba. His local popularity would be increased if during his term in office there would be ample funds from Jakarta flowing to Sumba, and if he would show the authority to settle large disputes in peace. *Bupati* Malo, Umbu Djima's successor in 1995, performed badly on all these fronts, being a mid-level colonel from the Air Force who had lived most of his life outside Sumba and who had a style

of governing that was opposite of what Sumbanese traditionally prefer. He was *bupati* in 1998, when the economic and political crisis struck. Chapter VI described how he and his local rival, the chairman of the parliament and Golkar, turned ethnic identity into a political tool, when they invited kinsmen from their traditional domains to come to the capital for support. This was the first clear sign of a 180 degree turn in focus of the district government.

Having lost protection from the centre, *bupati* Malo turned to his local constituency in November 1998. But these constituencies were not altogether clear anymore. As Charles Tilly (2003:32) argued, political identities assemble four crucial elements: a. boundaries, separating 'us' from 'them' b. shared stories about those boundaries, c. social relations across the boundaries and d. social relations within the boundaries. These four issues composed the agenda of the movement to create a new district, as described in Chapter VIII. The movement's leaders had to create a new political identity for 'Central Sumbanese', encompassing four or five traditional geographic domains, but excluding the neighbouring domains, through stories that grounded in historical, cultural, religious or linguistic arguments.

During the democratic elections in 2004 and 2005, creation of political identity was the core activity for candidates trying to secure the largest constituency possible. In the case of elections, that identity should be inclusive, and therefore ethnicity in the sense of identification with traditional domains was not as explicitly important as in the case of creating a new district. The same politicians would now argue that marriage alliances with domains in the very west of Sumba legitimized the election candidates' leadership, whereas in *pemekaran* rhetoric the opposite would be the appropriate argument.

One of the conclusions in Chapter IX about the direct district-head elections, *pilkada*, in 2005, is that ethnicity and religion play an important role in the results of *pilkada*. All candidates, except one, won in their own home area, their traditional domain, but since there are many of these domains in West Sumba, a home victory is never sufficient to win the majority in the whole district. Election candidates therefore had to play out other political identities. The Catholic identity turned out to be an asset in an electorate that consisted of nearly 50 percent Catholics and in a field of competition where only two of the ten candidates adhered to this religion.

#### *Political class, political public and the tani class*

The developments on Sumba since 1998 can also be understood in terms of social classes. During the New Order, there was a fairly small elite of district state officials; and their connections with businesses were not openly acknowledged. Gradually since 1998, the local elite included a larger group

that I call the political class. Those who are in the position to decide about the allocation of the state resources compose the political class, which includes the higher level executive currently in office, but also (some, not all) retired state officials, businessmen, political party bosses, clan leaders, religious leaders and the wives and mothers of all these influential men. Inclusion of (some) businessmen in the political class clearly distinguishes this concept from *pegawai* (state officials). Members of the political class are aware of their privileged position; they are very occupied with maintaining the relations within the class, and therefore create borders that restrict access to their class. There is no single institution that coincides with the political class; members connect with each other through networks that become visible at private ceremonial occasions and public meetings. Inclusion in the political class results in access to information, economic opportunities, state services (for example, police will actually act as they should when ordered by high police officials who are members of the political class) and it also provides the opportunity to skip the lower levels of bureaucracy (including the necessary bribes at those levels). The fact that the main criterion for membership of the political class is influence on the decision to allocate state resources (money, jobs, permits and violence) means that this membership has to be constantly reassured, and that downward mobility and losing influence can happen.

Feith (1962:108) used a political model and stratification that focused on the role of individuals in the political process, viewing them as participants in a leader-followers unit. This model sees the distribution of power beyond the elite as series of concentric circles, with power diminishing as one's political distance from the elite increases. The first circle surrounding the elite consists of people of lesser political influence. Feith (1962:109-10) calls them the 'political public', 'persons of a middle range of political effectiveness, persons outside the political elite who nevertheless saw themselves as capable of taking action which could affect national (district) government or politics'.

What Feith calls the masses, and in my terminology is the *tani*-class, is positioned in the outer circle, where people consider themselves of too low status to be politically active. There are no statistics about the size of these classes. I would estimate that at least two-thirds of Sumba's population considers themselves as common people with no influence on allocation of state resources. They make up the outer circle in Feith's model. The political public would include about a quarter of the population, leaving about 10 per cent for the political class.

In this model the boundaries between the 'political class', the 'political public' and the '*tani*' are not clearly delineated. Analytically this is a weakness of the concept of political class, and one of reason why according to Borchert (2002:3) some political or social scientists reject it. Yet, this fluidity between the classes is in accordance with reality, which makes the model empirically

very useful. Exactly because the boundaries are not fixed, people in Sumba are so involved in accumulating various forms of capital in order to get access to the political class.

The political public and the '*tani*' (those in the outer circles) benefit from a state that serves the public interest. This would be reflected in a high percentage of the state's budget being allocated to services for the public that are of high quality and without any additional political cost, fee or mark-up. But reality is different. The political class derives its livelihood from the state. They not only earn salaries as state officials, but also work as contractors by gaining state projects, as officials who can sell services for an additional fee, or who can issue permits in exchange for a percentage of the profit, or who can assemble votes in times of general elections. The higher one's position is, the better the chance of rewards.

The two sides in this cleavage are interdependent. The *tani* class is in control of food and land, labour and livestock, which are essential resources for all Sumbanese, whether urban or rural dwellers. The political class possesses money and access to opportunities for improving livelihood, through education and networks that stretch to the world outside Sumba. Politicians are usually already members of the political class, but they need the rural population as their constituency.

Violence in Waikabubak was a first sign of class conflict. 'Bloody Thursday' was not just another case of tribal war in West Sumba. Rethinking the local discourses and comparing it with the other cases described in literature, it appears that war between domains, *perang suku*, was always a powerful concept on Sumba, especially useful as a tool for mobilization. In November 1998, discourse about *perang suku* was used to divert a class conflict into a more manageable ethnic conflict. Bloody Thursday was the first case in West Sumba in which violence was directed at the state and those who appropriated its resources for the benefit of their small clique. The battle was fought in the streets of the district capital, state domain *par excellence*, as opposed to a plain somewhere between the groups' territories. The groups involved originally could be characterized as those in control of the state resources and those who lacked access to them. This cleavage in Sumbanese society is increasing and becoming the most important factor of social distinction. With increasing democratization, including fair and direct elections, it is not beneficial for the ruling elite to allow such a stark class divide. The old ethnic war model is much safer for their professional positions, turning them from leaders of the political class to leaders of ethnic groups that include many people who belong to the middle class or regard themselves as *tani*.



*Democratization and Uma politics*

Have the changes in the national political context of Indonesia led to democratization in West Sumba? My conclusion at the end of this book is that there is positive change towards democracy. Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1995:6-7) described three essential conditions for democracy, based on their comparative research on experiences with democracy in a large number of developing countries: free and fair elections that exclude the use of force, a high level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, and civil and political liberties secured through political equality under a rule of law.

The elections in 2004 and 2005 were indeed free and fair. They were competitive and participatory, in the sense that everyone in Sumba knew at least some of the candidates for the district parliament elections; in June 2005, there were many discussions about the elections and large crowds visited the rallies. In West Sumba, 222,000 people were registered as voters, about 60 per cent of the total population. Writing about African elections, Staffan Lindberg (2006:150) argued that elections provide more than just an arena for political contestation. They sometimes give rise to new, independent institutions and often force political actors to adapt at least partly to voter preferences. In West Sumba, all election candidates had to address the voters directly, which in itself was a democratic achievement. Apart from the elections, there was no wide participation in the selection of leaders. Political party boards eventually decided who would be the candidates on the election list and their ranking. In the parliament elections this procedure led to voters' disappointment when they found out that a popular candidate was not elected because of low ranking. National Political party board's priorities caused the incumbent *bupati* of West Sumba to lose his PDI-P candidacy to a wealthy Jakarta based politician.

Civil and political liberties have increased enormously since 1998. There are frequent demonstrations and press can print critical commentaries on current events. The fact that in October 1998 there was a popular uprising in Waikabubak focused on issues of governmental corruption buttressed the case for democratic reforms and fairer elections (as well as fairer civil service examinations), although it was of course tragic that those demonstrations led to mass violence.

A real democracy can only function effectively if the citizens are participating. Civil society has been the common term to describe this since the late 1980s, when people in NGOs and political parties started their discourse on 'strengthening civil society' (Wolters 2002:132). I prefer to call the participating citizens the 'political public', because this term does not have an a priori normative content. The political public can vote in elections, can organize themselves to promote the group's interests using the democratic means, but

they can also resort to violence or create a secession movement. That intermediate class could only emerge after preconditions of access to media (information), freedom of speech and freedom to assemble were established. What determines membership of this political public is 'the state of mind which requires a man to communicate with other people than those to whom he is tied within his traditional society' (Feith 1962:110). As an increasing part of the Sumbanese population received access to electricity, everywhere people started watching television. Communications with other areas in Indonesia became easier since cell phones have become available on Sumba. Many young people went to study on Java or in Kupang, and since not all of them succeeded finding employment elsewhere, a considerable group returned to Sumba. They did not want to become farmers, but they were more ambitious and preferred a position as civil servants. Regional autonomy and direct elections involved people in politics. The political public has been growing since 1998, and that is also an achievement of democratization.

What Diamond, Linz and Lipset's criteria of democracy do not catch is how local leaders in Sumba use the opportunities created by changes in the national political context in Indonesia to farther their own interest and stay in power. The growth of the political class with its exclusive and privileged character overshadows the positive aspects of democratization. Travelling along the main road from Anakalang to Waikabubak, it is striking to see how many new fancy houses were built over the last two years and how many huge offices and churches emerged. In the same period there was not much change for the *tani* class. Regional autonomy seems to have increased the inequality in wealth between political class and the *tani* class. For some developments, it is too early to judge what may happen. The effect of creating a new district will only be clear after it has been established for some years. The cost of the campaign was accumulated from 2003 to 2006 when a large amount of economic capital was transferred either to the local political class or to brokers and gate keepers in Jakarta and Kupang as bribes in the process to move the decision through all political institutions.

The test of democratic achievements will come after the elections. If state services follow through with the promises made in election speeches and benefit the population in their interests, the achievements will be positive. Yet, when we look closely at the local politics, there is ample reason for concern. The *bupati* and DPRD members are completely entangled in reciprocal obligations which became clear after the elections. The political campaigns were financed by businessmen (*tim sukses*). Politicians gathered their constituencies by mobilising social networks and depending on the cooperation of people who occupied crucial knots in those networks. The latter, too, will demand reciprocal services, in positions, jobs or other types of rewards. Actors

in the political class are intimately linked to each other within this reciprocal economy centred on state resources, as if they were brothers in an Uma. If I refer to present day politics in Sumba as 'Uma politics', it is not in reference to the kinship based traditional Uma. However, the political reciprocal system is quite reminiscent of the ties within an Uma. There is a large chance that Uma politics of the political class, especially those concentrated in circles around the *bupati*, can best be understood as a black economy, in which 'reciprocal services' are a euphemism for diverting government funds into private pockets. The many new, fancy houses in Sumba's two capital towns are a sign of black economy benefits, because salaries of the owners could never pay for such houses built at that pace. The highest members of the political class, such as, the high level bureaucrats, politicians and businessmen, invest the wealth they gather on Sumba outside the island. Their children pursue their education abroad, they buy land in other parts of Indonesia, or build their luxury houses in Jakarta or Surabaya. These developments are a challenge for further research, which is required to supply arguments to the tiny opposition in Sumba in their struggle to remind the government of the fundamental claim that it is a public body working on behalf of the people.

## Glossary

adat	custom, customary law, ceremonial exchange
afdeeling	administrative unit under Dutch colonial rule
aspirasi masyarakat	the genuine wish of the people
ata	slave
Bahasa Indonesia	Indonesian (language)
bupati	district head
camat	sub-district head
civiel gezaghebber	the highest colonial government position on Sumba
daerah	region
dana perimbangan	equalization funds, Revenues for the district received from the Central Government
demokrasi	democracy
desa	village
El Nino	a major warming of the equatorial waters in the Pacific Ocean which caused shifts in 'normal' weather patterns
gezaghebber	<i>see</i> civiel gezaghebber
gotong royong	traditional self help
guru injil	village evangelist
heka pata	new ways
ikat	(literally 'to bind') style of weaving
kabihu	patrilineal clan
kabupaten	district
Kamis Berdarah	Bloody Thursday in Waikabubak on 6 November 1998
kampung	traditional village or hamlet
kecamatan	sub-district
kehendak Tuhan	wish of God
kepala dusun	head of neighborhood
kepala perang	war leader
kerajaan	kingdom
kijang	type of car popular with government officials in Sumba
kontrolleur	colonial government position
krisis	crisis
landschap	administrative unit under Dutch colonial rule, comparable to sub-district
mamuli	a traditional ornament
mangu tana	the lord of the land

maramba	nobleman, nobility, highest social class in traditional stratification
marapu	mythical ancestors of a kabihu
musyawarah kontak tani	the council of farmers
ndewa	(cosmological) power, energy
ngabawini	bride-receivers (groom's family)
ojek	motorcycle taxi
onderafdeeling	administrative unit under Dutch colonial rule, comparable to district
onkos politik	political costs – the euphemism for bribes to the boards of political parties
orang	person, human being
orang Loli	a person from the Loli (ethnic label)
Pancasila	five pillars, the Indonesian state principles
paraingu	traditional village or hamlet in Sumba
pasola	a ritual of warfare in West Sumba
pegawai negeri sipil	civil servant
pembangunan	translated as 'development', strongly associated with top-down programs initiated, managed and funded by the New Order state to increase economic growth
pemekaran	(literally 'blossoming') creation of new administrative units: new provinces, districts or sub-districts
perang suku	war between clans
pesta demokrasi	democratic festivals, New Order euphemism for elections
Podu	a month in traditional Sumbanese calendar festival which marks the start of the new agricultural year
raja	king
ratu	<i>marapu</i> priest
reformasi	reform, also: period around the demise of the New Order regime
reformasi total	total reform
sawah	paddy field
secara adat	in the customary way
secara keluarga	in the way the relatives do it – using adat
sekolah Inpres	(public) primary school
sinode	general meeting of congregations of the GKS
sosialisasi	meeting to explain something (usually government program)
sosialisasi pemilu	election lessons
sumpah adat	traditional vow
swapraja	area governed by a raja
tani	farmer
tim sukses	promotion team for election candidates consisting of advisors, investors, well-known supporters and party officials
tingkat I	administrative level 1: provincial

tingkat II	administrative level 2: district
toko	shop
ucapan syukur	home service to thank the Lord
uma	house
Uma	a group of people who belong to a traditional house
urus adat	doing things in the sphere of the ritual obligations
wai	water, spring
warung	small food stall
wilayah pemilu	election area
wunang	specialist in ritual speech
yewaungu	confirmation yell
year	bride-givers (bride's family)
zelfbesturende landschap	self-governing region, in the colonial period
zelfbestuurder	raja, ruler in the colonial system of indirect rule



## Abbreviations and acronyms

ACCESS	Australian Community Development and Civil Society Strengthening Scheme
Bappeda	Badan Perencanaan dan Pembangunan Daerah – Regional Planning Board
BPD	Badan Perwakilan Desa – Village Representative Board
brimob	brigade mobil – mobile police brigade
CPNS	Calon Pegawai Negeri Sipil – candidate civil servants
DAU	Dana Alokasi Umum – General Allocation Fund
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat – People’s Representative Assembly (Parliament)
DPR-RI	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia – National Parliament
DPRD	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah – Regional Parliament
Forum	organisation to lobby for the new district, called Forum Komunikasi Pembangunan Desa (Consulting Committee on Village Development)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GKS	Gereja Kristen Sumba – Christian Church of Sumba
GMKI	Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia – Indonesian Student Christian Movement
Golkar	Partai Golongan Karya – Political Party of the Functional Groups, the ruling party during the Suharto regime (1966-1998)
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit – German Technical Cooperation
IKAS	Ikatan Keluarga Besar Asal Sumba – Union of Sumbanese living outside Sumba, for example in Kupang
KKN	Korupsi, Kolusi dan Nepotisme – Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism
KPU	Komisi Pemilihan Umum – General Election Committee
KPUD	Komisi Pemilihan Umum Daerah – Regional General Election Committee
krismon	krisis moneter – financial crisis
kristal	krisis total – total crisis
KTP	Kartu Tanda Penduduk – identity card
KUD	Koperasi Unit Desa – Village Cooperative (used for both institution and building)
miras	minuman keras – strong alcoholic drinks



*Abbreviations and acronyms*

MPR	Musyawarah Perwakilan Rakyat – People’s Consultative Assembly
muspida	musyawarah pimpinan daerah – meeting of regional leaders
NTT	Nusa Tenggara Timur – East Nusa Tenggara (Province)
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama – Muslim Scholar Organization, largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia, representing orthodox Sunni Islam
PAD	Pendapatan Asli Daerah – own revenue of regional governments
Parkindo	Partai Kristen Indonesia – Indonesian Christian Party
PDKB	Partai Demokrasi Kasih Bangsa (the Love the Nation Democratic Party)
PDI	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Indonesian Democratic Party
PDI-P	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan – Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle
pilkada	pemilihan kepala daerah – regional head elections
PKB	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa – Party of the Awakening of the Nation
PKPI	Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia – Indonesian Justice and Unity Party
PNS	Pegawai Negeri Sipil – civil servant
(P)PDK	(Partai) Persatuan Demokrasi Kebangsaan, Party for Democracy and Welfare
Propelmas	Proyek Pelayanan Masyarakat – Project for Service to Society, GKS NGO
Puskesmas	Pusat Kesehatan Masyarakat – community health center
SARA	Suku, Agama, Ras dan Antar golongan – ethnicity, race, class or religion
SD	Sekolah Dasar – primary school
Sekwilda	Secretary of a district
SMA	Sekolah Menengah Atas – senior high school
SMP	Sekolah Menengah tingkat Pertama – junior high school
SOSPOL	Social and Political Directorate of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs
Undana	Universitas Nusa Cendana – Nusa Cendana University, in Kupang
YAKKEL	Yayasan Kesejahteraan Keluarga – (GKS) Foundation for Family Welfare

# Annex 1

Results of the general elections in Nusa Tenggara Timur for the national parliament in Jakarta (DPR-RI)

Ranking	Political Party	Votes	%
1	Partai Golongan Karya	758,669	37.03
2	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan	395,619	19.31
3	Partai Damai Sejahtera	120,340	5.87
4	Partai Demokrat	83,281	4.07
5	Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia	76,719	3.74
6	Partai Penegak Demokrasi Indonesia	71,540	3.49
7	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa	54,031	2.64
8	Partai Persatuan Demokrasi Kebangsaan	54,004	2.64
9	Partai Pelopor	51,917	2.53
10	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan	38,330	1.87
11	Partai Karya Peduli Bangsa	34,374	1.68
12	Partai Nasional Banteng Kemerdekaan	33,820	1.65
13	Partai Merdeka	33,496	1.63
14	Partai Patriot Pancasila	33,229	1.63
15	Partai Persatuan Daerah	31,018	1.51
16	Partai Nasional Indonesia Marhaenisme	29,515	1.44
17	Partai Amanai Nasional	29,398	1.44
18	Partai Buruh Sosial Demokrat	25,775	1.26
19	Partai Bulan Bintang	24,243	1.18
20	Partai Sarikat Indonesia	22,237	1.09
21	Partai Perhimpunan Indonesia Baru	20,470	1.00
22	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera	19,827	0.97
23	Partai Bintang Reformasi	6,829	0.33
24	Partai Persatuan Nahlatul Ummah Indonesia	14	0.00
Total		2,048,695	

Source: Pemi Apriyanto, *Database Pemilu 2004*. Jakarta: Spirit Research and Database, p. 421.

## Annex 2

Origin of the votes for each pair of candidates in the direct district head elections (*pilkada*) in West Sumba, June 2005 (in %).

Kecamatan	Home area of	Pair 1	Pair 2	Pair 3	Pair 4	Pair 5
Waijewa						
South	T. Langgar	3.2	0.9	1.3	0.2	23.3
East	Y. Bobo	9.8	6.3	37.9	2.3	11.5
West	Markus DT	28.8	4.1	10.9	2.0	12.6
North	no	5.6	1.9	3.5	0.5	3.0
Kodi	Kornelis/Horo	8.5	33.0	8.5	7.4	7.2
Kodi Bangedo	no	3.2	10.6	4.0	6.5	5.8
Katikutana	Bintang	0.8	1.4	7.0	34.7	1.9
Umbu Ratu						
Nggai	Dedu Ngara	1.7	1.3	1.9	8.7	2.6
Memboro	no	1.3	3.0	4.4	4.8	1.5
Loli	Pote Leba/ Dapawole	2.4	11.5	2.4	4.7	5.3
Waikabubak		2.8	9.6	2.3	8.3	7.7
Loura		8.2	8.9	6.0	4.8	5.1
Lamboya		2.8	2.8	6.6	8.3	7.2
Wanukaka		0.5	3.6	2.1	6.1	4.2
Tana Righu	Yubi Pandango	20.3	1.1	1.2	0.5	1.2
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Data from General Election Committee (KPU) in West Sumba.

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