

Commodities and Labor on the Move

The West Kalimantan Borderlands as Economic Infrastructure for Sarawak, East Malaysia

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People and things move freely, often across national boundaries. Such movements are, however, incompatible with the state's sovereignty and the realization of territoriality. The sedentarization of people and control of commodity movements are the oldest undertakings of the state. The state is generally an enemy of mobile people and goods. There is something generic about this desire to fix people geographically and to control the unauthorized movement of commodities.

The state's tendency to spatially circumscribe the flows of people and commodities within its territory has been, however, minimally pursued by Indonesia, and in fact was perhaps non-existent at the beginning of its nation-building. From the Dutch colonial era to the present, Indonesia has functioned as one of the region's important labor reserves, serving as a source of indentured labor for such foreign labor markets as the colonial rubber estates in British Malaya, oilfields in the Middle East, and downtown sweatshops in East Asia. In addition to the movements of laborers, the illicit cross-border flows of commodities have been a practical source of income for local communities adjacent to international boundaries. The smuggling of copras in the maritime communities of North Celebes and rubber sheets from West Kalimantan are two examples of transnational commodity chains between Indonesia and neighboring countries.

When out-migration is tolerated by the state, and local institutions emerge to support these labor flows, people become a reserve army for foreign production systems. When transnational movements of agricultural commodities and natural resources are incorporated into production systems across the border, the expansion of capitalist production takes place unhindered.

There are individuals who profit from the transnational movement of labor and commodities. They are often located at the margins of national territories, and their profits are often contradictory to the economic nationalism disseminated from Jakarta. The formation of this peripheral nation space, *daerah perbatasan*, has led to the rise of heterogeneous social arrays rather than homogeneous national or sub-national economic totalities. People combine diverse modes of living, learn to negotiate the contradictions, and take advantage of the economic difference that have widened since the Asian economic crisis.

Residents at the national margins indeed have taken advantage of the current economic disparity between Indonesia and Malaysia, represented in the form of the lopsided rupiah-ringgit exchange rate. For instance, despite the economic downturn, borderland society has generally enjoyed a rise in profits from border trading and labor migration. The depreciation of the rupiah against the ringgit has boosted economic transactions between Indonesia and Malaysia, and specifically the one-way flow of commodities and laborers from Indonesia to Malaysia in pursuit of income in Malaysian currency.

At stake in the age of Indonesia's political decentralization is how the decision-making of provincial governments, which has a direct bearing on the everyday lives of local people, can precede that of Jakarta without losing synergy in policy implementation. The following is an attempt, through the ethnological enterprise of anthropology, to furnish empirical case studies on the generalities of political scientists as well as economists.

My undertaking as a team member of a research project titled "Anthropological Studies on the Transitional Period in Indonesia" is to examine the nature of international mobility and dynamics of human labor and commodities across the border between Malaysia and Indonesia on the island of Borneo. Focusing exclusively on peasant communities in the Sambas District of West Kalimantan, this study scrutinizes the socio-economic conditions of local communities located in the borderlands adjacent to Sarawak, East Malaysia, which have functioned as a labor reserve as well as a commodity supplier to the market across international boundaries.

The following ethnography consists of three parts with different units of analysis, deliberately set to better understand the dynamics of economic transnationalism: borderland communities, trans-border marketplaces, and the migratory labor circuit. I will first present a microscopic analysis of the socio-economic relations between two peasant communities facing each other across the international boundary in the maritime frontier of western Borneo. Secondly, focusing exclusively on the borderland region connected to the other side of border through *border crossing posts* (*pos lintas batas*), I will look into the flow of goods, both agricultural commodities and natural resources, out of Indonesia. Finally, I will look at the movements of contract workers (TKI) from a rural peasant village of Sambas to downriver industries in north Sarawak, East Malaysia, where thousands of Indonesian workers are employed in the production of plywood and sawn timber.

My research shows that outflows of commodities and labor have been generic to the rural societies of West Kalimantan. Timber-related factories such as sawmills and plywood manufacturers, as well as oil palm estates, are dependent on an Indonesian labor force mainly recruited from peasant communities in the region. Local peasants in Sambas serve as the economic infrastructures for the industrial as well as agricultural sectors in Sarawak. The flows of peasant proletarians as well as natural resources have been directed toward Malaysian production sites, and the movements have been

accelerated by the opening of ten official immigration posts in Entikong, Badau and other places, and by the construction of road networks directly connecting local villages with the main Sarawak economic hubs of Kuching, Sibul, Bintulu, and Miri.

In the absence of proper governmental programs for the development of the local agricultural sector, the transnational drain of labor and commodities from peripheral societies continues. The peculiar division of labor is maintained intact; the agricultural sector based on paddy cultivation functions for the maintenance of the basic subsistence of villagers, while additional cash income is eagerly sought by the younger generation, especially in the form of the female work force (TKW), seeking temporary contract jobs in Malaysia.

During the Dutch colonial period when the *dual economy* was developed through the colonial apparatus, Indonesian rural society was deliberately divided into two labor sectors: one for subsistence-oriented agriculture and the other for plantation-based commodity production. Under the current division of labor, which is observed in the borderlands of West Kalimantan in particular and rural agricultural communities in general, the colonial production of agricultural commodities has simply been replaced by modern foreign capital located outside Indonesia. The production sites are located abroad, while rural agricultural communities serve to generate and maintain steady flows of labor. With the widening of economic disparities since the monetary crisis, the drain of labor as well as commodities has been accelerated, and rural communities situated at the national periphery will remain an infrastructure for cross-border economic development until the resource supply becomes exhausted.

From Mega-project to Illegal Logging

Forest Resources and Decentralization in Central Kalimantan

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1. Peat Swamp Forest Development during the Suharto Era

Indonesia has substantial areas of peat swamp forest and has, for many years, dedicated substantial resources towards developing them for the sake of economic growth. Since the late 1950s, Sumatran peat lands, for example, have been settled by spontaneous immigrants from nearby Malay villages and from faraway Kalimantan and Sulawesi. These movements were driven primarily by small-scale commercial farmers' need for land. Using their own manual labor, they converted peat swamp forests into valuable commercial coconut plantations.

While this spontaneous migration was occurring, peat swamp areas came to the attention of national planners and developers. The success of the immigrants encouraged government authorities, who imposed state management upon these forested lands. This resulted in the demarcation of areas for one of the leading state-organized trans-immigration projects, the Perkebunan Inti Rakyat (PIR, or "Nuclear Estate and Small-holders Project"). The stated aims were to increase the production of plantation crops and raise the income of participating "farmers," and to contribute to regional development. In contrast to arbitrary development by spontaneous immigrants, it was a planned and organized large-scale development.

2. Mega-Project in Central Kalimantan

The development of peat lands was formulated as a Mega-Project. In 1995, President Suharto launched the Project Pengembangan Lahan Gambut in Central Kalimantan, with the aim to convert one million ha of peat swamp forest into paddy fields. To some extent, recent industrial development in Indonesia had turned toward using fertile Javanese lands for manufacturing rather than agriculture. National food self-sufficiency was achieved at one point in 1985, but it has been said that the future is uncertain. The Mega-Project for peat swamps was primarily intended to make up for the rice yield declines in Java.

The participants were initially provided with personal living necessities and agricultural materials such as rice seeds, a hoe, sickle, chemical fertilizer and

insecticides. However, following the first harvest, the new settlers were obliged to buy materials from a certificated company at fixed prices. The company leased tractors to pull tilling and threshing machines, and bought the harvested rice. The participants thus became laborers working for a rice plantation rather than independent farmers.

From the very beginning, the threat of environmental destruction and the economic costs of running this Mega-Project were obvious to critics. Peat is, for example, chemically oligotrophic, lacking mineral nutrients. Crop yields on peat land drop suddenly after the initial nutrients are exhausted. For sustained land-use, the peat land inevitably requires large quantities of fertilizer and other agro-chemicals.

3. The Failure of the Mega-Project and the Livelihood of Immigrants

Major problems dogged the projects, however. The construction of the infrastructure, for example, was not well coordinated. Canals were built but no dams were constructed, making the canals useless for washing the acid water away from peat. On top of these problems, most of which had been concerns prior to the project, came the economic crisis of 1997 and, without financial support, the Mega-Project was suspended.

The vast project site, however, had been deforested for cultivation. Moreover thousands of participants were already settled on the site. They are still receiving limited official services and support from local governments, which were not originally planned or promised. The allocated lands have turned out to be insufficient, both quantitatively and qualitatively, for sustaining their livelihood. Some settlers have had no choice but to leave the project site, but others remain. How do they survive in these unfamiliar surroundings far from their own *kampong*?

Two strategies for survival have been taken by the remaining participants. They are not competitive but mutually compatible.

Firstly, in spite of the unsuitability of peat for crops, they have begun to manage their allocated lands in a positive way. Under the Mega-Project, most of agricultural practices, from the selection of paddy varieties to harvest transactions, were planned and arranged. There was little room for individual initiative. But in the absence of support from the project, the settlers have been forced, for better or worse, to farm their lands at their own discretion. They were supposed to become “laborers” for commercial plantation, but again have become “farmers,” working for themselves. The income from the lands is, however, generally inadequate. New agricultural experiments may take some time to get going.

Secondarily, they try to find jobs that can provide a living wage. During the period of decentralization in Central Kalimantan, the most popular waged activity is to engage in illegal logging activities.

Since late 1998, Indonesia has been implementing decentralization. The authority over the management of natural resources, including forests, has been transferred from the national to local government. This process has often been chaotic and forest resources have been quickly extracted, before the establishment of proper regulations, mainly by local enterprises or corporations.

Once-logged forests near project sites often contain timber that can be sold on the local or even international markets. Scratch groups of loggers have rushed into the forests to reap the last remaining benefits. Project participants have constituted the main labor force.

The timber is sold to sawmills that have mushroomed along the river. Most of the remaining settlers have joined these logging activities, particularly during the agricultural off-season. Some of them place more weight on the *illegal* logging. The settlements of the former project became the *de facto* frontline bases for illegal logging, a negative consequence of the Pembangunan era.

***Musyawarah Mufakat* (Unanimous Agreement after Consultation and Deliberation)
or a Representative System?**

Governance Changes in Rural West Java in Democratizing Indonesia

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Important social changes are taking place at the surveyed village, especially in the area of village administration. Heads of villages have been made responsible to the local people through the village representative body (BPD); under the old system, they were responsible to the district head. Today, the village representative body is independent of the village office. Village officers and members of village office auxiliary bodies (LPM) are not permitted to become members of the BPD. The BPD can propose and adopt drafts of village regulations, ask the district head to sack the village head, and accept or reject proposed candidates for territorial leaders as well as village officers. The BPD makes decisions based on a majority vote, rather than using the principle of unanimous consent (*Musyawarah Mufakat*). This is a great change, because the principle of consultation and unanimous consent was an important doctrine under the Soeharto Regime. These changes were prescribed by a change of government policy and the Government Act; each district and village administration has the authority to create a system appropriate to its territory.

It was not until March 2001 that the members of the BPD in the surveyed village began to be elected directly by the people. Today, the members include many primary school teachers or other school staff. The impact of this composition has not yet become clear. However, this new body may have a major impact on village administration, by relaying the voices of the people or forging strong linkages with political, religious and economic interest groups in the village. So far such linkages have not become clear at the surveyed village. The LPM is quite active, and has succeeded in convincing the district government to spend large sums of money on the construction of roads, and on schools that have been constructed with central government/presidential budget. This change reflects the change of policy regarding local government autonomy.

In implementing the villagers' representative system, the village meeting, which is attended by all members of the community, has the highest authority in formulating the village budget. The principle of *Musyawarah Mufakat* was applied. However, some people disagreed to the proposals made by the LPM, and refused to obey the decisions

of the village meetings. Today, the village meeting is different from that during the Soeharto Regime, as now it has the right to decide important issues *de facto*, as the BPD recognizes its decisions as village decisions formally, and almost automatically. However, decisions of the village meeting do not need to be recognized by the head of district. The present village meeting is somewhat different from that in 1950, as the village in 1950 head had more power and authority than in the present. The present village meeting failed to achieve an actual consensus, and the LPM sought to formulate a compromise.

The BPD at the surveyed village achieved quite modest performance, merely supplementing the village meeting. The members were too timid to exercise their authority, for example in deciding the village budget, and they merely recognized the decisions of the village meeting. We can thus say that the representative system, under which the majority wins, has not yet been applied in practice at the surveyed village. The method of *Musyawah Mufakat* is applied instead. However, it is totally different from the system under the Soeharto Administration, because the principle of *Musyawah Mufakat* is used at the village meeting, not the BPD. This system is also different from that in the past because it is not the village head but the LPM that negotiated the compromise

Where Have the “Entrepreneurs” Gone?

A Historical Comment on Adat in Central Flores

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The surge of attention given to *adat* (custom) is one of the distinctive features of present-day Indonesian local societies. The Soeharto Government enforced a paternalistic interventionist policy toward the *adat*, which the government felt had the potential to wield political influence or to hinder the successful realization of “development” (*pembangunan*). On the other hand, the decentralization regulation (Undang-undang No. 22, 1999 on local government), legislated after the demise of the New Order, rested on the two intertwined concepts of regional autonomy and social empowerment. In addition, this regulation also defined *adat* as the basis of village administration. Given that Indonesia is predominantly rural, it is hardly surprising that there has been a rapidly growing interest in *adat* among local people, especially local politicians and intellectuals.

This is the case with the administrative regency (*kabupaten*) of Ende in central Flores. In 2000, the government of Kabupaten Ende began enacting numerous administrative ordinances under the decentralization regulation. One of those ordinances intends to afford protection and empowerment to *adat* (Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Ende No. 25, 2000). In addition, the Agency of Rural Society Empowerment (Badan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa) of Kabupaten Ende collected data on *adat* institutions in 2002, even though its research covered only a few areas because of its fiscal predicament. Accordingly, Regent of Kabupaten Ende distributed to all village headmen in the regency a questionnaire on the status, role, genealogy and territory of each *adat* chief. The headmen were ordered to return the questionnaires by 23 September 2002. It was appropriate for this survey to focus on chiefs and land because both of them are of central importance in *adat* institutions in central Flores. *Adat* also is a matter of concern in the few local offices of the central government that are left over after major downsizing in the past several years. The epitome of these is the branch office of the National Land Agency (Badan Pertanahan Nasional) in Kabupaten Ende.

This presentation intends to put forward a succinct historical analysis of the present state of *adat* in central Flores. It will focus on Lise, a political domain in Kabupaten Ende. Specifically, I explicate how the present state of *adat* in central Flores

is causally connected with (a) the slave trade and warfare that took place in central Flores until early in the 20th century, (b) Dutch colonial rule, especially the impact of the pacification that was conducted from August 1907 through February 1908 in central Flores and which put an end to the slave trade and warfare, and (c) the development policy that the Soeharto Government executed from the 1970s until its downfall in 1998. I have chosen this selective focus not only for reasons of time, but also because taking this approach makes it possible to behold some aspects of the present state of adat that were not conceived of in the “development” discourse that took place during the New Order, nor have been conceived of in the current political circumstances surrounding adat.

The starting point of my discussion is the uneven distribution of population density between the north and south of central Flores. It is difficult to explain this phenomenon with reference to natural environmental factors. Although the two Dutch administrative “subdivisions” (*onderafdeeling*) of central Flores labeled Ende and Maoemere do not differ ecologically, according to demographic data from the 1910s the south coast of Onderafdeeling Ende was more densely populated than its north coast, but this was not true of Onderafdeeling Maoemere. Moreover, to examine in detail, the most heavily inhabited areas in those “subdivisions”, namely Ende/Pulau Ende in Onderafdeeling Ende and Geliting/Ili in Onderafdeeling Maoemere, were the hubs of trading activities that Dutch colonial rule ended.

Lise, originally an inland political domain, struggled against domains occupying the south coast of central Flores and controlling profits and muskets acquired from trading activities carried out there through the 19th century. In fact, it was a matter of life-and-death for a group of people to acquire more guns and gold than their rivals, since political domains that failed to obtain them could not but surrender to or be defeated by those who preempted them. I emphasize that gold was the most condensed form of wealth and military potential. It was utilized not only to pay the price of firearms, but also to hire mercenaries. In addition, chiefs who succeeded in amassing gold invested part of it in purchasing pieces of land around their territory in order to increase their following (*aji-ana*), whom they could mobilize when the need arose. Thus, the fittest chief in pre-pacified central Flores was an entrepreneur-like leader who maximized both the efficiency of his limited resources and his return on investment.

The pacification not only stopped such chiefs’ entrepreneurial endeavors but also changed the political situation surrounding chiefs. After the pacification, when it was no longer a matter of life-and-death for groups to join forces in warfare and commerce, the strong leadership of chiefs turned out to be useless. In addition, the weakening of their economic foundations gave chiefs a further blow. For a certain time shortly after the

pacification, though deprived of earning opportunities, chiefs would have been able to spend their hoarded gold on obligatory activities. After the coffers were emptied, however, they could not but ask for financial support from their *aji-ana*. Nevertheless, all the latter were willing to bear was a minimum amount of rice and livestock used in the performance of small-scale agricultural rituals. Thus, chiefs were reduced to priest-like functionaries who presided over rituals following agricultural cycle but did not differ much from their people economically. This is revealed by the fact that large-scale offering ceremonies to “the pair of supreme beings” (*du’a ngga’é*), to which more than 1,000 people were invited and which brought fame to chiefs through their ostentatious displays and consumption of wealth, have hardly been performed since the 1930s.

The second major change regarding adat in central Flores originated in the development policy implemented by the Soeharto Government. Taking Desa X, an administrative village in Lise, as an example, let us first look at the land-tenure pattern in Lise until the 1960s. From his earlier years, the head of Lineage Sega, the largest patrilineage localized in Desa X, made a memorandum of whatever village seniors told him about adat, land and history. A passage in this memorandum is a precious piece of information when trying to elucidate this matter. Currently, a land-parcel named Ngebo Sipi comprises part of the tract of land (*maki*) held by the head of Lineage Sega. This land is divided into 14 land-parcels (*ngebo*), each of which is held by a different individual. Nevertheless, according to the memorandum, based on information imparted on 19 April 1961 by an old man born late in the 19th century, Ngebo Sipi had been cultivated successively by 26 persons from late in the 19th century until the 1960s, each under the control and by permission of the successive heads of Lineage Sega. In other words, Ngebo Sipi did not consist of a number of clearly demarcated ngebo unlike nowadays. The same seems to be true with many other ngebo not only within Desa X but throughout central Flores according to all available data.

Comprehending the multiple-layered articulation of land-right is of central importance to understanding land tenure in central Flores. A chief’s tract of land, designated *maki* or *tana*, is the principal source of living for his people. For this reason, the chief dominates his people. Similarly, an eminent chief asserts authority over subordinate chiefs, since an eminent chief is recognized as the substitute of an ancestral hero who granted land to the ancestors of the subordinate chief according to their merits in warfare. Nonetheless, this is not the endpoint of the causal nexus of domination. It extends further and ultimately reaches the supreme beings (*du’a ngga’é*), who were conceived as the first cause of the “universe” (*ulu ela*). Even though “*du’a*” and “*ngga’é*” are almost the only words that can be translated as “owner” in Lionese, a local language in central Flores, they are hardly ever used to refer to human beings,

whether eminent chiefs or not. This implies that even the land-right of eminent chiefs has not contained exclusive right of disposal which comprises the heart of the modern concept of ownership.

To my knowledge, such a layered character of land-rights has almost never been mentioned in the development discourse. In fact, the master narrative of land during the period of the New Order was monolithic and closed to the effect that it was based on the concept of ownership, whether communal or private, as well as on the alternative relationship between communal and private landownership. Therefore, even if an adat chief naively asserted his hereditary land-right, he was generically censured for pretending to be a landowner for selfish purposes or condemned as a holdover from feudal times that were repugnant to a fixed line of national policy. Thus, adat chiefs could voice little dissent on their land and over the implementation of national land policy. In this situation, where adat chiefs could not but be silent about land tenure, the introduction of perennial cash crops was loudly promoted as part of the “development” policy.

Returning to the previous example, the tract of land (maki) of the head of Lineage Segi is currently divided into 395 land parcels. Nevertheless, apparently most of ngebo boundaries were originally the borderlines of newly planted perennial crops owned by each cultivator. In other words, the ownership of those crops “diffused” into the surface of land itself and transformed it into quasi-private property. This occurred during the the 1980s and 1990s. I would like to label this phenomenon “diffusion of crop-ownership”.

Registered land-parcels in Kabupaten Ende increased rapidly during the period of Soeharto administration and totaled around 10,000 in August 2002. On the other hand, there exists more than one hundred administrative villages in Kabupaten Ende, and it can be safely inferred that a number of private-property-like ngebo came about in each desa through the “diffusion of crop-ownership” in and after the 1980s. In that case, numerous private-property-like land-parcels came into being while the land registration program was going on, and the number of these now amounts to several times the number of registered land-parcels in Kabupaten Ende.

Chiefs still clearly distinguish their tract of land (maki) from ngebo. Nonetheless, I hesitate to state that their people make the same distinction. People do not explicitly deny the right of chiefs to maki. Nevertheless, as is suggested by the fact that the agricultural taboos, observed in recognition of chiefs’ right to maki, have been frequently transgressed since the 1990s, it seems that the difference between maki and ngebo has become blurred, and the right to the latter has merged into the right to the former. If this is the case, the emergence of quasi-private property through the “diffusion of crop-ownership” has been undermining chiefs’ land-right more

fundamentally than ever before. This inconspicuous and creeping change has a potentially ruinous effect on adat, because the chiefs' land-rights – based on the aforementioned causal nexus of domination by chiefs – comprises the heart of adat.

Adat has been conceived as a changeless entity not only in Kabupaten Ende but in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur generally. During the administration of Soeharto, adat was considered the remnant of a past feudal social order that was becoming extinct. Since the downfall of the New Order, it has been treated like an endangered species vulnerable to “modernization” and “globalization”. By contrast with these perspectives, I have suggested that the present state of adat is not “genetically” determined but should be understood as the cumulative effect of the historical processes that central Flores has undergone since the early 20th century.

It is unclear what policy should be applied to the present state of adat in central Flores. Nevertheless, whatever policy is adopted, I think it is inevitable that these two major changes suffered by adat in central Flores be taken into consideration.

From Paddy to Vanilla, from Elephant Tusks to Money

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1 Introduction

This paper deals with “change” and “continuity” during the “Era Reformasi,” using data from a tiny village in Ende on the island of Flores, in the remote part of eastern Indonesia, .

1.1 Pa’o

One day during my recent fieldwork, a villager from Rhepa Dori, named Pa’o, complained to me about the recent “changes” in the village. “Nowadays,” he said, “rice comes from the shops in the town of Ende, so we don’t know the season for the marriage ceremonies. It’s so exhausting.” In a subtle way, his comment expressed the precise themes of this paper — “change and continuity.” This paper will pursue the line of thinking Pa’o set for me on that day.

1.2 The Agricultural Cycle in Ende

Let me add some pieces of preliminary information to allow for a better understanding of this fragment of conversation. In the mountain areas of Ende,¹ individuals are expected to contribute in one way or another to ceremonial gift exchanges in accordance with their relationships with the wedding couple. Marriage ceremonies are occasions that involve large expenses for those involved. Formerly, there was a sort of fixed season for ceremonies, and once one passed through a hectic month or two, it was possible to live life without much financial anxiety. But, according to Pa’o, “there is now no season for the ceremonies (*ghoma*),” so people have to prepare themselves for expenses throughout the whole year.

2 Settings of the Story

2.1 Three Economic Spheres

¹ Roughly speaking, in the mountain areas of the Ende region, the people are Catholic and more or less retain “traditional” ways of life, while along the coast live the Muslim Ende, who order their lives according to the Islamic codes.

I will discuss changes in the traditional economy along the three stages of the history of the village. The first stage in my historical narrative deals with the age of Nipi (the father of my main informant Robé), from before WWII until the 1960s. Then comes the second stage, the age of Robé, which I myself witnessed, ranging from the 1970s to the early 1980s. After Robé's age came the present situation, ranging from the latter half of the 1980s up to now, and I will dub it, "the age of Hane," Hane being Robé's sister's son as well as Robé's daughter's husband (because of a matrilineal cross-cousin marriage) (*ané*).

2.2 Three Historic Stages

Next, I will classify the economic activities of the Ende people into three spheres: (1) the prestige economy, (2) the subsistence economy and (3) the market (t) economy ("t" meaning "traditional"), and call this tripartite economy the "traditional" economy of Ende.

3 The Prestige Economy — Bridewealth Exchanges

The "prestige economy" refers to the sphere of bridewealth (*ngawu*) exchanges.

3.1 Friends Make Gifts

The bridewealth exchange is the other side of the Endenese kinship system, in the sense that to grasp the gist of bridewealth exchange, it is necessary to understand the Endenese kinship system. One of the main ideologies of the system is matrilineal cross cousin marriages. This is the institution that allows Ende villagers to classify their own affines into two types: wife-givers and wife-takers. Roughly speaking, wife-givers give wives to wife-takers, and wife-takers give wife-givers bridewealth (*ngawu*). The most important items of bridewealth are (1) elephant tusks (*sué*), (2) gold earrings (*wéa*) and (3) livestock (*éko*).

3.2 Gifts Make Friends

In Ende, not only do friends make gifts (wife-takers and wife-givers exchanging gifts) but gifts make friends. If you give an elephant tusk to me, then you become a wife-taker to me in the sense that my daughter is to be married to one of your sons; bridewealth exchange is that important. An Endenese expression for "matrilineal cross cousin marriage" *mburhu nduu // wesa senda*, means "connecting the path and tracing the track." Robé once told me that the "path" in the statement refers to "the path of elephant

tusks.” Thus, a woman has to trace the path of the elephant tusks which was paid for her father’s sister.

3.3 Feasts

It is at the marriage ceremony that the bridewealth exchange takes place. The marriage ceremony is an occasion that leads to large economic sacrifices for villagers. Guests at marriage ceremonies have to prepare a certain amount of bridewealth (*ngawu*); the host must prepare a big feast (*ghoma*) including, among other things, rice. Let us now proceed to the rice producing activities of Ende: the subsistence economy.

4 The Subsistence Economy: Working in Dry Fields

4.1 Agricultural Activities

The Endenese people were traditionally slash-and-burn agriculturists. They planted paddy and other crops in dry fields (*uma*). For heavy labor such as planting and harvesting, they employed a traditional form of cooperation (*gotong-royong*) called *songga*. At the time of *songga*, people sang while working and had lunch (occasionally with palm wine) in the field, then having a big dinner at the host’s house.

They harvested maize, paddy and other crops while holding the proper rituals for the respective crops. After the harvest and the last ritual, called *kaa uwi*, “eating yam,” began a slack period (*mera méré*) when the people were busy holding marriage ceremonies. This was what Pa’o called the “season for ceremonies.”

4.2 Making of a Big Man

In Nipi’s household, in addition to his wives and children, there were a number of *tu’as*. A bridewealth (*tu’a*) is a woman “bought” (*mbeta*) with bridewealth (*ngawu*). Men who were poorly prepared for bridewealth (*ngawu*) sometimes, it is said, “sold” their sisters to a rich man to get sufficient bridewealth to marry a woman. Nipi was famous for his wealth. Because of the abundant labor force, his household had a large harvest. The paddy was not consumed at his household, though, but instead was exchanged with *ngawu*, including elephant tusks. Thus, the mechanism for rich men is: the more wealth (*ngawu*), the more *tu’a*; the more *tu’a*, the bigger the harvest (*nuka ngasu*); the bigger the harvest, the larger the wealth (*ngawu*).

In this way, the subsistence economy supported the prestige economy at the time of Nipi as well as at of Robé.

5 The Market (t) Economy —Weekly Market and Other Non-places

The economic activities for which the Endenese people show the least enthusiasm is the sphere that I have termed market (t).

5.1 Non-Places

One exemplar of the market (t) can be found in the weekly market (*nerhu*). Here, people do not consider each other as kin and do not exchange bridewealth. It is a place where people regard each other as “non-kin,” and can “buy” (*mbeta*) and “sell” (*téka*). It is, in short, if I may borrow Augé’s terminology, a “non-place,” meaning “a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity” [Augé (1992): 77–78]. The town of Ende and the northern coast are other examples of non-places to which people often refer in their conversations.

5.2 Effects of Non-Gifts

The market (t) is not only located in faraway places. It sometimes manifests itself in the middle of the villagers’ everyday lives. As I mentioned above, in Ende, it is also true that gifts make friends. If every exchange had this effect of accruing kinship obligations, then the society would be a difficult place to live in. This is not the case, however. In Ende, there is a space where transactions can be carried out without invoking any kinship obligations. It is the market (t). Rather than describing a certain transaction in the terms of the prestige economy, such as “give and take” (*pati simo*), it can be described in the terms of the market (t) economy, that is, “sell and buy” (*téka mbeta*) and “borrow and reimburse” (*gadhi nggérhu*) etc. So even if a rich man transfers an elephant tusk to a poor man, if it is agreed that the transaction will be described in the terms of the market economy (t), the movement of the elephant tusk does not result in any kinship relationship. All the poor man needs to do is to reimburse (*nggérhu*) the tusk in due course, when he is well off. There is no path to trace and no track to connect.

6 Changes in the Scene

Now enters the capitalist economy; we will call it “market (c)” (“c” for “capitalist”).

6.1 Labor Migration

The most conspicuous evidence for the change from the introduction of market (c) is in the village landscape. There are now few young men to be found in the villages in Ende; young men go to Malaysia as migrant workers to earn cash. Labor migration started

around the mid 1980s. I already dealt with this topic in an earlier paper [Nakagawa (2003)] and will not touch upon it here. The main point of the previous article is that labor migration has not affected the Ende people's way of life much, because the market (c) was regarded as yet another variation of the market (t). The destination, Malaysia, was seen as yet another addition to the list of non-places along with the town of Ende, the north coast, Jakarta and so on. The market (t) functions as a niche for integrating the newly introduced market (c). In other words, the market (c) was swallowed by the market (t), and nothing has changed in the Ende "traditional" way of life.

6.2 Cash Crops

In this paper, I will focus on another conspicuous change of the scenery — not in the village, but in the fields. Nowadays, the people of Ende do not plant paddy as in the olden days. Some do not open (*ghagha*) fields but simply plant paddy between other crops in their permanent fields (*kopo*). These crops are coffee, clove, cacao, and vanilla.

6.3 History of Cash Crops

Planting cash crops is not a foreign idea to the people of Ende. Most of Robé's coconut palm trees were planted by Nipi. Yet during the age of Nipi and Robé, cash crops were a mere addition to the household's finance. Many households did well without any cash crops.

It was in the 1990s that cash crops began to play a significant role in the economy of the villagers.

Thus, people no longer hold rituals, as they do not cultivate paddy and other crops which require rituals. And now, as Pa'o said, "rice comes from the shops in the town of Ende."

6.4 Development Assistance

I suspect that it was development aid that caused the shift of the planting pattern in Ende.

In 1994, a governmental project called IDT (Inpress Desa Tertinggal) was set in motion. Every *desa* (the smallest administrative division) received 20 million rupiah. The money was then divided into self-help groups at the village level. It was at this time that self-help groups (*kelompok* or *kelompok masyarakat* in Indonesian) were formed in the villages. Each member was said to have received from 60,000 to 100,000 rupiah in the first year.

The *kelompok*, which were thus formed in 1994, are groups working together on a parcel of land, replacing the *songga*. Workers go to an assigned place, each with their own lunch. They work together until evening, taking a lunch break at around noon.

Then in the evening they just go back to their respective houses. There is no communal eating, no collective drinking session and no talking into the dead of the night. “It is much more efficient than *songga*” people say, sometimes with a tinge of nostalgia.

In 1996, aid came to the village via another NGO. Several of the villagers received vanilla vines.

In 1999, cacao seedlings were distributed among the villagers of Rhepa Dori. The seedlings were given to them by the Department of Labor in Jakarta.

In 2001, the PPK (Proyek Pengembangan Kecamatan or Kecamatan Development Program) started.

At the village level, via a *kelompok*) each member can receive 2 to 3 million rupiah.

I could continue listing the aid received in the village Rhepa Dori, but the above examples are, I hope, sufficiently convincing for the point that I am going to make — that the shifting pattern of cultivation was, at least partly, caused by development assistance.

In 2003, during my last trip to Ende, the villagers were busy planting vanilla as the price of vanilla was quickly rising.

7 Multiple Conclusions

Thus ends my story of the history of Ende in terms of economics. Here, I should add some concluding remarks to the story.

I will give two conclusions here: the first comes from my perspective as an anthropologist of economist persuasion, and the second as a “cultural” anthropologist.

7.1 Economist: “Changes in the Scene”

In this sub-section of the concluding section, I will talk as an economics-oriented anthropologist.

My conclusion is that “the scene changes.”

The changes are obvious: no rituals (*nggua*) are performed; instead of the traditional and inefficient *songga*, a modern *kelompok* type of co-operation is now in vogue. No subsistence economy is in sight; people plant mostly cash crops in their gardens. In short, the capitalist economy is spreading over the lives of the villagers. There used to be, indeed, a tripartite economy, consisting of prestige, subsistence and market (t). Now the subsistence economy has dwindled to nearly nothing, and the market (t) has been replaced by market (c), its capitalist version.

In a nutshell, Ende society is yet another society that has belatedly become involved in the world system, in a negligible peripheral position. As stated by Bohannan, “there is very little doubt about its outcome” [Bohannan (1967)].

7.2 Anthropologist: “The Song Remains the Same”

My conclusion as an anthropologist is that “the song remains the same.”

It is true that the tripartite economy has now become in practice a bipartite one. Moreover, the scene seems to really have changed. But this is seen from the outside. If we look at the “landscape” from a native point of view, it is the prestige economy that matters to the people. They do not care what becomes of the subsistence and market economies (whether [t] or [c]) as long as the prestige economy remains intact. In the age of Nipi and Robé, it was the subsistence economy that supported the prestige economy; now it is the market economy that supports the prestige economy.

As Pa’o stated, things have indeed changed but the point is that the prestige economy remains (to such an extent that “it is exhausting”) and its importance has actually increased.

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Regional Autonomy in Process

A case study in Bali 2001-2003

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“Regional autonomy” (*otonomi daerah*) is no doubt one of the most important keywords characterizing the political scene of post-Soeharto Indonesia. The term catches the liberal and anti-authoritarian atmosphere of the period, and has won the acclaim of the people who demand and yearn for a reformation, or even a deconstruction, of the highly centralized government system of Soeharto’s New Order regime. If the word “reformation” (*reformasi*) was and still is the most popular political slogan in this transitional period, “regional autonomy” continues to indicate the desirable direction of the political reformation.

The word “regional autonomy” in this context covers a wide range of current topics. Because it relates to the national governmental structure, the term was often referred to and advocated in the debates concerning federalism that once flourished in the president Habibie era. These debates ended in the moderate consensus among political leaders that a unitary government had to be maintained while the extent of regional autonomy had to be broadened.

The increase of regional autonomy was first realized in the form of two new laws concerning the decentralization of the domestic government system. Law No. 22 1999 on the devolution of governmental authority and Law No. 25 1999 on fiscal decentralization were both enacted in 1999 and have been implemented since 2001. These new laws obviously reflected the political climate of the period and have served as the founding stone for the subsequent policies on domestic governance.

Along with this schematical change of the domestic government system was carried out the transfer of a part of the national government staff to provincial or district (*kabupaten*) governments. Most of the transferred staff had been posted at provincial/district branches of state ministries, so that the policy might seem to have caused only an administrative change of status. Nevertheless, it brought about a significant structural change of regional government, especially at the district level.

While the reformation of the domestic fiscal system and the transfer of a part of the national government staff to regional governments were enforced in 2001, the implementation of some policies prescribed in the newly enacted laws was delayed

because the laws had to be supplemented in detail by a series of government regulations (*peraturan pemerintah*) which themselves needed considerable time to be prepared. Such was the case of the renewal of the village government system, which was only briefly outlined in Law No. 22. The related articles in the law can be read as the official recognition of local traditional institutions as alternative governing bodies in the newly planned village government. This, however, was a highly sensitive issue, as the legal status of these local customary institutions had long been neglected ever since the independence of the Republic of Indonesia. The government regulations prescribing anew village government structure were not enacted until 2001. As a resultant, some district governments delayed the preparation of the district regulations on that matter, waiting for the enactment of the government regulations, while some others soon enacted such regulations without referring to the prescriptions of the national regulations which had not yet been sentenced.

Thus, the three years from 2001 to 2003, the period of my research on this subject, were the very beginning and trial stage of the realization of the regional autonomy plan in the post-Soeharto era. The rail has already been set by the two laws, some policies have been enforced, but some others are not yet fully operative. During my three research visits to Bali between 2001 and 2003, I collected data at several sections of the Bali provincial government office and Gianyar district government office, and also at some village government offices in the district of Gianyar. In addition, in 2002 I made a short visit to the West Sumatra province to obtain data concerning the policies on the new village government system, hoping to compare them with the Balinese data. Throughout this research period, I often visited the village of Bona in the Gianyar district, where I once stayed for a year to conduct anthropological field research, and obtained various informations and opinions on the current regional autonomy policies through conversations with the villagers.

This paper analyzes some provisional results of the on-going decentralizing policies of the domestic government system and the accompanying changes brought about at the province, district and village levels. The next section summarizes the structural and financial changes in the provincial and district government which took place in the first year of the enforcement of the two laws of the new regional autonomy plan by presenting and analyzing the data from the Bali provincial office and the Gianyar district office.

The second section presents a comparison between the national regulation and the district regulations (of Gianyar in Bali and of Agam in West Sumatra) of the new village government system, and discusses the expected progress in village level democracy.

The third section focuses on the Balinese traditional village system which needs to be restructured in accordance with the newly constructed government village. In this Regional Autonomy era, the centuries-old traditional village system is highly evaluated by the Balinese people themselves as the fundamental base of their culture, and is hoped to play a supplementary but indispensable role in the village administration. Under such pressure the local traditional village system, too, is forced to reform its structure and function.

Thus, at least in Bali, regional autonomy policies following the newly enacted two laws have brought about fundamental changes in the administrative, budgetary and social system at the provincial, district and village levels. The final section discusses the significance of these political reforms for local people in terms of “democratization”, “modernization”, and “civil society”. Decentralizing policies and village government system reforms obviously highlight an important part of the on-going vast and rapid social change in Indonesia. The influences of these reforms are far-reaching and fundamental because they not only follow the political urge of the current Reformation Era but also concern some principal matters of a nation-state: the imagined unity of uneven populace and regions, integration and power distribution, and the domestication of indigenous social systems into a modern bureaucracy.

Table 1. Increase of Government Personnel in the Gianyar District

[2000]		[added in 2001]	
District secretariat	198	District agencies	503
District agencies (12)	588	Kindergarten teachers	83
District units (Bappeda, DPRD, etc.)	390	Junior high school teachers	1008
Sub-district offices	144	Senior high school teachers	674
Ward offices	26	Administration staff of JHS	208
Public health offices	375	Administration staff of SHS	176
Primary school teachers	2146	School inspectors	9
Religion teachers	385	Sub-total	2661
Sports teachers	201		
Primary school guards	145		
Total	4598		

(Source: Gianyar district office and Gianyar district agency of education)

Table 2. Bali Provincial Budget, 2000 and 2001 (Rp million)

	2000	2001
[Receipts]		
Balance previous year	100,261	171,123
Province's own receipts	237,915	268,875
Subsidy from central government	102,550	103,105
Tax distribution	12,178	10,135
Routine funds	30,699	(DAU) 91,170
Development funds	57,982	
Others	1,691	1,800
Total receipts	440,726	543,103
[Expenditure]		
Routine	131,371	354,349
Personnel	30,770	110,100
Materials	15,653	20,599
Subsidy for districts	55,371	160,926
Others	29,577	62,724
Development	120,600	193,506
Economic	42,321	85,426
Social	26,310	45,615
General	31,841	48,471
Subsidy for districts	20,128	13,994
Total expenditure	251,971	547,855

(Source: Bali provincial office)

Table 3. Gianyar District Budget, 2000 and 2001 (Rp million)

	2000	2001
[Receipts]		
Balance previous year	6,024	10,021
Province's own receipts	25,145	38,519
Subsidy from central government	92,714	233,981
Tax distribution	4,376	8,529
Routine funds	38,189	(DAU)182,460
Development funds	46,252	(DAK) 42,992
Others	3,897	0
Total receipts	123,883	282,521
[Expenditure]		
Routine	62,244	142,090
Personnel	41,837	99,288
Materials	10,497	10,789
Subsidy for sub-districts/villages	5,487	12,896
Others	4,423	19,117
Development	65,264	153,788
Economic	48,594	116,063
Social	5,357	15,849
General	1,313	21,876
Total expenditure	127,508	295,878

(Source: Gianyar district office)

Table 4. Bona Village Budget, 2001, 2002 and 2003 (Rp thousands)

	2001	2002	2003
[Receipts]			
Administration fee	1,162	1,421	1,907
Interest	1,200	2,143	1,977
Subsidy from central government	11,920	11,920	11,920
Personnel	1,920	1,920	1,920
Development	10,000	10,000	10,000
Subsidy from provincial government	14,767	30,463	25,500
Personnel	13,557	25,167	25,167
Tax distribution	1,210	5,296	332
Subsidy from district government	16,856	35,722	41,427
Personnel	9,423	24,573	35,853
Tax distribution	7,433	11,149	5,575
Donation	1,545	1,984	2,091
Total receipts	47,450	83,653	84,822
[Expenditure]			
Routine	38,554	72,614	80,332
Personnel	25,110	51,660	63,660
Materials	4,120	2,354	1,450
Equipments	4,664	6,700	7,800
Traveling expenses	650	850	550
Activities	3,610	5,450	5,750
Subsidy for villagers' activities	400	5,600	1,122
Development	9,002	11,039	4,490
Infusion to village economic asset	1,200	1,393	1,227
Renovation of village head office	5,659	9,646	3,263
Arrangement of public health center	1,500	0	0
Others	643	0	0
Total expenditure	47,556	83,653	84,822

(Source: Bona village head office)

Local Press in Bali in the Era of “Reformasi”
An Appraisal of New Directions for Research

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As has been pointed out, during the “New Order” regime, Indonesia became a “widely literate society” as a result of the spread and extension of formal school education, and with this, the publishing of dailies and weeklies became feasible as a business [Shiraishi 1992: 105]. One of the serious consequences of this change was that opinion-forming power became centralised in Jakarta, as the wealth of the nation became concentrated there along with the government apparatus of the New Order regime [Shiraishi 1992: 106]. Indeed, in the 1980s, the media in Indonesia were integrated into commercial groups such as the Kompas-Gramedia group, Sinar Kasih group, and Tempo-Jawa Pos Group. Apparently, as argued by Hanazaki [1998], “commercial journalism by the mass communication industry” displaced “political-oriented journalism by ‘home industries’” in the course of the New Order regime’s suppression of the media. In the 1990s, furthermore, a stratum of state leaders came to dominate the media. They included Bob Hasan’s Gatra, and Abdul Latief’s Tiras. SIUPPs (publishing permits for the press), which were necessary for publishing, were granted to entrepreneurs who were known to be “close” to the government. This tendency, which had been apparent particularly since the beginning of the 1990s, became even more obvious after the suppression of Tempo, DeTIK, and Editor, in 1994 (source: Info Harian, Tempo Interaktif June 22, 1996. http://www.tempo.co.id/ang/har/1996/960622_1.htm).

Thus, as argued by Shiraishi and others, it seems evident that the ability to form public opinion was concentrated in the power elites in Jakarta, and particularly among those with close relations to the government. Consequently, public opinion even in local societies came to be strongly affected and controlled by the opinion-makers in Jakarta as the mass media converged into the Jakarta-based conglomerates under the very nature of capitalistic economy and the suppressive politics of the New Order regime. From the era of “Reformasi” on, however, local press proliferated throughout the Republic, due apparently to the fact that it became much easier to publish periodicals following the abolition of the SUIPP.

The major tool for controlling the media in Indonesia was the licensing system. The “Keterbukaan” (open) policy instituted in the twilight of the Suharto regime gave

the media an additional degree of freedom. Then, the resignation of Suharto and the collapse of the New Order regime lead to the Reformasi (reformation) era. The conditions for issuing SIUPP were greatly loosened, and the Habibie regime abolished the Ministry of Information regulation of 1984, stipulating the annulment of the SIUPP. Even the Ministry of Information, which was notorious for its censorship, was abolished during the Gus Dur presidency. Eventually, various publications emerged everywhere throughout the Republic, including Bali.

However, despite the fact that the abolition of the SIUPP system permitted local media to emerge, the mass media as well as wealth may still be concentrated in the centre. Hence, as predicted by Shiraishi, the power of public opinion formation may also be concentrated in the centre. Even so, the process of the concentration and resistance against it may differ from locale to locale, and to describe the distinctive features of each locale in this regard is, I assume, the main aim of anthropology (or at least, a part of it).

In anthropology, the mass media has not yet become a fully acknowledged field of investigation. By concentrating on so-called “primitive cultures,” anthropological studies dealt mostly with the “traditional,” meaning simple “non-Western” and “pre-modern” societies and their institutions. By contrasting the “modern” to the “traditional,” characterized by its lack of items of the “modern” world, anthropology has excluded those things considered to be “modern” from the proper objects of anthropological research. This holds true for the press and other forms of mass media. From the 1980s to the 1990s, however, through critical reviews of the conventional methods in anthropology and their premises, anthropologists began to reflect upon what had been done in the name of anthropology, i.e., fieldwork and ethnography. To overcome the defects of conventional ethnography, anthropologists have carried out various experiments toward a new ethnography. Some have situated it in a wider context such as the world system, while others have argued for participatory observations at multiple research sites [Marcus 1995; Canberra Anthropology 1999]. In this paper, I will argue that the description and analysis of the local press in Bali places the characteristics of Balinese society in the context of the Indonesian state in the era of “Reformasi,” on the assumption that the mass media in local societies is a proper object for anthropological/ethnographic studies. I should like to examine the local press (newspapers, tabloids, and magazines) in Bali to appraise directions of research combining the microsociology of anthropological research with a national (and global) background. So far, most studies on the media deal with those with a national circulation or nation-wide broadcast coverage, and have been done by scholars in

political science, communication studies, and sociology. Studies focused on local media have not yet been fully explored.

According to data obtained at Badan Informasi dan Telematika Daerah Propinsi Bali, currently (in 2003) there are 48 local press outlets registered in Bali. Clearly the changes in the constraints on the media as described above led to the proliferation of print media in Bali as well as in other parts of Indonesia. It is reasonable to assume that the abolition of SIUPP was the direct cause of this proliferation. The licensing prevented small local capital from publishing periodicals in the New Order era. However, providing a circumstantial description of a particular locale should indicate the landscape particular to Bali, which cannot be elucidated with sheer general constraints. In this paper, I will look at newspapers and tabloids such as Bali Post, NUSA, Fajar Bali, Koran Bali, RadarBali, Bali Aga, TAKSU and SARAD. By describing them, I will demonstrate that the constellation pattern of the local press market displays features specific to Balin.

National and local newspapers have been competing for the Balinese market. The Bakrie Group bought Bali's second largest newspaper, NUSA, when Bali Post (Bali's largest Balinese-run local newspaper) was conducting a campaign against the Bali Nirwana Resort, which was being developed by the Bakrie. In 2001, the Jawa Pos Group began to publish a Balinese edition (Radar Bali) as a supplement to Jawa Pos. It is rumored that the Kompas-Gramedia Group is planning to publish a Balinese edition to supplement Kompas. While the Java-based media conglomerates struggle to dominate the market, Bali-based local newspapers have also appeared. In addition to these newspapers, tabloids and magazines there also emerged, and among them Balinese culture is a popular focus.

Considering the recent case where Surabaya Pos lost a great deal of market share to Jawa Pos, it should be noted that Bali Post, which devotes pages to Bali centred articles while trying to be a national paper, is still the leader in the Balinese market, and that its contenders are concentrating ever more upon local issues, particularly upon (Hindu-) Balinese culture. I suspect that this is a demonstration of the particularity of the Balinese market, which displays a preference for Balinese tradition. This is also shown by the comparison with the data from NTB, where no press is concentrated in a single ethnic culture.

While the national media has been studied by other social scientists, it should be the task of anthropologists to depict in detail such regional media as Bali Post, TAKSU and others. I believe that anthropological studies on regional media can contribute greatly to the study of local society in Indonesia that has undergone a decentralisation process.

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The History of Deprived “Religious” Role in Balinese *Dalang* and Signs of Restoration in the “Transition Period” of Indonesia

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This paper focuses on the “religious” role in Balinese *dalang*, and discusses how the religious policy has affected it after establishment of *Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia* in 1959. (*Parisada*: the religious institution, which administers Hindu communities throughout Indonesia.) Furthermore, the process and the societal background for restoration of *dalang*’s “religious” role will be studied in detail, in which the internal dispute and November 2001 schism of Bali Province *Parisada* (*Parisada-Bali*) is considered as a motivating milestone.

After three decades of Suharto regime collapsed in 1998, President Habibie has advocated “reformation (*reformasi*)” to renew the Suharto policies. As democratization accompanied reformation of the election system and freedom of speech, centralization was re-considered for the May 1999 Autonomy Law and Inter-governmental Fiscal Balance Law. Actually, decentralization of power started out in January 2001, as authorities were transferred to local governments, excluding foreign policy, national defense, jurisdiction, finance and religion.

Quint-annually convened, the 8th Congress of All *Parisada* in Indonesia (*Maha Sabha VIII Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia*) landed on such a political map in Bali, September 2001. The slogan, “*Parisada* for All-Hindu Reforms,” reflects the rushing tides of political and economic reform in Indonesia.

Fundamental policies and principles of *Parisada* were virtually “reformed” by congressional approval. Modifications implemented were twofold: i. the experts’ (*Welakas*)’ eligibility as the executive committee secretary-general, in addition to the high-cast priests *Sulinggih*; ii. affirmative view over *samperdaya*, the new Hinduism movements from *Sai Babba* and *Kresna* devotionalisms.

However, a reactionary sect of *Parisada-Bali* objected to the agenda, which fired controversy and internal dispute. Strictly against reforms that “spoil” Bali-Hinduism, the reactionaries idealized the 1959 and 1961 principles of *Parisada* in the early days. Eventually, *Parisada-Bali* split into two schisms in November 2001. Conflicting beliefs was not the only cause of the split, for “religious rationalism” has continued in the name

of pan-Indonesian Hinduism, contradicting from the reformative “decentralization” and local autonomy.

The new *Parisada Bali* for reactionary Hinduism announced the action policy during the November 2001 Provincial Congress, in which the necessity of re-education for the “religious” role of *dalang* was stipulated.

Prior to the establishment of *Parisada* in 1959, Balinese *dalang* has committed himself to primitive beliefs in Bali by making the holy water from puppets and practicing the purification ritual. However, the religious rationalization by *Parisada* and the cultural policies of Balinese government deprived *dalang* of the essence of his “religious” role, categorized it as *adat* (“local custom”), and eventually ignored it from *agama* (“religion”). Effectuating was the doctrine and a series of educating seminars. Even though *Parisada* did not intentionally deny the “local customs” at first, they were abandoned after conflicts with the idealized Hinduism. It holds true for the “religious” role of *dalang* as well. In the “Dictionary of Hinduism” supervised by *Parisada* in 1991, *dalang* is defined as a “puppeteer and religious educator,” while his “religious” role in the purification ritual and holy water making is totally neglected.

The “religious” role of *dalang* was spotlighted in the “December 2002 Seminar on Balinese Sacred Performing Arts” hosted by the Commission for Evaluating and Promoting Culture (*Listibiya*), a cultural agency under the jurisdiction of the Balinese Government. *Listibiya* surveyed the topic as a form of degenerated culture, by refraining from the influential religious and cultural policies.

Founded in 1967, *Listibiya* was inspiringly committed to the Balinese cultural policy and performing arts up until the 1970s. However, *Listibiya* has almost slept over two decades, as the Bureau of Culture established in 1986 replaced the active role. Accidentally, the chairman of *Listibiya* who took office in 1999 was a leader of the reactionary sect in *Parisada-Bali*. Thanks to his endeavoring commitment to the Balinese Government as a cultural policy maker, the financial assistance resumed for *Listibiya* in 2001. Subsequently, the *Parisada-Bali* successfully conceptualized restoration of the “religious” role of performing arts, where the re-started *Listibiya* worked as a cultural policy advocator. *Dalang* and his neglected “religious” role was a timely topic in focus.

The “Seminar on Balinese Sacred Performing Arts” centered on performing arts, fine arts and religion, with the performing arts presented by a faculty member who teaches *wayang* performance and theory in the Collage of Arts in Bali (*STSI*). He underlined how the sacred *wayang* performance (e.g. *sapu reger wayng*) has been ignored, as well as *dalang* as a sacred performing priest, and emphasized the necessity for *dalang* to be re-estimated, and for the sacred *wayang* to be authorized as a sacred

performing art by the Balinese government. In 2003, *Listibiya* submitted the proposal to the Balinese Government.

Furthermore, the new, reactionary *Parisada-Bali* took advantage of *Warta Hindu Dharma (WHD)*, the monthly journal of *Parisada*, because the chief editor was a leading member of the new *Parisada-Bali*. In addition to Balinese *wayang* puppets photographed on the cover page, a detailed article on the purification ritual of *dalang* was contributed to the readers' column in the August 2002 issue of *WHD*.

“Reformation” and “decentralization” are the two major impacts on the politics and economy of Indonesia. They are catching hold of religion, which is seemingly off the scope of decentralization. Actually, the unrest has motivated reactionaries of *Parisada-Bali* to rise against Indonesian-Hinduism. Dissenting from the escalating religious rationalism, they idealized return to the Balinese-Hinduism, which *Palisada* pursued at the start. The new *Palisada-Bali* is making serious attempts to restore the “customary” factors and “religious” elements long neglected as “unreligious.” Resuscitation of the “religious” role of *dalang* will be truly epoch-making.

Will the “religious” role of *dalang* in Bali be restored from “customary” and converted into “religious” in the true sense of the word? Time will answer the question, as the abovementioned signs of recovery are gradually taking root in the phase of transition Indonesia faces today.

Cultural Policy on Sundanese Performing Arts at the Turn of the Century

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One of the most remarkable changes in Indonesia since the “*Orde Baru*” has been the decentralization of the country’s political system, which began simultaneously with the advent of the 21st century. The central government has decided to transfer greater authority and budget to local governments and to allow them wider leeway in the framework of the united Republic of Indonesia. This paper considers the effects of the decentralization on local people and culture, by examining changes in Sundanese people’s attitudes toward performing arts and the corresponding local government policy. Performing arts play an important part in Indonesian culture and are a major factor in representing ethnic groups and their cultures. People’s attitudes toward performing arts may reflect their sense of identity. That is the reason why I have continued to observe trends surrounding Sundanese performing arts.

The Change in the System of Government

“*Orde Baru*” was a highly centralized regime, which is often described as “authoritarian.” Performing arts activities in the regions were carried out under strict government control. The Department of Education and Culture had offices at the *propinsi* and *kabupaten* or *kotamadya* levels, and *penilik kebudayaan* as a local institution at the *kecamatan* level. In theory, performing arts activities were fully controlled by the Department at the center. Artists were required to receive permission from the authorities to perform, and had to be instructed based on the policy from the center. However, the process of democratization and decentralization has changed the situation. The authority to formulate policy on local performing arts has been transferred to local governments, with the government describing its own role as a “facilitator,” inviting people to work with it in partnership, rather than instructing them. This may represent a chance for Sundanese people to reposition performing arts as an expression of their own. Since authority has been transferred to local governments, Sundanese people in West Java now have broader opportunities to participate in the process of policymaking on performing arts. In some ways, the former government took on the role of patron from the Sundanese aristocrats, or *menak*, and behaved as a master of artists. Performing artists had once been dependent on patrons, performing according

to their patron's tastes and requests. Now, however, the government has abandoned its role as patron and is now trying to support artists in developing their activities.

Concern for Sundanese Culture

From August 22 to 25, 2001, the Rancage Foundation held the first International Conference on Sundanese Culture (KIBS), with the theme of the transmission of Sundanese culture within the trend of globalization. Attended by around 800 participants, the conference marked a rise of consciousness regarding Sundanese culture. People expressed concern for the future of their culture. Many presenters and members of the audience warned that Sundanese traditional culture was in danger, claiming that members of the young generation tend not to pay attention to their own tradition. The conference represented the tendency of Sundanese people to become more concerned about their own identity as Sundanese and to emphasize traditional culture as the core of their identity.

The founder of the Rancage Foundation, Ajip Rosidi, criticized the fact that ethnicity is not listed as the first of the so-called SARA issues. He pointed out the need to openly discuss the cultural wealth of ethnic groups in order to choose factors which are suitable for the development of the Indonesian nation. Some members of the executive committee told me that not only his statements, but in fact the conference itself, would not have been allowed in the "*Orde Baru*" era. The conference was in line with the reform of Indonesian political system and shared to some extent its spirit of decentralization.

From an academic point of view, the results of the conference were ambiguous, as most of the audience members were not professionally trained researchers and the discussions often failed to focus on the issues delivered by the papers. However, its success lay in stimulating people and the local government toward actions aimed at revitalizing Sundanese culture. The participation of presenters from abroad, including myself, tended to be perceived as a proof of the value of Sundanese culture, although Ajip warned that in fact the number of foreign researchers interested in Sundanese culture is not very large compared to other ethnic groups. The conference should be evaluated as an event marking the beginning of a movement to revitalize Sundanese culture. The local press pointed out in articles reporting on the conference that this was of greater importance than the issue of how to put it into practice.

The Government of West Java

The West Javanese government established Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata (Disbudpar) following the regulation on the Dinas Daerah Propinsi Jawa Barat (Perda

no. 15, tahun 2000). One of the three Subdinas of Disbudpar is Subdinas Kesenian, which has a staff of 21. Disbudpar also has five Unit Pelaksana Teknis Dinas (UPTD), one of which is Balai Pengelola Taman Budaya, with a staff of around 60.

Disbudpar has acted in line with the Sundanese people's desire to revitalize their culture, expressed through the KIBS. In the process of formulating this policy, Disbudpar invited artists and intellectuals to discuss future actions. It received many suggestions, which it has been working to realize. One is the establishment of regulations on local culture. In February 2003, the West Javanese provincial assembly enacted three regulations: Peraturan Daerah Propinsi Jawa Barat Nomor 5 Tahun 2003 on Pemeliharaan Bahasa, Sastra dan Aksara Daerah, Nomor 6 on Pemeliharaan Kesenian dengan Rahmat Tuhan Yang Maha Esa, and Nomor 7 on pengelolaan Kepurbakalaan, Kesejarahan, Nilai Tradisional dan Museum. These regulations, which prescribe the West Javanese government's policy on local culture, emerged from the discussions in the *forum dialog* held by Disbudpar. The drafts of the regulations were also written with the assistance of Sundanese intellectuals outside the government. Kalang Budaya, an advisory board for government policy on culture, was also organized in 2003 based on the new regulations. Of the members of the board, 21 are representatives from the following sectors: performing arts, research on culture, history, religion, and tourism business in West Java.

Conclusion

Disbudpar seems to have made a good start under the leadership of its director, who is trying to attract people to work with the group in the first years of the decentralization. West Java already has regulations for the establishment of a policy framework on local culture in accordance with the spirit of the reform. However, we have yet to see how the system will be maintained and developed, and whether artists will be able to develop an attitude of positively participating in the policymaking process.

Disbudpar has positively developed a policy on culture based on the demands of people for the revitalization of Sundanese culture in a framework not limited to any single *kabupaten* or *kota*. However, Disbudpar does not have an authority to deal directly with performing arts in each *kabupaten* or *kota* in the decentralized system. In the next step, good coordination between *propinsi* and *kabupaten* or *kota* is needed.