

# The Uma-economy

Indigenous economics and development work in Lawonda, Sumba  
(Eastern-Indonesia)

Meg  
NN 8201  
1841



Jacqueline Vel

## Stellingen

1. "Iedere kijk op het economisch leven die menselijk, moreel en christelijk wil zijn moet worden bepaald door drie vragen: Wat doet de economie vóór mensen? Wat doet de economie mensen aan? In hoeverre worden mensen in staat gesteld aan het economisch leven deel te nemen?"

Uit: "De Keerzijde van de economische medaille, een geloofsbrief over de economie", D. Agelink e.a., Amsterdam 1992

2. Studie van cultureel en normatief pluralisme in moderne samenlevingen kan een nuttige bijdrage leveren aan het voorkomen van conflicten tussen etnische en religieuze groeperingen: door aan te geven waar raakpunten en overeenkomsten bestaan kan men deze kennis gebruiken om polariserende indelingen in termen van "wij" en "de anderen" te relativiseren.

3. Het idee van de staf van ontwikkelingsorganisaties of van overheidsambtenaren dat men door slechts een bijdrage in arbeidskracht te verlangen van de lokale bevolking een voorwaarde schept die de participatie van de armsten zal bevorderen, berust op het vooroordeel dat arme mensen tijd over hebben.

4. Het feit dat in een bepaalde lokale taal geen passende vertaling bestaat voor de Nederlandse uitdrukking "dank u wel", moet niet opgevat worden als een teken dat gevoelens van dankbaarheid ontbreken, maar als een uitdaging om de inheemse uitingvorm te zien en te waarderen.

zie D.K. Wielenga, 1933 ("Merkwaardig Denken")

5. Als boekhoudkundige methode om inzicht te krijgen in de materiële positie van een huishouden (*rumah tangga*) in de Uma-economie is het opstellen van een balans met rekening van schulden en vorderingen te prefereren boven het reconstrueren van een jaarlijks huishoudbudget.

*dit proefschrift*

6. De permanente aanwezigheid van een kat is een betere indicator van voedselzekerheid in een huis in Lawonda dan het resultaat van de berekening van het jaarlijkse voedsel budget van het betreffende huishouden.

*dit proefschrift*

7. Alle moderne vormen van kredietverlening, inclusief het uitlenen van boeken door een bibliotheek, zijn gebaseerd op de negatieve normatieve beoordeling van schulden; waar het een teken van prestige is om veel schulden te hebben, ontbreekt de morele druk tot terugbetaling, en zullen kredietprogramma's mislukken.

8. De effectiviteit van voorlichting over vernieuwingen in de landbouw wordt vergroot wanneer bij de keuze van doelgroepen onderscheid gemaakt wordt tussen enerzijds degenen die over de adoptie van vernieuwingen beslissen en anderzijds degenen die de vernieuwingen moeten gaan uitvoeren.

*dit proefschrift*

9. (a) De verklarende waarde van econometrische modellen wordt in hoge mate bepaald door de kwaliteit van het cijfermateriaal waarop de berekeningen gebaseerd zijn.  
(b) Ervaring in Lawonda met de manier waarop statistische gegevens door de overheid verzameld worden, leert dat kwantitatieve gegevens over produktie en handel op Sumba meer informatie geven over de houding van de informanten ten opzichte van de ambtenaren van de statistische dienst, dan over de werkelijke omvang van deze economische grootheden.
10. Nu een groot deel van de rurale bevolking op Sumba christen is geworden, en zij in hun dagelijkse landbouwactiviteiten de leiding van de *marapu*-priesters moeten ontberen, verdient het ontwerpen van preekschetsen over agrarische onderwerpen hogere prioriteit in het kerkelijk ontwikkelingswerk dan de training in nieuwe landbouwtechnieken.
11. De grote variatie in beloning voor kinderoppas, laat zien dat ook in Nederland de *terms of exchange* in transacties in aanzienlijke mate bepaald worden door de aard en kwaliteit van de sociale relatie.
12. Het feit dat promovendi hun proefschrift eigenhandig *camera-ready* moeten maken, pleit ervoor om hen bij goed gevolg niet alleen een doctorsbul uit te reiken maar eveneens een diploma tekstverwerking.

Jacqueline Vel  
Wageningen, 14 oktober 1994

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indigenous economics and development work  
in Lawonda, Sumba (Eastern Indonesia)"

The Uma-economy: indigenous economics and development work in Lawonda, Sumba  
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# Preface

During my studies in agricultural economics at the Agricultural University of Wageningen, my first experience with field work was in a research on informal savings and credit in a village in Sri Lanka, supervised by Drs. F.J.A. Bouman of the Department of Agricultural Law. I lived among very poor mat weavers for half a year, and I realized that I had to learn much more and stay much longer than what was possible in this short period in order to understand the economic actions of the villagers and their own indigenous logic. I also discovered my preference to do research in close connection with practical activities that help to do something positive about the problems of the people in the area of my fieldwork. The opportunity to combine development work with research on a local economy came in 1982. In November of that year, my husband and I were appointed by the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, GKN) as advisors to Propelmas, a rural development program of the Sumbanese Christian Church. After a preparation period of one and a half years in the Netherlands, we departed for Sumba in May 1984, and lived there until March 1990.

During our six-year stay on Sumba the emphasis of my work was initially on learning about the local way of life in the broadest sense. How to survive in a place without electricity, running water, shops and newspapers is a question one is not prepared for at the University, and I am very thankful to all the Sumbanese who taught us some of the practical skills that daily life in Lawonda requires. Gradually, we became more involved. We borrowed a paddy field from one of our neighbors and cultivated our dry lands. We learned by own and sometimes bitter experience how hard it is to produce one's own food. The Lawondanese introduced us to their exchange practices. In endless sessions on the veranda of our house with people who came to ask for a loan or a gift, we learned about the tricks of the Lawondanese morality of exchange.

In Propelmas' work, our major contribution was to assist the local staff in evaluating their experiences. We faced them with the outsiders' questions, that, although they seem to be very obvious at first glance, appeared to be helpful in analyzing the reasons for success or failure of development activities. I want to thank all members of the board and the staff of Propelmas for their confidence in us while sharing their experiences and thoughts with us, in particular Gany Wulangu, Wiyati ws., Sofia A. Djuli, I. G. Made Raspita, and D. M. Riwa.

After a year in Lawonda, I took up my initial plan to write about the results of action research for Propelmas in a way that would make our experiences in Lawonda accessible to a wider audience of both development workers and academic researchers. The final form of this book is substantially different from the plans and ideas that I began to formulate in the first two years I lived in Lawonda. In the period between 1988 and March 1990, I concentrated my research activities on two areas, Pangadu Jara and Yami Pahuruk. I visited the inhabitants of these areas at their home, and I am very grateful for the hospitality they

gave me, and for their confidence in telling me all about their daily lives. The first contours of the chapters of this book appeared during the last year I lived in Lawonda. As the result of in depth study, I wrote short papers on selected issues of the Uma-economy, and discussed them with a group of local experts. I want to thank Rev. H. Horulandja, Mrs. D. M. Riwa, Mrs. Wiyati ws., Pak Ande Deky and Pak Gany Wulangu for their sharp and very valuable comments, additions and corrections on my analysis.

The analysis of the Uma-economy is a contribution to the body of literature on "Indonesian economics". Traditionally this field is dominated by studies on Javanese economics (see Wertheim (ed.), 1961; Hüsken, 1988). Yet, the geographical, historical and cultural context of societies on other islands varies considerably from the circumstances on Java. In studies about economic issues that cover the whole Indonesian nation, Sumba either submerges in the province Nusa Tenggara Timur, with the consequence that little can be recognized of its own rural economies (Hill (ed),1989), or it is regarded as a marginal area based on characteristics that are relevant for comparison with areas within the framework of the national economy (Corner,1989; Booth, 1993). By contrast, I studied the Uma-economy in the context of Sumbanese culture and the economic, geographical and historical circumstances of this island, without continuously referring to the inter-island comparison that is often irrelevant for the rural population on Sumba.

Anthropological studies are prevalent in literature on Sumba. The most famous works are written by the linguist Dr. L. Onvlee and his assistant Oemboe Hina Kapita. Reverend D. K. Wielenga wrote a large number of articles and books about Sumbanese culture and the confrontation between traditional Sumbanese religion and Christianity. The works of both Dr. Onvlee and Rev. Wielenga reveal their great interest in the Sumbanese way of thinking and have been an important source of inspiration in my research. More recently, Sumba was the area of fieldwork for anthropologists who studied indigenous culture, with special attention to ritual speech (Keane, Keller, Hoskins, Kuipers), or the symbolic meaning of textiles (Adams, Geirneart), or cosmology and social organization (Forth). All their publications up to 1991 are included in the bibliography of Taro Goh, the Japanese anthropologist who died on Sumba in 1988 during his field work (Goh, 1991). Their work signifies a large and valuable increase in documentation on Sumba. Yet, what all these anthropological studies have in common is that they tend to stress the normative and traditional part of culture. They pay little attention to ordinary daily life of men and women who do not belong to the elite experts of customary law, and who perhaps share the elite's ideas concerning norms and rules, but are not wealthy enough to act consequently according to the prescriptions of *adat*. A focus on traditional culture, the myths and the normative aspects, hampers a clear view on changes that take place in Sumbanese society. This study of the Uma-economy of Lawonda is supplementary to the studies in the more classical field of anthropology: it focuses on the contemporary, changing economy and gives special attention to the perspectives of the poorer segment of the local population.

We returned to the Netherlands in March 1990. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands offered me a one year assignment to write about our experiences on Sumba. This resulted in the book "Tussen Ruilen en Rekenen" (Vel, 1991), which presents some of the issues of

this dissertation in simple language for a broad audience. A committee of the *Agrarisch Sociale Commissie* of the GKN supported my writing, and I want to thank its members, Gosse Hekstra, Ettie Holwerda, Geert Klaassen, Jan van Capelleveen, Wim van Halsema and Franz von Benda-Beckmann for their enthusiastic and constructive comments.

Thanks to the mediation of Prof. von Benda-Beckmann, the period of work for the GKN was supplemented by an assignment at the Wageningen Agricultural University, which enabled me to write this dissertation.

The final version of this book is the product of reflection in the three years that have passed since I returned from Lawonda. Initially, I was occupied with finding a way to deal with the different way of thinking I encountered in Lawonda. Back in Holland, the academic atmosphere convinced me that many of the insights that seemed clear and obvious in Lawonda can be questioned from a theoretical or comparative perspective. Although the transition from the world of practical development work to the University was a culture shock to me, its positive effect was that I was forced to reconsider my analysis. I want to thank all my colleagues at the Department of Agricultural Law, and fellow participants of the Ph.D.-seminars for the contributions they made to (re-)introduce me in the academic world, and to enable me to situate my own research in a wider analytical context. Gradually, my reflections became more abstract. Yet, my heart remains with the people on Sumba and the activities to improve the quality of their lives. I hope the readers of this book will still be able to recognize the men and women who struggle for their daily livelihood on this eastern Indonesian island. Furthermore, I hope that the more abstract analysis of the Uma-economy stimulates other researchers to be more open minded toward the indigenous economics of the areas they work in, so they may use their curiosity for the exotic to provide knowledge that can serve to improve development cooperation.

I wish to thank Franz von Benda-Beckmann for the frequent efforts he made to convince me of the usefulness of writing a book about the Uma-economy, for all the hours he spent reading my draft chapters, and for his fruitful comments. In 1992, I asked Prof. Henk Tieleman to comment on the draft chapters, and discussions with him turned out to be very stimulating. I want to thank him especially for encouraging me to finish my book quickly. I owe Jos Mooij and Frits Bouman many thanks, because they were so kind as to read and criticize the draft manuscript, and showed me how I could turn it into a better and more accessible book.

During the whole process of making plans for research, doing field work, and writing the dissertation, I received the great support of many friends and relatives. Gert van Dijk helped me with his countless questions, advices and remarks on my work, and by encouraging me not to feel shy about being an alternative economist. My father visited us each year in Lawonda, and during these visits and in our weekly correspondence he gave me the opportunity to reflect on the many events that happened in our Sumbanese life. I want to thank Joel Buzzell for changing the language of this book into proper American English, and Jaap Bijkerk for improving the designs. A grant of the LEB-fund made it possible to publish this book.

My sons Roel, Micha and Sofian insisted on my attention and care, and in their loving way they showed the relative and limited importance of writing books. My greatest debt, however, is to my husband Laurens, who volunteered to restrict his career as a consultant to a part-time profession, and who shares both the pleasant and the not so pleasant tasks in our household with me. Apart from that, he has always been my main discussion partner, with whom I shared the experiences in Lawonda, and who reminded me in my academic moods, to write about people instead of analytical constructs.

Bennekom, August 1994.

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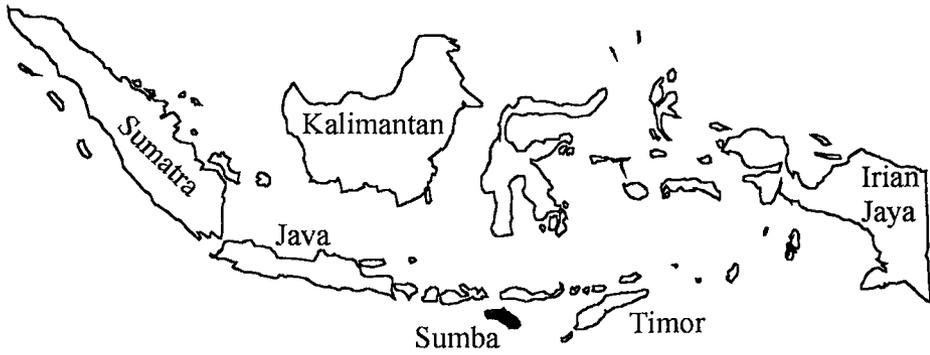
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# Indonesia





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# Introduction

"The Sumbanese have their own values and their own form of economy by which they uphold their values. When viewed in terms of their values, their conduct makes sense." (Onvlee, 1980:204)

## A complicated co-operative

The people of the northern part of Maderi, a village on the Indonesian island Sumba, have set up their own farmers' organization. It started with the cultivation of mung bean. In one of the neighboring villages mung bean appeared to do very well, and yielded a considerable quantity of additional food. Moreover, it turned out to be a suitable cash crop. The options for people on Sumba to earn cash are very limited, since most transactions in their local economy are non-monetary. The people of northern Maderi wanted to try the new crop too. The local development organization, Propelmas, assisted in the experiment. Cultivation was a success and next came marketing of the harvest. The revenues generated were spent by each member individually. Eventually, a school teacher, who was also a member of the farmers' organization, proposed that next year part of the revenues should be gathered to create a collective fund. This fund could then be used to finance cooperative activities of the farmers' organization.

The organization evolved as the range of its activities expanded and cooperation between members became more continuous and stable. In 1986, the members decided to change their organization into an official *Kontak Tani*<sup>1</sup>, and called it "Dulama". One of the consequences of this step was that the members were now obliged to pay an entrance fee and an annual contribution. Although the individual fees were small, they composed a collective fund of considerable size in four years time. What was the purpose of this fund?

In June 1989, a delegation of Dulama members made a trip to the island of Flores. The journey was organized by Propelmas in order to visit a number of farmers' organizations in Ende. The farmers of Dulama observed many different activities, but what appealed most to

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<sup>1</sup> *Kontak Tani* is the name used on Sumba for an organization of male or female farmers that is officially recognized by the Government. When a farmers' organization is turned into a *Kontak Tani*, the members lay down formal regulations, which are often partly copied from other organizations.

them were the various *usaha bersama*, small cooperative businesses. Back in Maderi they told their fellow men of this idea and Dulama decided to set up a cooperative shop.

Setting up a shop and getting it running was not as easy as it had appeared at first glance. Although the shop started with only two products, sugar and cigarettes, its organization turned out to be a rather complicated task. One of the school teachers volunteered to organize the business, though after a while he lost his enthusiasm. He found he was spending too much time running the shop, and his only reward was the suspicion of the other members. They thought that he was benefiting privately from the enterprise "like all shop keepers do". Another serious problem was the reluctance of the Dulama members to pay in cash when shopping in "their own" shop. Some argued that they did not have to pay, because the commodities in the shop were bought with their own contributions. Others just bought on credit, promising to pay when they had the money or when the shop-keeper needed it, just as they would have done in transactions amongst close relatives.

Dulama addressed Propelmas with a number of questions: What is a good selling price for the commodities in our shop? How can we organize our cooperative business without getting entangled in internal quarrels and suspicion? Are the members who have contributed more to the collective fund entitled to a larger say in how to run the shop? Why do the members of Dulama have to pay for the things they want to get from the shop?

As a member of the Propelmas staff, I was involved in finding answers to these questions. Appropriate answers would not only give solutions to the explicit issues mentioned in the questions, but would also address the implicit, underlying problem of difficulties in understanding a different economic rationale. For example, when we tried to explain to the members of Dulama's shop committee how to calculate a good selling price, it appeared to be very difficult to include a financial reward for the labor of the shop keeper. Shop keeping was hardly considered as work, and at best could be rewarded with some return services, like assistance in agricultural work at his dry field. Local norms concerning the proper way to conduct transactions appeared to be another impediment to the viability of the shop. People in this area of Sumba distinguish one another according to social distance: the group of "us", comprising close relatives and neighbors, a category of "no others", with whom relations are well defined, and the rest, "others", who are strangers or even enemies. For each category different economic behavior is appropriate. Selling and buying with cash is associated with "others". Since the co-operative shop of Dulama is run by close relatives and neighbors of the customers, either the code of appropriate behavior or the viability of the shop was invariably offended.

### **The central question**

I have selected the story of the complicated cooperative to start with, because it introduces us in a straight and visible way to the local economy of Lawonda. This economy is the central

## Introduction

subject of this book. The anthropologist who studied Sumbanese society and culture for over thirty years, Dr. Onvlee, argues that the Sumbanese economy can only be understood if it is studied in the context of indigenous culture (see Onvlee, 1980, 1973). Each chapter of this book is a contribution to the effort to understand the logic of actions and legitimations of behavior that give shape to this local economy. A consequence of the approach that takes the economy as an expression of local culture is that, for the explanation of farmers' activities, it is not sufficient to limit the analysis to the physical and financial relationships between inputs, natural resources and outputs in the production process. The Sumbanese have their own perceptions about land tenure, land use, and about work. The distinctions they make between goods are not only based on the material quality but also take the social value of the good into account. All these perceptions are characteristic of their culture, and so determine their economic decisions. The central question, then, is how to analyze this economy from the viewpoint of the local population itself. The qualitative description in Part One of this book is my answer to this question.

However, a focus on the cultural peculiarities of the economy can lead to a bias, in the sense that one can easily lapse into stressing the traditional and normative aspects of economic behavior. Yet, the local economy of Lawonda is not static, and many people in the area are too poor to be able to act according to the traditional rules. They have to find their own way of dealing with the changes which occur on their island. Gradually, the local economy becomes part of the nation-wide economy. This requires new skills and new ways of thinking in order to participate successfully in the market-economic system. The questions of the members of Dulama about how to run their cooperative shop are an example of the problems that emerge in the encounter between two different economic systems.

In the Part Two of this book, I will elaborate on this encounter while discussing several ways to obtain money, used by the people of Lawonda. I have selected these activities because they provide a good entry point for analysis of the confrontation between traditional economic behavior and thinking, and the skills and rationality of the market economy. The central question of Part Two is: *how do the people in the local economy of Lawonda deal with the increasing need for money?* In this question, the people of Lawonda are the subject of the sentence, instead of the increasing use of money. I regard the Lawondanese as subjects in the processes that take place in their economy, and not only as the victims of the forces outside their own community.

In the next section, I will describe why the need for money is increasing in Lawonda. It is one aspect of rural change. The local economy responds to the processes of change, which create the dynamics that combine the old non-monetary economy, aimed at both subsistence and exchange in kind within the region, with the monetary economy of the wider area into which Lawonda is incorporated.

## **Rural change and the introduction of money on Sumba**

Change is regarded as a characteristic of peasant societies; "peasants are seen as representing a transition from relatively dispersed, isolated, and self-sufficient communities toward fully integrated market economies" (Ellis, 1988:5). In chapter four, I present an overview of historical developments on the island of Sumba that have affected the local economy of Lawonda. The quote from Ellis could be taken as a summary of this overview, be it that "full integration into the market economy" appears to be very far ahead for the Lawondanese. Only since the start of the twentieth century has there been a central government on Sumba. Before this period, the Sumbanese society consisted of relatively autonomous clans, which ruled their own territory and resolved conflicts between themselves by warfare. With the establishment of the central government came the obligation to pay tax. This can be regarded as the first general introduction of money, as defined by state-issued currency used on Sumba as a means of payment.

Before the establishment of a central government, some Sumbanese were already familiar with market-exchange due to their involvement in trade. Monetary transactions were confined to commodities for export, particularly livestock, to the other Indonesian islands. These commodities were (and still are) sold to traders, principally the Chinese, living in the coastal settlements. Exchanges within the borders of the island, between the Sumbanese themselves, were in kind. Monetary transactions were, and largely remain, associated with strangers or even enemies.

The government and the missions of the Dutch Protestant Church were the second and third sources of money in the Sumbanese economy. They both played an active role in the introduction of the market-economy on this island (Versluys, 1941:440-441). The Government and the missions paid money-salaries to their officials, who then spent much of their cash in the shops of Chinese traders. However, part of this money entered the local economies, where local government representatives used it to pay the taxes of other villagers in return for food, livestock or services. In the administrative centers of the island, where most of the officials reside, markets emerged in the period between 1920 and 1940, and products of the rural area were bartered and exchanged for money here as well (Versluys, 1941:464). For the rural inhabitants, market-exchange is a way to earn the money they need for particular expenses that can only be paid for in cash. I already mentioned tax, but with the institution of hospitals and schools, health care and school fees have become new, important items of monetary-expenditure. In the markets and Chinese shops, one can find commodities that cannot be produced locally, such as kerosene, sugar, cigarettes, and more recently, the luxury consumption goods, like radio's, batteries, torches, et cetera.

Along with the institution of central government on Sumba, administrative centers emerged. In the capital towns of the two districts of Sumba, Waingapu and Waikabubak, one can find many government offices and houses of government officials. The best schools for secondary

### *Introduction*

and professional education are found in these towns, and a large part of the towns' inhabitants are students. The economy of these urban areas comprises the commercial sector of the island. This commercial sector includes many activities: building and road construction, import of manufactures, motorized traffic and transport, export of agricultural and home industry products, and a very limited amount of tourism. All these economic activities are dominated by ethnical groups other than the Sumbanese. Amongst them, the Chinese are the most important. The main principal for infrastructural enterprises on Sumba is the government. The role of the rural Sumbanese population in this commercial sector is very limited. Young men can find employment as a casual laborer or contract laborer, though it is usually temporary employment. The rural population supplies the town's traders with agricultural products. The traders sell food to the urban dwellers, and also export cash-crops, such as coffee, beans, copra, and candle nuts to Java.

In the rural areas, there was, and still is, no sign of the establishment of a separate, capitalistic sector in the economy, consisting of plantations and industries like those found in other parts of Indonesia. There are no mineral resources to be exploited on Sumba (or they remain undiscovered), and the potential for agriculture is very limited. Climate and soil are not very suitable for large scale estates. The options for more intensive cultivation by the local population are also limited. Contrary to the fertile volcanic soils of the other Indonesian islands, Sumba is largely composed of limestone hills, and the soil is not very fertile and often hard to cultivate.

Regarding the private sector of Sumba's economy, there is a sharp contrast between the agricultural economy of the (ethnical ) Sumbanese in the rural areas, and the urban commercial services economy, dominated by other ethnical groups. The economy of Lawonda is part of the former.

The public sector appeared to be more open to ethnical Sumbanese. Outside interventions by the government and the missions created opportunities for some of the Sumbanese to become incorporated as members of new kinds of services. The opportunities for education, for example, created the option for employment outside of agriculture, particularly in the government or church service. The Sumbanese who are assigned as government officials or clergymen, embody the links between the rural, agricultural economy and the "new economic order". They participate in both spheres, transferring ideas and rules from the traditional to the modern sphere and vice-versa. The government services on Sumba generally occupy themselves with the internal affairs of the island, and the role of Sumba in national policy is very limited. For example, because of the poor quality of the soil and the relatively dry climate, Sumba is unsuitable as an area for transmigration, even though it is sparsely populated. Also, because its population is very small compared to the total number of Indonesian citizens, government programs for Sumba do not yield an important contribution to political support on a national level. From a slightly negative and opportunistic view on national policy, one could say the

only national importance of this island is its strategic, geographic location, at the southern border of the archipelago.

This brief overview characterizing Sumba and the major changes which have affected its rural economy, reveals that this island presents a case which is rather different compared to the economic history Java and other Indonesian islands. It was these islands that attracted the interest of traders, foreign entrepreneurs and the colonial government. It was also on these other islands, and Java in particular, where the famous studies on the economic history of the rural areas in Indonesia were conducted (Boeke, 1930; Wertheim, 1961; Geertz, 1963). The difference in conditions concerning demography and natural resources, and in history of outside intervention, make it impossible to adopt theories on rural change on Java as a framework for analysis of the rural economy on Sumba.

### **Articulation or a repertoire of options**

The introduction of the market economy on Sumba can be analyzed in terms of *articulation* of modes of production (Ray, 1973; Wolpe, 1980; Raatgever, 1988). Articulation 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). The concept of articulation of modes of production is very useful to depict a "top-down" version of the changes that take place in the local economy of Lawonda. It draws the attention to the process by which the local economy gradually becomes part of a larger economic system, while still preserving part of its own specific characteristics. A "mode of production" refers to "the system of social and economic organization as a whole. In addition to the social relations of production, it encompasses characteristic technological development of the system (the "forces of production"), and the various legal, institutional, and cultural norms ("the superstructure") which regulate its operation (Ellis, 1988:47). The articulation of the latter part of the mode of production, the "superstructure", is especially important in the process of change in the rural area of Sumba.

Following the line of a historical-structural approach to agrarian change (see Harris, 1982), the changes that take place in Lawonda can be regarded as a gradual transition from a mode of production in which the economic activities are aimed at subsistence (production for use), toward the capitalist mode of production, in which -in its ultimate form- all things and services are fully commoditized. In the latter situation everything is exchangeable and for sale. In this view, articulation of modes of production is only a temporary phenomenon, which applies to the economies that move along the path to capitalism (Van Binsbergen and Geschiere, 1982:5).

The local economy of Lawonda does not present another case in this theoretical framework. Any approach that considers the changes in the rural economy as part of a linear movement towards capitalism, leaves too little room to assess how the local population of Lawonda deals

with the opportunities to participate in the wider economy (cf. Long, 1990:5), or how monetary exchanges are incorporated in the traditional patterns of exchange.

Up to this point, I have not been very clear about the "new" mode of production. Conversion to Christianity, the emergence of the State and its increasing involvement in the rural areas of Sumba, growing possibilities to earn a living outside of agriculture, and growing cash-crops for markets outside the home region are all part of this new mode of production. This diversity of changes would not show, if this new mode of production were to simply be called capitalism. Therefore, I do not attribute a general label other than "new" to this mode of production. Instead, I specify its elements that bring about changes in the local economy.

Instead of describing the local appearance or articulation of modes of production in Lawonda, I approach the changes in the local economy from the viewpoint of the villagers themselves. Then, the presence of different modes of exchange, different media of exchange, different ultimate goals of economic activities, different units of economic organization, and different ways of thinking and legitimizing behavior -in short, what in a "top-down" view is comprised in the concept of articulation of modes of production-, presents itself in what I call a *repertoire of options*. This concept refers to the arena of choice, where the Lawondanese can either stay with their old mode of production, or adopt elements of the mode of production which prevails in the larger economy. The essential difference between the concept of articulation and my concept of repertoire of options, is, that the latter presents the "bottom-up" view of the processes of change which take place in the rural areas of Sumba. This approach leaves room to analyze the economy of the Lawondanese according to their own perceptions, and makes the observer sensitive to the different motives, interests and abilities of the Lawondanese. In the course of the following chapters, the contours of the repertoire of options will become clear. Yet, the articulation-approach is useful as an introduction, to characterize the local economy of Lawonda and to situate us in the literature on this subject.

### The Uma-economy as a repertoire of options

The economy of Lawonda is not a clearly distinguished, separate part of local life or society. The concept has no translation in the Lawondanese language, but its Indonesian translation, *ekonomi*, is used by the Lawondanese in common speech in several ways:

"He is not able to become village head because *ekonominya tidak memungkinkan*, his economy is not sufficient", which refers to the wealth of his household, which should enable a village head to receive guests properly. Or: "*Memang, dia orang ekonomis!*, Indeed, he is an economic man!". It means that the person involved is regarded as clever but stingy. Or: "We wait until my sister is married off, before we will *atur ekonomi*, arrange our economy". Arrange our economy in this sentence means making plans for other investments, such as building a new house. In these

examples, economy is associated either with wealth or with a type of behavior that does not correspond with what of old is appreciated in Lawonda.

In this book, I use the word "economy" in general, as a totalizing concept for the activities concerning production, distribution and consumption of material needs and the organization of these activities. Up to this point, I have referred to the economy of Lawonda as a local economy. This refers to geographical boundaries, in the sense that, the inhabitants of the geographical area of Lawonda are central to the analysis of this economy. It will become clear in the course of this book that the economy in which the Lawondanese are primarily involved cannot easily be restricted geographically. Physical distance between the dwellings of people is not the main variable to explain patterns of economic organization. Instead, social distance appears to be far more important. To stress the importance of social relations in the economy of Lawonda, I use the concept of "*Uma-economy*". It is named after the House, *Uma*, the central institution in social and economic organization in Lawonda.

The *Uma-economy* is the concept that refers to the contemporary economy of the Lawondanese. As explained above, I regard this economy as a repertoire of options. The options refer to different domains of choice. I distinguish three analytical domains, and one colloquial meaning of options. The former concern the choices between (a) alternative lines of social organization, (b) alternative modes of exchange, and (c) alternative "modes of thinking" which can be used to legitimize economic behavior. The colloquial meaning of options refers to actual economic activities, and is elaborated in four different ways to obtain money.

#### *Alternative lines of social organization*

To notice the type and role of social relations in the *Uma-economy*, it is helpful to regard this economy as the product of articulation between the traditional mode of production and the mode of production which prevails in the wider Indonesian economy. The former resembles a lineage mode of production, described by Raatgever (1988:233) as a concept "which denotes various forms of production, all dominated by kinship systems". The kinship structures are the social relations of production, and these kinship relations are very important in determining the individual's role in production, and part in consumption. The dominance of kinship relations in social organization, is revealed in the distinctions between partners in exchange. The relevant categories of people, then, are kindred, allies or strangers. To each of these categories a different mode of transaction -reciprocity, barter or sale- is the most suitable one (see chapter 3). If, due to articulation with a new mode of production, new economic relations are established, the principles of the lineage mode of production are still applied, and the new relations are perceived in the old kinship terminology. For example, a new school teacher in the village can be "adopted" by a group of Lawondanese, because they need his "assistance" in paying their financial expenditures. Consequently, he is called "brother" and incorporated

in their circuit of reciprocity. Let me give a brief characterization of the Lawondanese lineage mode of production<sup>2</sup>.

In terms of indigenous social organization, the society of Lawonda consists of *kabihu* and *Uma*. The *kabihu* is usually defined as the "patrilineal exogamous descent group" (Onvlee, 1973:23, Forth, 1981:269), and is translated as "clan". In more elaborate definitions, the *kabihu* is connected to a distinct founding father, or *marapu*-ancestor, and to a specific territorial domain (Forth, 1981:269). The members of a *kabihu* recognize a single ancestral house, which they call the *Uma Marapu*.

*Uma* is the general word for house in the Sumbanese languages. *Uma* refers both to the physical structure of a house and to the social group it encompasses (Keane, 1990:49). In earlier days, people in Lawonda provided their daily livelihood through agriculture. They also gathered some food from the forests and hunted for wild animals. Land and labor were the main production factors. The *kabihu*-elders had control over these factors. They were the ones who decided on the division of land for agricultural use, and they organized the work of their *Uma*-members. As the number of descendants increased, they made branch-houses. Although the inhabitants of a branch-house did not share the actual dwelling with the fellow *Uma*-members, decisions concerning the land-use and labor, and the division of its products were still largely made by the *Uma*-elders.

Historically, the *Uma* was the unit within which exchange of resources took place: labor services against rights to use a field, or to get access to livestock. The members with the lowest status in the internal hierarchy had to do the physical work, and the members with the highest status confined themselves to managing the work.

In the contemporary economy, the traditional *Uma* often does not comprise all the necessary resources to meet all of the "modern" needs. Money is a particularly clear example. The old mode of production was non-monetary, in the sense that it was not at all directed toward earning money. In the present *Uma*-economy, money has become one of the necessary means, and each *Uma* has to find a way to obtain it. Four different ways to earn money are described in chapters 8 to 11. The most characteristic example of articulation in this respect is found in chapter eight, which addresses the networks for exchange of resources. The organizational structure of these social networks is analogous to the exchange relations within the *Uma*. There is a junior party which provides physical labor, and there is a senior party which provides the necessary resources. The pattern of these networks shows three kinds of partners: first, the senior partner, or rural rentier, who has control over land and buffalo but lacks the labor to make these resources productive; second, the junior partner, a younger farmers' family in Lawonda that does not own (sufficient) land and buffalo itself, but has a relatively large labor

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<sup>2</sup> In chapter 4, I discuss these concepts of social organization, and indicate the difference between the general anthropological concepts of lineage and clan, and the indigenous concept of *kabihu*.

force; and, third, the "cash"-partner, who works as an official, employed by the government or any other institution that pays a regular salary in money. At present, network partners are primarily selected on their quality as contributors of resources, and, although one still preferably selects network-partners from one's *Uma*-members, these new network relations do not have to be real kinship relations any more. Alternative lines of social organization have emerged in the Sumbanese society due to incorporation in the Indonesian nation and conversion to Christianity. This has opened the way to regard non-kinsmen either as "brothers and sisters within the Indonesian family", or as "fellow-members of the Christian family". Within the contemporary social networks, the kinship idiom is still predominant. The network partners address each other in kinship terms, and their exchange of resources are referred to as "mutual help", as would be done among members of the same *Uma*.

### *Alternative modes of exchange*

The dominant mode of exchange is characteristic for a particular economy. The three classically distinguished modes of exchange are reciprocity, redistribution and sale (*cf.* Polanyi, 1968:149). In chapter three I elaborate on the combination of these three modes of exchange in the *Uma*-economy. If we concentrate on the transactions by which the Lawondanese try to obtain money, reciprocity and sale are the predominant modes of exchange. These transactions can then be divided in three categories: reciprocal "gifts", barter and sale.

Reciprocity is the mode of exchange in which "gifts are given in order to evoke an obligation to give back a gift, which in return will evoke a similar obligation - a never ending chain of gifts and obligations" (Kopytoff, 1988:69). Within a system of reciprocity, transactions not only concern the actual transfer of a thing or a service, but they also serve to create or maintain a social relationship. The latter component is not important in barter, which can be defined as "the exchange of objects for one another without reference to money, and with maximum feasible reduction of social, cultural, political or personal transaction costs" (Appadurai, 1988:9). The third mode of exchange is sale, which occurs when goods or services are exchanged for money in transactions that are discrete and terminal. The things that are exchanged in each of these three modes of exchange are commodities: at the moment of transaction, their exchangeability for some other thing is the socially relevant feature (Appadurai, 1988:13). The difference between the modes of exchange is found in the kinds and importance of social relations that are involved.

In the *Uma*-economy, all three modes of exchange co-exist. Reciprocity is predominant within the home community in transactions between kinsmen and allies. For this part, the *Uma*-economy can be regarded as a "gift"-economy, in the sense that it is a system of general, mutual indebtedness. There is nothing altruistic about the "gifts", since all Lawondanese keep an up-dated balance sheet in their heads showing their debts and obligations as the result of their gift-giving. The next chapters of this book do not provide any evidence of a "subsistence-

ethic", which would call the members of a "moral economy" to share what is needed for subsistence (Scott, 1976). My thesis is that; *the reason for the Lawondanese to prefer a mode of exchange in which transactions serve long term relations, is, that these relations are the best guarantee for the social security of the individual, and for the long term survival of the larger social unit to which he or she belongs.* Historically, this social unit was the *kabihu*, but contemporarily, former strangers can be incorporated in new groups, such as the networks for exchange of resources, in which reciprocity is again the dominant mode of exchange. The other two modes of exchange are applied in transactions where social relations are not important. Barter is then the easiest way to obtain particular goods or services that can be obtained for a reward in kind. The Lawondanese sell products when they face actual expenditures that can only be transacted in cash. Selling, as a mode of exchange in Lawonda, is then not only characterized by the use of money, but is also regarded as the denial of social relations.

To be able to understand how the Lawondanese try to obtain money, it is important to situate their efforts in the framework of the combination of modes of exchange which characterizes the Uma-economy. Then it appears that money does not only occur as the means of exchange in sale, but is also comprised in barter and reciprocal gift-giving. In reciprocity, for example, as assistance to pay a school fee, or in barter, as the means to pay for a specific expenditure for the person who then offers some good (in kind) in return. In both cases, there is no reference to the market-price of the counter-gift in kind. In my analysis of the effects of the introduction and increasing use of money on the Uma-economy, I detach money from commoditization<sup>3</sup>. Monetary transactions are, perhaps, characteristic of ongoing commoditization, but one should be careful not to equate the increasing use of money with commoditization. Instead, my argument is that economies, like the Lawondanese, have always been partly directed towards exchange. The exchange-value of products and services was, and is, culturally and socially determined, and expressed in different non-monetary units. In this economy, the introduction of money means the emergence of an alternative medium of exchange, which is suitable for some, but not for all transactions.

### *Alternative modes of thinking and legitimation*

The third elaboration of the repertoire of options is the choice between different normative frameworks. The repertoire of options, which refers to the choice between elements of different

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<sup>3</sup> In the classical definition, following the descriptions of Marx's "Capital", commodities are products intended principally for exchange, and they emerge in the institutional, psychological and economic conditions of capitalism (Long et al., 1986). Commoditization is the transition in the state of a particular good, from a product for use towards a product for exchange. Commoditization is also the process by which all decisions about the use of resources are ultimately considerations based on market-prices. The considerations appear as monetary cost-benefit relations (see Van der Ploeg, 1992:17).

modes of production, is derived from a concept in legal anthropology, the legal repertoire, which is used to refer to the situation of legal pluralism within a specific context (Von Benda-Beckmann et al., 1989).

In the same way that articulation of modes of production refers to the presence of more than one mode of production, legal pluralism indicates the co-existence and mutual interaction between different normative systems. The image of legal pluralism is depicted by Von Benda-Beckmann:

"Adats<sup>4</sup>, and also the body of Islamic religious rules, principles, procedures called syariah, consisted of cognitive and normative conceptions, that is concepts, rules, standards, principles pertaining to all fields of social activity, to the construction, allocation and transmission of political power, to the right to make, and change rules and take decisions, to validate transactions, to the access to and distribution and intergenerational transmission of economic resources, to social arrangements like marriage and kinship, and to procedures to deal with problematic events." (Von Benda-Beckmann, 1992:4)

In Lawonda, customary law (*adat*), religious law and state law are the three "named" (von Benda-Beckmann, 1992:8) legal systems comprised in the legal repertoire. If a dispute is settled according to customary law, *secara adat*, people refer to "what the ancestors taught us", and the kin-group elders are the authorities in charge of the settlement. If religious law is preferred, the church council has the largest say. If a dispute in Lawonda cannot be settled satisfactorily by the *adat*-elders nor the church council, State law offers the last resort.

A choice of rules and procedures to resolve problems not only appears in dispute settlement, but also in economic activities. Let me explain this with the example of the "complicated cooperative". The problem is payment for sugar from the cooperative shop. The continuity of the shop demands that a person who buys something from the shop has to pay. If the customers do not pay, the shop will run out of stock and will not have working capital left to buy new goods to fill the empty shelves. Direct payment seems to be the obvious rule. Yet, the shopkeeper in Maderi was confronted with the reluctance of his customers to accept this rule. They did not pay at once, or not at all, because they had different ideas about selling and buying, sharing and owning. They found their legitimation in the customary laws of behavior. The farmers of Dulama face a contradiction: if they want their shop to be viable, they have to offend the customary rule of behavior among kinsmen and neighbors. The shop keeper has to search for new options to legitimize his stingy behavior of letting his fellow men pay for the sugar from the shop.

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<sup>4</sup> Adat is the Indonesian word for customary law, and the plural *adats* refers to the many local versions of customary law.

How the economic activities and their organization obtain their shape in the local context depends on what people - in this case in Lawonda- find proper and convenient. Not every person has the same ideas and norms in this respect. There are people who rather consistently refer to tradition: they say that the old and common ways of behavior are the best, and that one should obey the rules of the ancestors. Yet, they can have a very selective memory of what the ancestors taught them, making use of their own set of customary rules as it suits them<sup>5</sup>. Other people are inclined to act as "modern Indonesian citizens" and they follow the rules of proper behavior of the national Panca Sila ideology. A third group finds more support in the Church. The unity in values of the Sumbanese, as suggested in the quote of Onvlee at the beginning of this chapter, does not really exist.

Besides rules attributed to a system, there is also "unnamed law" (Von Benda-Beckmann, 1992:9), that is, rules that are accepted as valid but do not form part, or were not said to form part of any of such systems. Especially in the case of new economic opportunities, there may be no rules from adat or state law available or applicable, and then the people involved create their own rules that reflect what they consider as the best compromise at that moment. In doing so, they make a mixture of elements from different normative orders, and creatively reshape old sets of rules to make them fit new circumstances. The spheres of allocation of money, which will be discussed in chapter three, is an example of such a mixture of economic rules, values and legitimations. It shows, for example, how people in Lawonda have found a way to justify spending precious items of ceremonial wealth on a modern education for their children.

A common sense concept in this respect, is the mode of thinking that refers to "the ways of thinking which are connected with the mode(s) of production present in the society under consideration" (Van der Grijp, 1993:9). We can speak of a "lineage-mode of thinking", from which the adoption of the kinship idiom in new economic relations was a first example. While thinking about the reasons why the Lawondanese are eager to keep this kinship idiom, we come to the question of whether this is merely a matter of custom or culture, or whether there is a more material, or "rational" explanation. I consider this question rhetorical, because being an outsider, one is never completely sure to assess precisely the relative weight of religion, ideology or less systematic and more unconscious customs -which are gathered in the Indonesian context in the short hand-concept of *adat* (see Burns, 1989)- on the one hand, relative to the material arguments for specific ideas and behavior on the other.

The "lineage-mode of thinking" in Lawonda is connected to the traditional *marapu*-religion. *Marapu* is the local word for both spirits and ancestors (Geirnaert, 1992:70-71). The deceased are believed to live on in the world of spirits, from where they have great power over the

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<sup>5</sup> In legal anthropology, this phenomenon is referred to as 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).

living. The deceased forebears are the *marapu* of their *kabihu*, and if their living kinsmen do not worship them well, the *marapu* can evoke misfortune over them (Forth, 1981:92). The fact that the Lawondanese perceive society in kinship terms is in accordance with their traditional religion.

If can we see the impact of the traditional religion on the local economy in terms of its goal and organization, it not very difficult to imagine the kind of impact instigated by conversion to Christianity. If the deceased forebears are no longer deified, they are no longer attributed with the power to determine the fate of the living. If one of the living kinsmen does not behave as a proper *kabihu* member, he only faces the anger of his fellow *kabihu* members, but no longer the dreaded sanction of the *marapu*. If the *marapu* are just dead men and women, they do not have to be worshipped any more, and they lose their meaning as the personification of shared identity for their living posterity. This opens the way to a more individualistic behavior. Yet, the mode of thinking of the Uma-economy is also a product of articulation. With regard to religion, this means that syncretism has become the rule rather than the exception: most Lawondanese are registered members of either the Protestant Christian or the Catholic Church, but, each in their own way still adheres to the *marapu*-religion as well.

### *Options to earn money*

There is also a more colloquial meaning of economic options. Here the choice concerns different ways to make a living, and in this book I concentrate on four alternative ways to obtain money. The Lawondanese face this choice in their daily lives, and when they decide on one of the alternatives, they make use of the repertoire of options in the analytical sense. Their choices are not random, but reflect a strategic use of available resources. A crucial point in the economy is that not every individual has access to all of the options. Some options to earn cash are only open to those who have access to, and control over, scarce resources such as buffalo and paddy fields. Unequal access to resources means that the "repertoire of options" is not equally wide for every individual in Lawonda. Some may not have anything to choose, and for them the Uma-economy is rather a repertoire of constraints.

### **Outline of the thesis**

"The Uma-economy" is the title of this book and each chapter presents a different aspect of this. After this introduction, the book consists of three parts. Part One is the description and analysis of the Uma-economy. Part Two comprises the chapters nine to 11, where each presents a different way in which the Lawondanese obtain money. And Part Three contains the concluding chapter.

## Introduction

The next chapter starts with the description of daily life in this Sumbanese village. This first acquaintance begins to describe the image of an area quite different from other parts of Indonesia. The aim of this chapter is to create a visual image of the Uma-economy, enabling the reader to grasp the *couleur locale*.

In chapter three, I go straight to the point of complexity and cultural definiteness of the Uma-economy. It deals with the morality of exchange, which comprises the traditional mode of thinking with regard to exchange. I have chosen to present this part of Lawondanese culture first, in order to stimulate the reader to set aside any universal blue print of a micro-economy, and to take the existing mode of production as the basis for analysis. The Lawondanese distinguish between different spheres of exchange, defined as sets of categories of goods ranked according to the local value system. In this chapter, I discuss how the Lawondanese incorporate money into this system of spheres of exchange.

The morality of exchange is not a phenomenon of the past. Over the course of time, it has been adapted by the Lawondanese to change. Chapter four presents a brief overview of historical events on Sumba and their impact on the local economy of Lawonda. In this overview, acts of outside intervention by the Government and Christian missions are predominant. It took until the 1960's before the area of Lawonda was incorporated into the nation to the extent that daily life in the area was noticeably affected. Before this period the Lawondanese society was fairly isolated. The Uma-economy by that time resembled the "lineage mode of production" as described above. In the first part of chapter four, I elaborate on the traditional patterns of social organization in which kinship relations were predominant. In the second part of this chapter, I describe the implications of the emergence of the state and conversion to Christianity on the Uma-economy. New lines of social organization followed, and these brought about possibilities for new exchange relationships. As an Indonesian citizen, or as a member of the "Christian family" one can adopt economic behavior toward "strangers" which used to be confined only to fellow-kinsmen.

The consequences of the emergence of alternative social units for the organization of work in the Uma-economy are discussed in chapter five. In this chapter I show that the common practice of micro-economic analysis to take the household as the basic unit of analysis, leads to many methodological problems in Lawonda. Instead, my own analysis starts with the description of the perceptions on work and its division between members of the *Uma* and *kabihu*, the patrilineal clan. The changes in rural society on Sumba have brought about new patterns of labor-organization. Wage-labor is still very rare on Sumba, but labor is an important resource for exchange in kind: labor-services are rewarded with use-rights of land, use of buffalo-herds, assistance in ceremonial obligations, and, sometimes, with gifts of money. Besides labor, land is the second main resource in agriculture in Lawonda. Chapter six describes, that a market for land is absent in Lawonda, but that there are many exchanges of use-rights of land. The Lawondanese share particular perceptions with regard to land, and these perceptions are just as basic to the Uma-economy as the morality of exchange of goods and

money. Exchange arrangements with regard to land show another manifestation of "morality of exchange".

The second part of the book presents four ways to obtain money. Together they represent different options for participation in the wider economy which requires money. To be able to understand how the Lawondanese assess these options to earn money, these activities have to be put in the context of the Uma-economy. Chapter seven deals with the issue of local assessment. For policy makers and development workers, cash-earning activities are part of the program for poverty alleviation; in chapter seven I describe the difficulties in discerning the poor from the less-poor in Lawonda, and the limitations of various methods of poverty assessment. The Lawondanese themselves have their own way of assessing the quality of life, and if they rank *Uma* according to their relative position in this respect, many variables are taken into account. This leads to the conclusion that success or failure of cash-earning activities cannot be explained only from the effects on the financial income of the participants, and that it is more relevant to analyze the effects on the wider range of variables that determine the individual's social security.

Chapter eight presents the most "traditional" alternative to obtain money in Lawonda. Existing patterns of exchange of resources between land-owners, buffalo-owners and people who can provide labor service to other households are used to create relationships with people who earn money. Formerly the exchange was taking place between senior (with regard to generation and status) and junior members of a *kabihu*. Contemporarily the networks for exchange of resources have at least one "cash-partner", who can assist his fellow network members in paying their financial expenditures, in return for access to land or labor assistance. The transactions within these networks compose a circuit of exchange which is probably much more important (with regard to volume of transactions and number of people involved) in the rural area of Sumba than the circuit of market exchange. Access to such a network is confined to people who have something to offer, labor or land or cash, or any other resource his network partners are short of. Therefore this option is open to the relatively well endowed only.

When the scale of money-expenditures increases, or when there is little access to "money-partners", more individual strategies to obtain money have to be found. Chapter nine describes an option to earn cash individually which is only chosen by some poorer members of the population. Young men who have poor future prospects, because they have little or no access to land, and no means to pay a good bride price, are tempted to engage themselves in forbidden activities. This chapter tells the story of a young married man who earned most of his living by gathering and selling edible birds' nests. The local community -and more in particular its decent middle class- disapproves strongly of this activity. Gathering birds' nests is equated with cooperation with the evil spirits, and its revenues are "hot" and will lead to destruction and disease only.

## Introduction

Chapter ten explores the potentials of rice as a cash crop in Lawonda. The farmers, who have access to rice fields and buffalo-services, are quite eager to raise rice-production. A change of technology was supported by the government and Propelmas, but it encountered the vested interests of the buffalo-owners. Rice is the most favorite staple crop, and it can easily be stored and transported. Exactly because of these characteristics there is an extensive range of distribution arrangements. An increase of rice production in Lawonda tends to be absorbed within this existing distribution system, and rice appears to be a commodity for reciprocal exchange rather than market-exchange (sale).

To end the overview of options to earn money, chapter 11 presents the more successful cash-earning activity: cultivation of *kacang ijo* (mung bean). The chapter begins with an account describing the introduction of this crop, and the adaptation of its cultivation practices to local circumstances. It is an option for dry land farmers, because the growing season of this crop coincides with the busy season on the paddy fields. Mung bean can be sold to buy food and pay for minor expenses without any hard feelings, because beans belong to the lowest category of the spheres of exchange. Marketing of mung bean appeared to be a separate and complicated activity, demonstrating the contradiction in the encounter between different modes of exchange.

In Part Three of this book, the main lines of the different chapters converge on the discussion of two major issues: the dynamics of the Uma-economy, and appropriate development activities. In chapter 12, I return to the concept of Uma-economy as it is clarified above as a repertoire of economic options.

Chapter 13 takes up the question concerning the scope of development intervention within the Uma-economy. It addresses the problem of tension between accepting indigenous economic knowledge and practices as the existing reality and basis for every new activity, on one hand, and on the other hand, the intention to stimulate change that will improve the relative position of the poorer segment of the population, in direct conflict with the institutions and practices that support the existing inequality.

### **The choice for a bottom-up approach**

The issue of the last chapter appears in the outline of this book as a final addition, but in the history of my research it was much more than just that. The bottom-up approach in the analysis of the local economy, which I have introduced above, was the consequence of my personal involvement in the economy of Lawonda. My first role in Lawonda was as an advisor to the local development organization, Propelmas. The staff of Propelmas needed background information about the local economy in a way that could directly benefit development activities. Therefore, my research activities in Lawonda were primarily action-oriented. The central aim of this research, as it was put in 1985, was: "to provide knowledge about the way the welfare

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of the poorer part of the population in the area of Lawonda can be improved, and how Propelmas can assist in doing so" (Vel, 1985:20).

The local staff of Propelmas, consisting of four permanent employees, had already five years of field experience in the area. They formulated the problem of poverty as:

1. there are many symptoms of malnutrition and many illnesses among the people in the area;
2. food shortages and seasonal famines regularly occur;
3. infant mortality is high, and most adults do not get very old;
4. there is a shortage of cash to pay school fees, taxes, contributions to the church, etc.
5. lack of self confidence and initiative to do something about problems;
6. suspicion and discord among the people,
7. inequality between the members of the local community, which shows in poor access to resources for the lower ranks, who often face injustice and bad treatment (Vel, 1985:14).



The office of Propelmas in Lawonda where the staff meets for discussions

In discussions with the staff of Propelmas, it became clear that these problems are complex and, although they are listed as distinct features, they cannot be treated separately. For example, inequality implies that a relatively wealthy nobleman does not have to do any physical work himself, but controls the natural resources for a large group of subordinates. The nobleman demands that his junior kinsmen and clients work on his fields in return for access to land, buffalo and support in ceremonial events. Due to this claim on labor, the subordinates

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cannot cultivate their own fields in an optimal way, and in bad years this can easily lead to seasonal food shortage.

Propelmas considered stimulating change within the local economy as its mission. The purpose was to fight injustice and poverty in the area of Lawonda. The staff was convinced that programs to reach this goal had to start as often as possible from the existing practices and ideas in the local economy, instead of presenting a blueprint for development from the outside. This was the origin of the effort (of Propelmas' staff in general and myself in particular) to understand economic behavior of the local population not only in terms of one's own framework of analysis, but also in terms of what we could call "indigenous economic knowledge". This concept refers to the knowledge of the local population about how production, distribution and consumption of material goods can best be organized under the ecological and social restrictions in their specific local context.

Studying local perceptions and local knowledge has been the occupation of many anthropologists, but for other scientists, scholars and development practitioners the focus on "indigenous knowledge systems" is relatively new (See Warren (1991) and Warren, Slikkerveer and Brokensha (1993)):

"Indigenous knowledge systems can be thought of as an integrative concept which keeps the focus on the individual or group as it functions in the local setting. The assumption is that things are the way they are for good reasons, even though many indigenous systems can become dysfunctional due to population and ecological pressure. In any case, it is important that we understand the dynamics of the indigenous systems before recommending changes that may or may not have a positive affect on the local conditions." (McClure, 1989:1)

Although the presentation of this concept as a new invention embarrassingly neglects the long tradition of anthropology, it reveals the recognition that local practices cannot be explained completely by universal theories, but that any analysis of behavior should give room to cultural peculiarities. The new element of indigenous knowledge studies, compared to the common practice in ethnography, is that the former is much more policy oriented. Within the scope of the recent boom in attention, indigenous knowledge is often attributed with positive associations, e.g. indigenous ecological knowledge with preservation of the environment. "Indigenous economic knowledge" is more disputable, because it can reflect unequal social relations which do not correspond at all with the aim of development work; but it represents "economic reality" as it is perceived by the local population. Therefore, this is the basis on which new ideas and activities are assessed.

This book presents my contribution to Propelmas' efforts to understand the economy of the Lawondanese, and to design development activities that suit the Uma-economy.

## **Methods of research in Lawonda**

I lived in Lawonda for nearly six years. During these years, I became completely involved in the local economy, and therefore "participant observation" is the main research method to collect the information, on which this description and analysis of the Uma-economy is based. Yet, it was not my only method.

In 1987 and 1988, I conducted two evaluation studies together with the other staff members of Propelmas. The studies can be considered as action-research on ways to improve Propelmas' work. Three questions were central in these evaluations:

1. What is the present situation of the poorer part of the population in the area of Lawonda with regard to welfare and poverty? What are the major shortages they suffer?
2. What are the ways the people themselves use to cope with shortages, and what are the main problems and restrictions they face in doing so?
3. To which extent does the present kind of intervention by Propelmas contribute to the decrease of these shortages and improvement of the material situation of the poorer people in the area? (Vel, 1985:21)

The first evaluation study concerned the female farmers' organization in the village of Maderi. It contained a description of the organization and its members, and a description and assessment of the activities of this organization. The second study concerned the cultivation of mung bean by seven different farmers' groups in the area of Propelmas. Within the scope of the general analysis of the Uma-economy, these evaluation studies contained the first systematic exploration on issues of production, distribution and economic organization.

A result of these studies was a large number of questions which could only be answered by in depth research. I selected two areas, each consisting of 16 houses, to gather more systematic and in depth information. From December 1988 to February 1990, I visited each house in these two areas at least five times. At these visits, I brought a questionnaire which contained detailed questions on the activities of the season, not only in agriculture, but also on house building, ceremonial events, lending and borrowing, visits to the market, trips to town, distribution of harvests, preparations for funerals, and many other things that are part of making a living in Lawonda. The detailed and in some cases quantitative data on these two research areas, that are presented in the following chapters, are based on the results of these two-month surveys.

Apart from the evaluation studies and in depth surveys, I conducted interviews to gather information about specific persons and subjects. On eight of these selected issues of the Uma-economy, I wrote a discussion paper for a working group of Propelmas. This group consisted of senior staff members and two Sumbanese advisors. The subjects were: "The household economy", "Life cycle in the farmers household", "Money in Lawonda", "Indigenous credit and distribution", "On Labor and work", "Networks of households", "Gathering birds' nests",

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and "The local calendar as an indigenous way of planning". This working group offered a check on my interpretation of research data and local perceptions, and was the forum of exploring the possibilities to adapt development activities to the Uma-economy.

To end this introduction, I want to return to the concept of repertoire of options in a very personal way. For an individual person, the alternative options of the Uma-economy are connected to different identities. The village head, for example, is the representative of the Indonesian Government at village level. In this capacity he is supposed to act according to the state law and obey the orders of his superiors in the administration. Yet, at the same time he is the leader of his *kabihu*, and in matters of land disputes, marriage and funerals he acts as a dignified *adat*-chief. In this way, nearly every individual person in Lawonda has several roles, and will choose the one that is most convenient in the situation at hand (Vel, 1992). I, too, had a *repertoire of roles*, and this colored both my questions and the information I gathered:

First, I was a staff member of Propelmas. To most people in the area of Lawonda I was introduced as a new Dutch advisor to Propelmas, and most of the time I was referred to as the wife of the project leader, or "Ibu Laurens". In the first year of our stay, I learned from the local staff of Propelmas, accompanied them to meetings in the villages, learned under five clinics and nutrition programs about how to sort medicines for malaria and worms, how to sow maize and harvest beans et cetera. In the second year I was in charge of the financial administration of the project. This gave me an initial idea about the existence of a very different economic morality and strong distribution mechanisms. After I handed this task over to the local staff, I concentrated on research.

Second, housewife and mother. Managing a household in Lawonda is a difficult task. Since there are no shops, no electricity and no running water, all tasks have to be done by hand, and many hands are required to keep a household going. Preparing food, fetching water and firewood, growing vegetables, maize and manioc, and caring for livestock are activities that are scornfully considered as routine jobs. Yet, they all take skill and a lot of time. We had two girls and two boys to help us. On Sumba, it is common that teenagers are boarded out to more advantaged families, and in the tradition of the missionaries, our household was regarded as a good home for teenage children. It took me quite some time to get used to this role of mother-of teenagers. With the birth of our own sons, I shared the position of being a mother with the other mothers in the neighborhood. The obvious differences in style of raising children was a new source of information on local culture, and a reason for many lively discussions with our neighbors. At the end of our stay, we were with eleven: four girls, three boys, our own two baby boys, my husband and I.

Third, woman. On Sumba there is a strong gender-division. There are clear ideas about the division of tasks between men and women. Farmers organizations that cooperate with Propelmas are either male or female, and not mixed. Being a women, I could participate in women's tasks, and many women in Lawonda talked more freely to me than to my husband.

Fourth, wealthy neighbor. Gradually we became accepted as neighbors in the southern *dusun* of the village. Especially in the last years of our stay, neighbors often came to our house just to chat, or drink coffee. Since the school and the center of Propelmas are in the other parts of the village, we were one of the rare households with a cash-salary in the neighborhood, and therefore classified as "rich". Many people came to our house to ask for a loan (or a gift), and it took us a considerable amount of time and money to find the proper behavior in this respect. We were often invited to celebrations in the neighborhood, and expected to bring our contribution. In the end we learned how to behave as "decent foreign nobility". We asked for help from our neighbors to thatch the roof of our house, to transplant paddy, to puddle our paddy field, to bring cooked rice to our parties and to organize and do the work for our celebrations. In return we helped with project activities, transport with our car, small money loans and sometimes some political influence. Also, we had a good volleyball team in our neighborhood and practiced every Sunday afternoon close to our house.

Fifth, member of the Protestant Christian Church. In Lawonda, we were just regular members of the local Protestant congregation. In our neighborhood, we participated -once in a while- in the gatherings to read a part of the Bible. Every house, whether large or small, received its turn in being the host of the session. These were nice occasions for us to visit and see houses without bothering the host with the material consequences that our visit would normally impose on him, such as making coffee or preparing a meal for us. At the same time, the Church was our employer, which meant that we had a special position within the Church and good contacts with some top officials. Within the Church, discussions about relief for the poor indoctrinated me to Sumbanese ideas on poverty, and who is entitled to receive support from the Church. But because we were always associated with the Protestant Christian Church, people did not easily tell me about *marapu*-practices and other "sins".

Sixth, foreign researcher. Some of the time I acted as the researcher, a stranger who writes a lot where people do not write, but speak; a stranger, because she asks questions about clear and obvious, every day things; and a foreigner, who observes the events from a distance and tries to understand them by comparison with ideas from other parts of the world. What I write about Lawonda is determined by the mixture of these different roles. I am glad that I had the opportunity to really settle and live in Lawonda for six years. Some of the case studies could never have been written if I had been in Lawonda for only a year or two. Then, I would not have known about bird's nests and spheres of exchange.

## Part I

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### The Uma-economy



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## Living and working in Lawonda

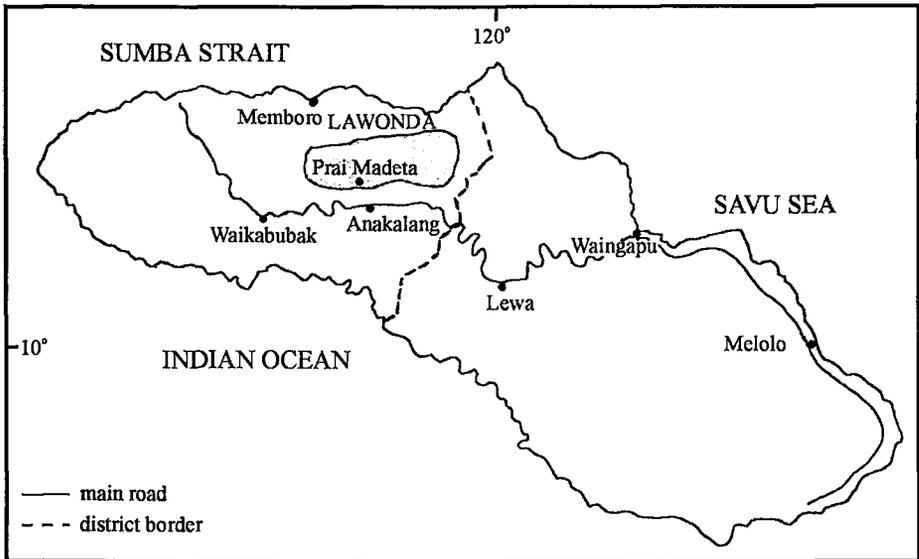
### **An unattractive island**

"Sumba is one of the most unattractive islands of Indonesia." This statement comes from a tourist guide referring to the swarms of mosquitoes and poor transport and tourist facilities. Development experts, looking for potential projects, agree: "Poor soils, generally arid conditions, and lack of suitable water storage for irrigation, combined with steep terrain in higher rainfall areas offer limited scope for agriculture. There are neither mineral nor extensive forest resources to support the development of extractive industries, and generally sparse populations offer limited market potential for broadly based urban development" (Corner, 1989:179).

These statements about Sumba are clearly made by outsiders. They compare Sumba with other Indonesian islands. The intensive rice cultivation of Bali, with its neat and ingeniously constructed terraces, sharply contrasts with the untidy paddy fields of Sumba. The busy life in the densely populated areas of Indonesia, with crowds of people on the streets selling all kinds of food and other commodities and services, is absent on Sumba. There are no conspicuous temples or mosques, no ancient buildings to reveal the signs of a rich history. Except for anthropologists looking for places with fairly undisturbed indigenous culture, and textile lovers in search of the most beautiful specimen of *ikat*-cloth, no foreign traveler seems to be enthusiastic about this island. The Sumbanese have quite a different view of their island. Generally, they do not compare the situation on Sumba with the more developed areas of Indonesia. Sumba is their homeland and they love it.

Waingapu, situated at the northeast coast, is the capital of the island. The climate here is warm and dry. The dry season lasts nearly seven months with an average annual rainfall of only 800 mm (Abels, 1965:186). In the north and east part of the island farmers can grow only one staple crop per year. On the hillside fields the main crops are cassava and maize. Close to rivers there are wet rice fields and irrigated fields of maize and vegetables.

Figure 2.1 Sumba



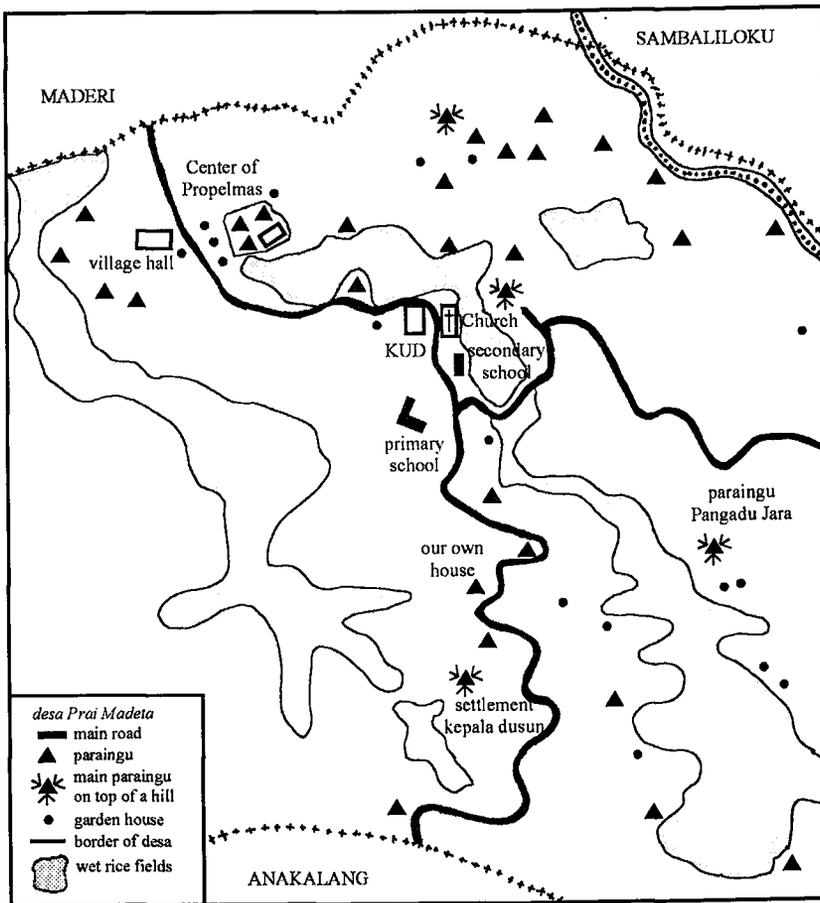
From Waingapu the island's main road leads west. Ten kilometers away from the capital the road winds itself into the mountains. The central mountain area of the island has a more humid climate. The dry season there lasts only three to four months, with average annual rainfall varying between 1500 to 2500 mm per year. Traveling west from Waingapu the environment becomes green. The rolling limestone hills are covered with grass and interspersed with patches of forest.

Following the road from Waingapu to the capital of West Sumba, Waikabubak, one passes two plains. The first is the plain of Lewa. Fifty years ago this used to be a dangerous no man's land, filled with robbers and thieves. Now it is the center of modern agriculture with extensive areas of wet rice fields and a school for agricultural education. The second is the plain of Anakalang. From the village of Anakalang westward the population density increases, especially close to the main road. There are several schools for secondary education. Twice a week there is a market where people from surrounding regions meet to sell their products and buy "urban commodities" (industrial products). From Anakalang a small road leads north and after nine kilometers one reaches the southern border of Lawonda.

### Living and working in Lawonda

Lawonda is both the popular name for the area that comprises seven *desa* (villages) and a congregation of the Protestant Church (Gereja Kristen Sumba, (GKS)), and for one of these *desa* in particular, though it is officially called Prai Madeta. The southern border of the *desa* is not marked by any sign, and it is not easy to recognize something like a village. *Desa* Prai Madeta comprises about 170 houses, most of them built in dispersed settlements called *paraingu*, hidden between the trees.

Figure 2.2 *Desa* Prai Madeta



### *The Uma-economy*

Some of these settlements are close to the road. 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 *kepala dusun*, head of the southern part of the desa and one of the richest rice farmers of thevillage. 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. Kept in this peak are the relics consecrated to the deified clan's ancestor. 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 the microcosm "which reflects the totality of social and conceptual order" (Forth, 1981:23).



A typical Sumbanese house, *uma*, in Maderi with its inhabitants in front

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 the peaked roof. 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 marks the crossing of the roads leading north and east. The primary school and a large sports field stand on the left side of the road. The modest buildings of

the secondary school are found on the right side. The only private houses in the village center are those of the school teachers and the church minister. They are built on the ground, with flat corrugated iron roofs. Modern houses are for humans only, and do not give room to ancestors or livestock. The new 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) appears. It has the familiar look of the square angled shed that can be found in every village throughout Indonesia. Although designed as a building for the storage of agricultural inputs, rice and other products the cooperative ought to buy from the farmers in the area, in Prai Madeta it is the residence of the village head and his family.

Walking north along the road early in the morning the oncoming traffic consists only of pedestrians. Children in their white and red uniforms walk to school in small groups. On Wednesday and Saturday there are also many adults on the street; women carrying baskets with vegetables, fruits or other garden products, men with one or two 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 will 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 maximally loaded at about seven o'clock. Those who can afford to spend Rp 250 for the truck 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 bring the 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 always feel 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 their first treatment by a nurse along with the minimum package of government subsidized medicines. One must go to Anakalang to visit the doctor or midwives of the Puskesmas (community health center) for more sophisticated medical treatment. 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 "parked" at the gate of the Propelmas Center. They have carried paddy to the storage shed, where a hulling machine produces a roaring sound. Paddy is usually sold in small quantities, just enough to get 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 in the storage shed and can be bought as *beras* in small quantities.

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 such a narrow track. In the sloping fields, the sound of splashing accompanied by the "Ho...Ho..." of a herdsman indicates that a herd of buffalo is being lead 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 decent (especially in the eyes of the higher class) to use them.

The degree of activity one can observe in the fields depends very much on the season. The wet rice fields in the valley are busy places during the rainy season. Here and there herds of buffalo trample the fields, walking around in the mud with cheerfully shouting mud-covered boys behind them. At a small field a few women are transplanting rice for their own household. If a large field is being transplanted, 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.

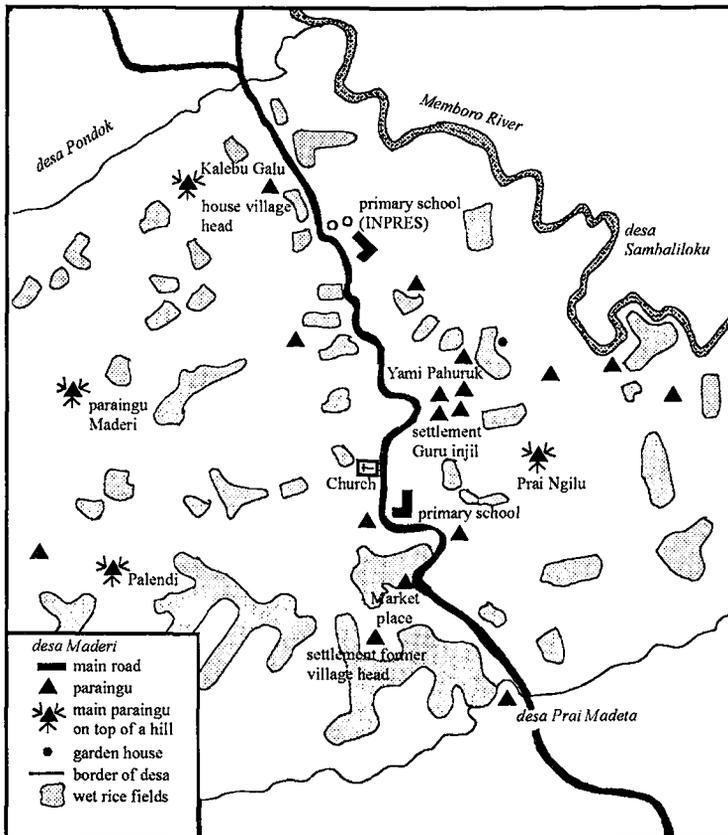
Sunset is greeted by the sound of crickets. Only the moon lights up the dark in Lawonda. There is no electricity and most people can only afford to light a small kerosene lamp. In the rainy season there is also the overwhelming noise of the frogs, who are called "the gongs of the *sawah*". Occasionally 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 single, nocturnal traveler is regarded as a thief. After dinner the families settle on their bamboo benches around the fireplace and sleep until early morning.

At dawn they sweep the yard, fetch water, feed the chickens and prepare a hot drink (if coffee and sugar are available) and some food for the school children. The early morning hours are used to work on the dry fields close to the house. These are the hours of the working groups whose members cooperate in clearing new gardens, tilling the soil of the old gardens and weeding. At about nine o'clock it is time to eat breakfast. Often the morning meal is skipped and replaced by an early lunch, because after eleven o'clock in the morning it becomes too hot to work on the dry land. Noon is a good time for women and small children to go to the spring to do the laundry and bathe. Soon the school children will return home from school, eat and rest a bit. The afternoon is spent on domestic work, gathering firewood and food for the pigs, and cutting grass for the horses. The children play with sticks and stones and grasshoppers when they do not have to work for their parents.

### Heading north to Maderi: about village factions

North of the Propelmas Center, the main road enters *desa* Maderi. There is no sudden change in landscape, but the area of wet rice fields is much smaller here.

Figure 2.3 *Desa* Maderi



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 what is usually an open plaza between the houses is here 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 ceremonies. 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 own 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 teacher of religion. With his settlement, the Christian primary school, the church, and the private houses of several teachers, this area is the Protestant Christian center of the village. The appearance of the church shows 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 clearly the most prominent. Historically this middle part of the village has always provided the village secretary.

In 1988 there was a big campaign for conversion conducted by a group of very enthusiastic 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 provide the basis necessary to accept 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 nor 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 there was no clear consensus on who should succeed the former village head. Three candidates represented their own parts of the village. In this period between 1980 and 1985, the district government appointed a retired policeman from the district capital as village head *ad interim*. The only remainder 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 primary school of Maderi, the *sekolah Inpres*, 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 her fame has spread. Many people gather at her house during the prayer sessions, casting the *sekolah Inpres* as a new religious center as well. Generally, the other inhabitants of Maderi respect her because of her enthusiastic and obvious concern for her fellow man. In the Protestant church feelings about her are ambiguous; on the one hand they are pleased to have such a prominent Protestant Christian, but on the other hand they are frightened and concerned about her deviant way of practicing the faith.

The history of cooperation between Propelmas and the people of Maderi reflects the absence of unity in this village. The "ideology" of community development assumes harmony within the local communities. The first community activities were conducted in the central part of the village, however, the participants from the other parts of the village gradually withdrew their support after several quarrels erupted. Propelmas made a second attempt in 1985. As a solution to the ever existing chance of discord, the development staff directed the activities in each part of the village separately. In the north, the farmers, school teachers and village head founded the organization Dulama. In the center, the wife of the *guru injil* mobilized the female farmers in "her territory" and they established the female farmers organization Anakara. In the south, people were the most reluctant to involve themselves in the development activities. The old village head was skeptical. In 1988 women in this area started a group meant to further their interests in cultivating dry season vegetable gardens and the Propelmas' program for child nutrition.

Gradually, membership increased in all of these groups, and in the central and southern part of the village men founded their own farmers' organization. In 1990, just before I left, cooperation between the different organizations started: together they consulted with Propelmas or the village government. This *musyawarah kontak tani* offers the potential of governance based on representation of all three parts of the village.

The factions in Maderi directly relate to the different geographical areas of the village. Lineage membership, religious adherence and educational level are the variables used to characterize each of the three factions. Because each of these groups act as parties in matters of village politics, compete for village leadership or at least do not accept the other groups' superiority, they can be regarded as factions.

In Prai Madeta it is not possible to discern factions in the same way. The community of this *desa* is just as heterogeneous with regard to lineage membership, religious adherence and educational level, but there are no clearly distinct groups that compete in village politics

from an equal power position. Historically, social hierarchy in Lawonda was much more prominent than in Maderi. Lawonda used to be a domain of nobility. The tombs in the ancient *paraingu* reveal this as the land of the *maramba*, or noblemen, who lie buried here in large graves surrounded by four pillars that support carved tomb stones<sup>1</sup>. In the colonial period of Sumba the leader of one of the major lineages of Lawonda was appointed as *raja* over the area. The autonomy of each of the lineages was offended by this colonial government action. The *raja* and his relatives benefitted 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 they could also afford to continue their education. 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.

The present village head is a descendant of the former *raja* though his leadership is not as powerful as it was for his father and grandfather. His private educational and professional careers were not very successful. His prestige is now gradually eroding and, though he is still regarded as a nobleman, the Lawondanese are eager to explain that he is not really the master of the slaves who stay with him, but that he merely replaces his cousin who lives in town. He asks for services from his villagers, but they are increasingly reluctant to comply with his demands simply because he is village head. In the 1986 elections for village head, his main competitor was the village secretary, who is a member of the second lineage of Lawonda, and regarded as 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.

### **The research area**

I concentrated my research activities in Prai Madeta and Maderi. To locate these activities more precisely, let me follow the description in chapter one of research methods and my personal repertoire of roles. Broadly, there were three parts in my research: first, "participant observation" during the entire period of six years I lived in Prai Madeta; second, evaluation studies for Propelmas, in 1987 and 1988, concentrating on Maderi; and third, from late 1988 to 1990, in depth research focusing on either of the two selected *desa*. The selection of the two areas was based on six criteria for the purpose of comparison, half of which indicate common characteristics found in both areas, and the other half indicate differences:

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<sup>1</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.

- a. the area is considered poor according to local standards,
- b. the area constitutes a social entity, according to the villagers, (who indicate the area by either referring to its leader, or to its main settlement),
- c. the presence of key informants, with whom contact was already established, and who could facilitate contact with their fellow inhabitants in the area.
- d. one area in Maderi and one in Prai Madeta, to observe the differences in historical and social characteristics of these two *desa*,
- e. one area with, and one without cooperation with Propelmas,
- f. one area specialized in dry land agriculture, the other in rice cultivation.

The criteria of difference refer to variables which were important within the framework of Propelmas' work. The staff chose to concentrate its agricultural activities on dry land cultivation, because this is regarded as the agriculture of the poor. They were also convinced that the strong hierarchy in social organization, more evident in Prai Madeta than in Maderi, was an impediment for a more horizontal farmers' organization. Comparison of two different areas, regarding agricultural systems and social hierarchies, could therefore test the validity of Propelmas' assumptions.

Our house was situated in the southern part of *desa* Prai Madeta. This part of Lawonda was the area where I participated most actively in the Uma-economy, primarily as housewife, mother and wealthy neighbor. During the years I lived in Lawonda, I became acquainted with our neighbors in this area, and particularly with the people of Pangadu Jara. Some of them I met as fellow members of the quarter of the Protestant church; others regularly came to sell vegetables and fruits to me; several boys and girls played volleyball with us every week. The paddy field we worked for ourselves was located in between the fields of the farmers of Pangadu Jara. They watched our ways, gave us advice, their daughters assisted us with transplanting paddy, and we had many discussions about the things that occupy a rice farmer's or a mother's mind.

In 1988 I selected Pangadu Jara as one of the two areas for in depth research. Its major settlement, *paraingu* Pangadu Jara, rises high above the paddy fields in the valley, opposite to our house. It is one of the old settlements of Lawonda, and in earlier days its inhabitants were notable Lawondanese. They had a considerable area of wet rice land, and owned buffalo as well. Yet, during the course of this century they have gradually become impoverished. Now the "decent middle class" of Prai Madeta scornfully speaks of Pangadu Jara as a dirty settlement, where people stick to their backward customs, a center of gambling, and a meeting place for thieves. Propelmas had some cooperation experience with the inhabitants of Pangadu Jara. In the first years of activities the staff had assisted them in a program concerning vegetable gardens. Unfortunately, during this effort many of the vegetables were stolen from the gardens, and later, when conflicts between the participants accumulated, one of the parties chased a herd of buffalo through the gardens and all the delicate vegetables were trampled. That put a (preliminary) end to Propelmas' development activities in Pangadu Jara.

Two men were pre-eminently important for me to contact in Pangadu Jara. Boku Dena is a young man who lived with and worked for us for several years. He introduced me to the Wai Maki part of the settlement, where his father lives in one of the old houses of the *paraingu*. Boku's relatives make a living by a combination of rice cultivation and dry land agriculture. Additionally, the younger people earn a modest income from casual labor or from the sale of forest products such as birds' nests. In sharing part of his life with us, Boku enlightened us with many stories and defined several problems of "the economy of the poor"<sup>2</sup>.

The second key informant is Ama Yusuf, a relatively wealthy (or less poor) man who makes his living as a rice farmer. He is a member of the other lineage of Pangadu Jara. He does not live in the *paraingu* of his forefathers, but in his own settlement by the side of the main road. Ama Yusuf is member of the church council, whose duties include giving moral guidance to the church members of his area, and organizing meetings and collecting contributions for the church. Since we had several problems with the local church council (Vel, 1992), Ama Yusuf visited us frequently and turned out to be a good friend and neighbor.

My research area of Pangadu Jara comprises sixteen houses, including the houses in the old *paraingu*, their garden cottages and Ama Yusuf's settlement. The houses are the units in my survey, instead of households which are the common units in government surveys. As will be clarified later, I use the unit of house, because actual dwellings remain, whereas the number of members and composition of households often varies over the course of time. In the selection of the houses, connections with Ama Yusuf and Boku Dena were important.

The second research area I selected, Yami Pahuruk, is situated in the middle part of desa Maderi. It consists of three major *paraingu* and a few garden houses; 16 dwellings in all. Since the start of Propelmas in 1976, the staff has had good contacts with the retired *guru injil* and his family. In 1985, after several years of inactivity, Propelmas began cooperating with a group of female farmers in the middle part of Maderi. The wife of the *guru injil* was the key person and chairwoman of this new initiative. She can be regarded as the main informal leader in the area of her own settlement and the surrounding *paraingu*. In this area there is a large difference between the *guru injil's kabihu* and the other inhabitants. The *guru injil's kabihu* was one of the first to settle in Maderi, and for part of the land, they are considered the land-owning *kabihu*. Presently, this shows in the fact that only members of this *kabihu* have a "mixed farm": they cultivate both a considerable amount of paddy fields and a dry land field. The members of the other *kabihu* in this area are regarded as immigrants, although their *kabihu* has lived in Maderi for many generations. Their own

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<sup>2</sup> Up to the point that we really got involved in his economy: we contributed to his bride-price and did other things that are expected of a good foster parent. In return we could always go to his house, ask his relatives for help to transplant paddy, or thatch the roof of our house, to beat the gong at our parties, to help prepare meals for guests, etc.

rights to land are confined to dry land, some small, flat patches of which are turned into rain-fed paddy fields. The members of this "immigrant" *kabihu* are the poor in this area.

Table 2.1 Statistical information about *desa* Prai Madeta (December 1989), *desa* Maderi (June 1987), and the two research areas Pangadu Jara and Yami Pahuruk (December 1989).

Area:	Maderi	Yami Pahuruk	Prai Madeta	Pangadu Jara
number of inhabitants	1221	73	1109	81
male	637	38	587	43
female	584	35	522	38
number of households ( <i>rumah tangga</i> )	208		209	
number of houses		16		16
religious adherence (percentage)				
Protestant	25	48	83	49
Roman Catholic	0	0	6	32
animist ( <i>marapu</i> )	75	52	11	19
number of <i>kabihu</i>	12	3	8	2
acreage of wet rice fields (hectare)	30		120	
rice fields cultivated by the people of... (hectare)		6		17
number of:   horses	170	16	116	6
buffalo	150?	7	182	15
cattle ( <i>sapi</i> )	0	0	104	1

The women in the second research area are members of the female farmers' organization Anakara. My first evaluation study in 1987 concerned their organization and activities. My second evaluation study, concerning the cultivation and marketing of *kacang ijo*, comprises

seven farmers' groups, Anakara being one of them. Three other groups in this survey are also from Maderi. Most of the survey data on *kacang ijo* cultivation mentioned in this book, especially in chapter 10, refer to the cultivators from Maderi.

Table 2.1 presents the statistical data about *desa* Prai Madeta and *desa* Maderi which I obtained from the village secretaries. Listed next to the data of the total village are the corresponding figures of the two research areas.

### **Making a living in Lawonda**

Previously described in this chapter are many activities of the people in Lawonda. In this final section I will describe the daily appearance of the Uma-economy, and specifically how the Lawondanese make a living.

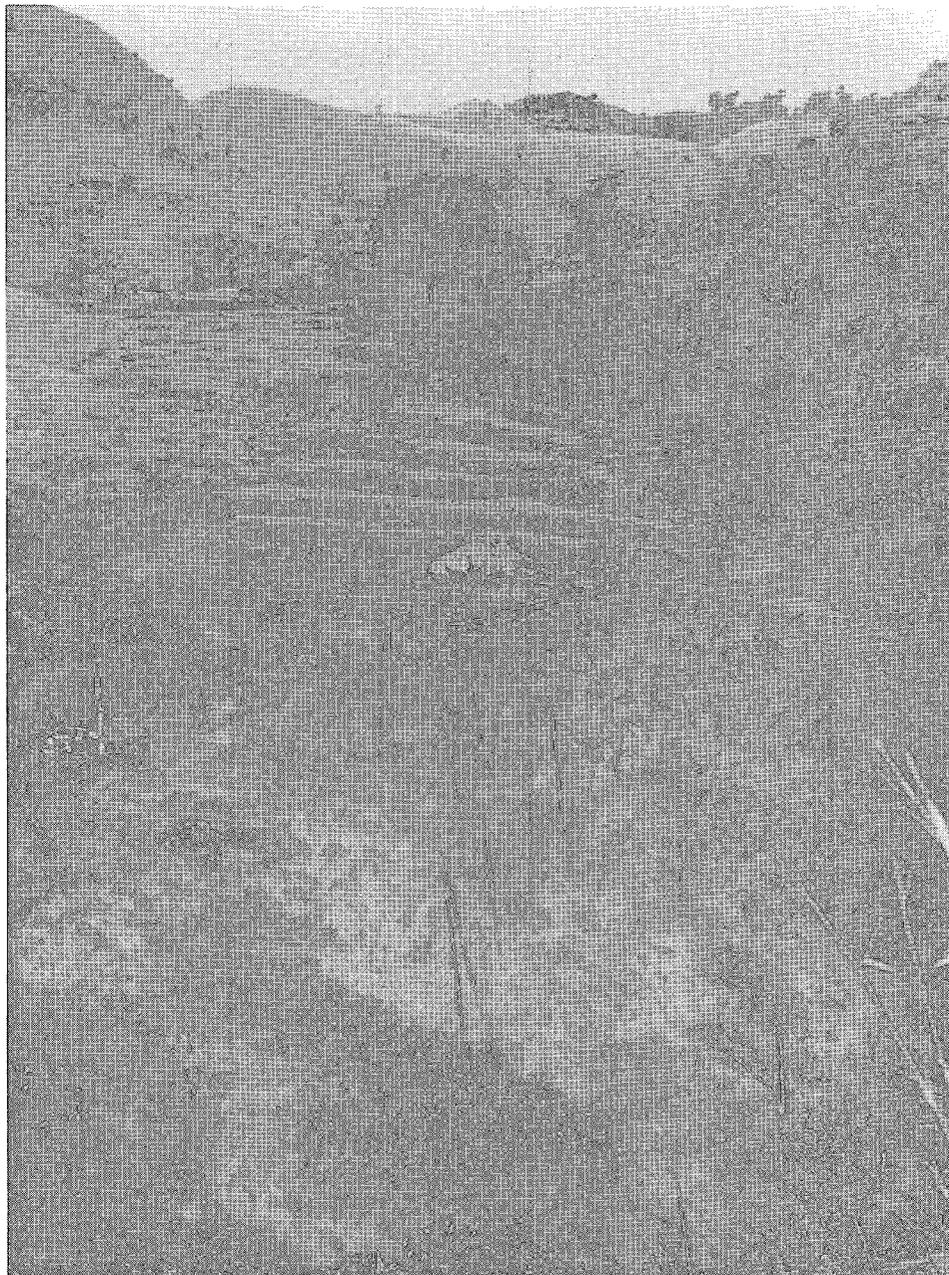
Agriculture is the main source of sustenance in Lawonda. The valley bottoms are cultivated with rice. The surrounding hills are only partially cultivated. The image of fallow land, stretching out to the hill tops on the horizon is the dominant landscape.

From November to July the hills are covered by the green grasses and weeds that serve as fodder for the horses and buffalo. The Lawondanese call this fallow land *padang khewan*, grazing fields for livestock. In the dry season the hills turn yellow and brown as the vegetation dries and consequently becomes unsuitable as fodder. A month later most hills turn black as the fields are burned to clear them of the dry grasses. As the first rains come, new grasses and weeds start to grow again.

Long ago, the island of Sumba was covered with forest. The first agricultural activities consisted of clearing a patch of land in the forest using the "slash and burn" technique. After a few years of cultivation the site would be abandoned, allowing the forest to regenerate. With the occurrence of strong grasses, especially *alang-alang* (*Imperata cylindrica*), the regeneration of the forest was disturbed. The roots of this type of grass were able to survive the burning. The forest was increasingly replaced by grasslands. Cultivation shifted to clearing grassland, and preparation of a field for cultivation now required tillage. Wooden sticks, called *woka*, were used to turn the soil. This technique was only successful in eradicating the grasses and weeds if tilling was done several weeks before the first rainfall (Abels, 1958:103). The only other tool used in this type of agriculture was a *periku*, a curved piece of iron wire functioning as a weeding hook. People in Lawonda never used manure on these fields to improve soil fertility. The sloping fields were only minimally protected against erosion by the stone ridges, called *didi*.

Near the hilltop settlements there are cultivated gardens, usually fenced with stone ridges used to mark the edges of the field and to prevent the entry of wild animals. The dry land area around Lawonda produces important food crops such as maize, cassava and other roots and tubers, though people prefer to eat rice.

In Lawonda there are presently two types of agriculture: rice farming and dry land farming. Rice farming requires access to paddy fields and buffalo (services) and is therefore confined to the relatively well endowed farmers. Most people are involved in both types of



The landscape in Lawonda with a garden house, hill-side dry fields and the wet rice fields at the bottom of the valley

farming, combining a small paddy field with one or more dry land fields. Those who fully depend on dry land agriculture are considered the poor. There are no landless people in Lawonda. There is enough fallow land that all inhabitants of the area -even foreigners- can, with the consent of a "landowner", cultivate a dry field with annual crops. Traditionally, the land is the property of the *kabihu* and to date there is no land registered as being individually owned property. Yet, the division of land-use rights among members of the *kabihu* is well established. This means that every patch of land in Lawonda is allocated to a person, and he or she has the greatest say concerning the use of this land.

Table 2.2 Harvest seasons of traditional staple food crops in Lawonda

Month:	Harvest of:	Main food:
October	-	sorghum, dried roots and tubers
November	-	wild tubers, dried roots and tubers
December	second cassava	wild and dried tubers, fresh cassava
January	maize, maize beans	maize
February	sweet potato	maize, sweet potato
March	dry rice, sorghum	maize, dry rice
April	dry rice, sorghum, various beans	dry rice, sorghum
May	maize beans, lentils	dry rice, beans
June	maize, cassava, sweet potato, taro, beans	maize, fresh roots and tubers
July	wet rice, cassava, sweet potato, taro, yams, beans	maize, rice, fresh roots and tubers
August	wet rice, cassava, taro	rice, fresh roots and tubers
September	sorghum and millet	sorghum, cassava, taro

Dry land cultivation is the oldest type of agriculture in Lawonda. It is characterized by a high diversity of crops. The agricultural season starts by the end of September or early October with the arrival of the first rains. Immediately after the first heavy shower, maize seed is sown, followed by planting the cuttings of cassava. The common cropping pattern is to sow two maize crops and one rice crop per year. Cassava can also be harvested twice. The calendar of harvest seasons referring to the traditional staple foods describes

considerable variety over the months. The diet is supplemented by vegetables, herbs and spices, cultivated in the permanent garden. In October and November nothing is harvested because the growing season has just begun. Traditionally, November and December were the months of hunger when people would rely on their stock of dried roots and tubers.

The large variety of crops is coupled to a wide variety of harvest periods. This diverse cropping pattern makes it possible to fetch small quantities from the field every few days, just enough to be readily consumed. The individual plants of indigenous food crops mature at varying rates, thus making the total harvest period last longer<sup>3</sup>. There was little need for storage, except of the seeds for the next season. The custom of harvesting a little at a time is reflected in how Lawondanese perceive the total yield. They assess the harvest in terms of the length of the period in which the food will be available. They do not measure or estimate the total volume of the yield. Therefore it is difficult to quantitatively state the total production of these traditional crops in Lawonda based on information available from the cultivators themselves.<sup>4</sup>



Ama Pobu makes a living of traditional dry land farming. His garden has a large variety of food crops

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<sup>3</sup> By contrast the most improved varieties, of beans for example, have to be completely harvested within a short period of time. This quality is convenient to mechanical harvesting

<sup>4</sup> In my surveys, a combination of questions was included to find out about the quantity of traditional agricultural production. I asked for information concerning what people had actually eaten the day before the interview, about the stock of different types of food present in their house at the moment of the survey, and their assessment about until when certain crops/types of food would last.

Traditional dry land agriculture securely provides food throughout the year, though people in Lawonda assess the quality of the food produced in this system as inferior. This judgment is not based on nutritional standards but on their general preference for rice. In areas where rice production is the main agricultural activity, the months of eating roots and tubers are called the period of rice-hunger.

Whenever wet fields are available, people in Lawonda prefer to cultivate rice. The shift in attention from the dry land to the paddy fields gives rise to the erosion of the hillside soil, making the dry lands less fertile. Very little of the original forest remains intact as most of the hills on Sumba are now covered with grasses and a very persistent type of weed<sup>5</sup>. Areas covered with this weed are more difficult to convert to production than land covered with *alang-alang*. Today, people grow mainly maize and cassava in the dry land fields. Both crops tend to exhaust the soil, and without special care it has no opportunity to recover its fertility. The poor quality of the fields is evident in the yield of dry rice: in Maderi, where members of the female farmers' organization grow dry rice with care, the average yield was only twice the amount of seed. The fallow fields and forests are also important for maintaining a livelihood in Lawonda. The hills are the grazing field for livestock. The forest provides wild roots and tubers during the periods when staple food is in short supply. Two types of tuber are common in Lawonda: *uwi*, and *kembili*<sup>6</sup>. The former is poisonous and can only be eaten after fairly complex processing: cleaning, slicing, several turns of soaking in water for a day and drying in the sun until dehydrated. The latter, *kembili*, is not eaten by wild boar because of its thorns and is thus available for human consumption. For humans, gathering these tubers is a difficult job too. Both *uwi* and *kembili* are found in the middle of the forest, a place infused by spirits and inhabited by wild and dangerous animals. These tubers are a good, secondary source of food, but because of their difficult collection and preparation they are only sought when other types of food are in short supply.

Additional foods collected from the forest or wastelands are mushrooms, fruits and vegetables. Presently, there are only few older people who occasionally collect these wild foods. Knowledge concerning the different edible products of the forests and fields is decreasing.

The wastelands and forests provide building materials. *Alang-alang* grows abundantly in the fields and is used as roof thatch. Wood and bamboo are cut for house construction. Bamboo has many other uses as well: cutting knife, material for fencing, "natural bucket"

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<sup>5</sup> This weed grows quickly into two or three meter high shrubs. Its leaves have a strong smell and livestock do not eat it. The roots and stem are fire-resistant. The weed is said to have been carried to Sumba by grasshoppers, and therefore in Lawonda it is usually called *tai belalang*, grasshopper dirt. Another name commonly used is *rumpu Golkar*, Golkar grass, referring to its speed in spreading over the island and its persistency which eventually kills all other weeds.

<sup>6</sup> The botanic name of *uwi* is *Dioscorea alata*, Linn. (Kloppenburg-Versteegh, 1934:93) and of *kembili* it is *Coleus Tuberosus*, Benth. (Poerwadarminta, 1985:475)

to transport water, and as storage "tin". The soil from a special site in the mountains, when mixed with sand from the river, makes excellent clay for cooking pots. Women in Lawonda weave mats from *pandan*-leaves and baskets from rattan. The sloping hills are hunting grounds too: wild boar, deer, monkeys, wild cats and many smaller animals consider the fallow land as their home. Hunting is a popular sport for men in Lawonda. It is also necessary in order to protect the crops. The hunt is a sporadic activity though, and because the "yield" is divided among many people, the meat does not contribute substantially to the diet of the Lawondanese.

Wet rice cultivation in the valleys has been practiced on a large scale since the 1960's. Large scale in this context means that wherever the land is suitable to make wet rice fields many people engage in this type of agriculture. For *desa* Prai Madeta, known in the area as the best rice village, paddy fields cover only about six percent of the total area of the *desa*. This compares to 29 percent dry fields and 60 percent fallow land. The technological level of rice cultivation in Lawonda is low: the soil is not tilled but trampled by buffalo, the varieties have a growing period of six to seven months, there is no application of fertilizer or pesticide or other external input and people in Lawonda do not weed the fields. Yields are correspondingly low, averaging between one and two tons per hectare.

As mentioned above, most people in Lawonda are engaged in a combination of wet rice cultivation and dry land farming. For the two research areas, the mixed character of farming is reflected in table 2.3. It gives two indicators as a means to approximate the size of the farms and the composition of the cropping patterns: (a) the part of the survey-population that cultivated the mentioned crops, and (b) the average amount of seed per crop sown per house per year.

All houses in the two survey areas engage in maize cultivation. In Pangadu Jara the average amount of maize seed per house is larger than in Yami Pahuruk, but in the former area maize is only regarded as a secondary crop. Normally in Pangadu Jara, the yield of the maize crop is considerable in only seven of the 16 houses. The other nine houses clear a dry land field in the dry season and sow maize, but afterward they direct all attention toward the paddy fields. When this occurs, the dry land is neglected and weeds grow more abundantly than maize. The larger part of the maize in neglected fields is destined to be consumed by wild boar, monkeys and rats. The second maize crop is even more problematic in Pangadu Jara since the season for clearing the dry land and sowing second maize coincides with the peak season of work in the paddy fields.

Table 2.3. Data about agriculture in Yami Pahuruk (Maderi) and Pangadu Jara (Prai Madeta) concerning the season 1988-1989.

Research area	Yami Pahuruk	Pangadu Jara
number of houses	16	16
percentage of total number of houses from which the inhabitants cultivate:		
maize (main crop)	100	100
maize (second crop)	88	69
dry rice ( <i>padi ladang</i> )	82	19
wet rice (main crop)	70	88
wet rice (second crop)	0	56
average amount of seed per house that cultivates the crop concerned, per year (kg):		
maize (main crop)	3.5	3.8
maize (second crop)	2.5	2
dry rice	14	7
wet rice	26	60

The clearest indication of the importance of maize for subsistence is provided by data about the yield. Yet, it is nearly impossible to collect these data because the people of Lawonda harvest only a little at a time and do not measure the total yield of a crop in standardized units<sup>7</sup> (see box 2.1).

The total area of land suitable for wet rice cultivation is limited, especially in Maderi. People who do not have access to the fields in the valleys and still want to grow rice have to cultivate dry rice. Unfortunately, *padi ladang* gives a low yield, but what is harvested has high value: *padi ladang* is the favorite type of rice for consumption on Sumba, and is harvested in the period of hunger for wet rice farmers.

<sup>7</sup> A common answer to questions concerning the amount of seed and volume of yield in Pangadu Jara was: 10 cups of seed were sown and the yield was 10 bags of corn ears. These amounts were mentioned so often that I have the impression that they say more about what is considered a reasonable answer than about the actual quantities of seed and yield.

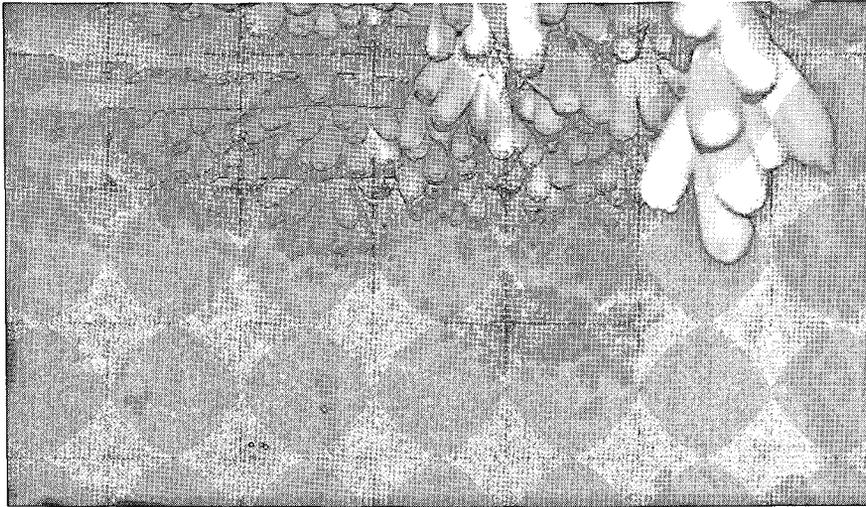
Box 2.1 How much is that in maize?

*People in Lawonda traditionally do not measure in universal standard units. They have their own customary ways to indicate quantities in units that make sense in their daily lives. Here is the example of how people in Lawonda measure quantities of maize:*

If you want to eat maize, you have to grow it. Wait for the rains. After the first big rain shower you must start sowing immediately. Take a stick and make a hole in the soil at every foot step on a nicely clean, dry field. Drop three to five grains and several maize seeds in the hole and cover it with earth.

The seeds are measured in cups. It takes four ears to fill a cup with grains. Two or three cups are about one kilogram. After about three months the crop is mature and we can eat *jagung muda*, fresh maize. You just pick the number of ears you want to eat. When eaten fresh, an adult needs about eight ears for one meal.

A few weeks later the grains are dry. Then, only three ears are enough for one meal. The dried ears are tied in bunches of four, and 15 to 25 bunches are strung together and called one *ikat*, bundle.



The stock of maize is tied in *ikats* to the ceiling, where the smoke from the cooking fire preserves it from insect infestation

Some people keep a stock of maize grain, which is more compact to store. If the Lawondanese indicate the amount of maize-stock in their house, they often give their assessment of the length of the period in which they will be able to eat maize.

In Pangadu Jara, wet rice is the main crop and the amount of seed sown is more than twice as great as in Yami Pahuruk. From the data of table 2.4 we can see that in both areas distribution of wet rice fields is very unequal.

Farmers in Lawonda usually measure the yield of wet rice in bags. These bags contain about 80 kilograms of paddy. The average yield in Pangadu Jara per *blek* of seed was about 300 kilograms of paddy. In Lawonda, four *blek* of seed correspond with one hectare of rice field. The wealthiest category of farmers' houses in table 2.3, the ones in Pangadu Jara who own both paddy fields and buffalo, have amply two hectares of paddy fields on average.<sup>8</sup> Calculated with these ratios, the average yield per hectare in Lawonda is 1200 kg paddy.

Table 2.4: Distribution of wet rice fields over four categories of houses, indicated by the average amount of rice seed sown per year per house in 1989.

Houses with control over:	Pangadu Jara		Yami Pahuruk	
	number of houses	average amount of seed	number of houses	average amount of seed
(a) <i>sawah</i> and buffalo	4	9 <i>blek</i> <sup>9</sup>	3	4.5 <i>blek</i>
(b) <i>sawah</i>	4	5 <i>blek</i>	9	1.3 <i>blek</i>
(c) dry land only	4	2 <i>blek</i>	1	0
(d) no land or buffalo <sup>10</sup>	3	1.5 <i>blek</i>	3	0

<sup>8</sup> Every year the village head and the *kepala dusun* of the southern part of Lawonda compete for the largest yield of the year. The winner has a yield of about hundred bags of paddy. Assuming that the average bag contains 80 kilograms of paddy, and that one hectare yields about 1200 kilograms, we can calculate that these largest rice farmers have about six and a half hectare of paddy field.

<sup>9</sup> One *blek* is a unit of volume: a tin which contains about 13 kilograms of paddy.

<sup>10</sup> Access to land for people who do not own land themselves is provided through different kinds of lending or share cropping arrangements, which will be discussed in chapter 6.

An average house in Lawonda can be self-sufficient in rice if it has an annual harvest of about 1500 kg. Of course, there are many variables determining whether the rice harvest is enough to cover the house's food requirements or not, for example: the number of inhabitants, the share of the harvest claimed by other people, or whether the rice harvest is used to cover other houses needs (e.g. sold to get money to pay school fees). From the combination of data of table 2.2 and table 2.3, we can conclude that in Pangadu Jara seven out of sixteen houses, and in Yami Pahuruk, thirteen out of sixteen houses are not self-sufficient in rice.

Animal husbandry is the third agricultural activity of the Sumbanese. The island used to be famous for its horses, and before the age of motor vehicles the "sandalwood-horses" were exported to other islands of Indonesia, Java in particular. On Sumba, horses are still the major means of transport for the rural population. Herds of horses and buffalo are the traditional expressions of wealth. A poor man is characterized as someone who has "no horse to ride, no buffalo to pull". Buffalo and horses are the main objects in ceremonial exchange. Every man who wants to obtain a wife has to pay a bride-price of potentially more than a hundred heads of horses and buffalo. Since the introduction of wet rice cultivation buffalo have gained in importance as a production factor. Characteristic of horse and buffalo husbandry on Sumba is that it is very labor extensive (Hoekstra, 1948:22). Therefore, it is perhaps more appropriate in Lawonda to speak of livestock-keeping than of animal husbandry to avoid association with intensive production oriented ways of keeping cattle in stables and feeding them with nutritious fodder. The latter method is traditionally only practiced on the best riding horses, and recently on a very small scale in a program for cattle fattening, initiated by Propelmas.

Table 2.5 Numbers of horses, buffalo and cattle in *desa* Prai Madeta in December 1989 and June 1985 according to the village administration:

	1985	1989
horses	218	116
buffalo	295	182
cattle ( <i>sapi</i> )	194	104

The scale of animal husbandry in Prai Madeta is declining. The village secretary of Prai Madeta told me that the number of buffalo, horses and cattle (*sapi*) has decreased.

The figures generally vary due to the many exchanges of livestock across the border of the *desa*, but the differences in the statistics between 1985 and 1989 are so large that they indicate an absolute decline of livestock property. The village secretary mentioned three reasons for the decline: theft, sale and payment of bride-prices to people in other villages. This corresponds with how three flocks of horses disappeared from the area during the period I lived in Lawonda. The village head lost his herd because one by one the horses were stolen. He was not able to mobilize enough people to chase the thieves away and find the stolen horses, nor to impose such dramatic sanctions that future thieves would be discouraged. A second herd from Lawonda disappeared in a legal way. Its owner exchanged them for another expression of his wealth: he married a woman of high social status and had to pay a bride-price of over a hundred head of livestock. A third herd of horses was sold because the owner's son went to Java to study at the University, and the list of fees and additional expenses seemed to be infinite.

However, theft, sale and payment of bride-prices cannot be regarded as the main cause for the decline in the numbers of livestock. My interpretation is that it is yet another sign of the general changes taking place in the economy of Lawonda. The number of items of expenditure, for which livestock can be exchanged without causing a feeling of loss, has increased, due to a gradual change in the morality of exchange. This will be discussed in the next chapter. Furthermore, people do not invest much in livestock anymore. Although young men are still occupied with accumulating savings in the form of horses and buffalo, in hopes that their efforts will be rewarded with the best wife, richer farmers rarely exchange part of their harvest for horses or buffalo because other allocations always seem to be more urgent.

The presence of cattle (*sapi*) in Lawonda is due to the government's Rural Credit program supported through the BRI (*Bank Rakyat Indonesia*). The program began in 1982. Each participant could get five head of cattle on credit. After a grace period of five years, credit should be repaid with the revenues generated by the accretion of the herds. Care for the animals was insufficient. Good knowledge of cattle keeping was lacking, as was land for good grazing. Moreover, the herds were used for trampling rice fields, and that led to further exhaustion of the animals. Some credit recipients sent their herd to more grassy fields in the eastern side of the area. The fodder was good, but cattle thieves were busy in that isolated area. Most recipients were forced to sell the initial animals of their herd to be able to repay their debt to the Bank and further resort to relatives with a paying job to help them cover the interest.

Around the houses we find smaller livestock: pigs, chickens, and occasionally some goats and ducks. Keeping pigs and chickens is women's work. Pigs are the "female" items in ceremonial exchange: bride-prices of horses and buffalo are reciprocated with gifts of pigs and hand-woven cloth. Chickens are very important in the daily economy. They serve many purposes: their intestines can reveal the signs of the *marapu* to the animist priests; they represent the household savings, and when a sudden expenditure can not be avoided, a

chicken can be easily sold; chickens are accepted as the most suitable quarterly contribution to the church; a chicken is an excellent gift to bring on a formal visit or to a mother who has just given birth; and together with rice they are the ingredients of a guest-meal. Apart from all of that they also produce eggs. Animal husbandry is not merely meat or egg production, but is also a necessary component of the every day activities to make a living in Lawonda.

The possibilities to make a living outside of agriculture are very limited in Lawonda. Two traditional, specialized professions are *marapu*-priest and *dukun*, a word which refers to medicine-men, indigenous midwives and faith-healers. These specialists receive a reward in kind for their services. During my stay in Lawonda I did not meet nor hear of a *dukun* or priest who could make a living exclusively from the revenues of this profession.

The opportunities for wage-labor are also limited in Lawonda. Only the Protestant Church, Propelmas and the government employ people here. In *desa* Maderi 19 persons receive a regular salary in money, 18 as government officials, and one as a retired church functionary. In *desa* Prai Madeta the number is greater: the two schools employ about 12 teachers and other help, Propelmas employs 10, and the church congregation employs three people on salary. The number of other government employees, such as the village government officials and health workers, varies. The total number of paid officials in Prai Madeta is about 30. This figure refers to the officials who actually reside in Maderi or Prai Madeta. There are a number of Lawondanese who have a paying job elsewhere on Sumba. Part of their salary or wage comes back to their relatives at home in Lawonda. This is an important source of cash for the villagers. However, because these employees no longer live in the village, even temporarily, they are not counted as village residents. Consequently, their income cannot be registered as paid-labor-income of village citizens.

The description of daily life in Lawonda in this chapter is quite elaborate. All the details and peculiarities of the *Uma*-economy project an impression of complexity. In the next chapters the analysis of this economy is the central subject.



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## The morality of exchange

In 1933 the missionary reverend D.K. Wielenga published a book entitled "Merkwaardig denken", a collection of stories about the Sumbanese "curious way of thinking". In one of the chapters he describes his conversation with a visiting Dutch seaman. The seaman complains that the Sumbanese apparently lack any sense of gratitude, "they do not even have the words to say thank you". Reverend Wielenga then recalls the example of a man who stayed in the mission's hospital to recover from a serious illness. After his recovery he came to Reverend Wielenga's house, and instead of expressing his thanks in many beautiful words, he asked the missionary for a rixdollar. The seaman was puzzled by this story, because to him it only stressed that the Sumbanese were not only ungrateful, but also very impertinent. Yet, as Reverend Wielenga explains, this remarkable request entailed an expression of deep gratitude. The very fact that this Sumbanese man asked for a gift, the rixdollar, meant that he did not regard the missionary as a stranger, but that their relationship had become very close, as if they were kinsmen. The consequence being, from that time onward, Reverend Wielenga could be sure of the friendship or assistance of this man (Wielenga, 1933:106-110).

Although this story is perhaps over romanticized, it gives a clear example of Sumbanese ideas concerning exchange. These ideas are the components of what I call the "morality of exchange"<sup>1</sup>. This concept refers to the reasons why people prefer one mode of transaction over another, why they consider some people better exchange partners than others, why some material goods cannot be exchanged at all or only exchanged for specific goods, what makes up "a good deal", and also, why asking for a rixdollar can be a very appropriate way to express gratitude. The morality of exchange is characteristic in the specific cultural context of Lawonda. As part of the more general mode of thinking it is connected to a mode of production (see chapter 1). Without being aware of this morality of exchange, one cannot understand the logic of economic activities in Lawonda. Thus, one could easily conclude that the people in

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<sup>1</sup> "Money and the morality of exchange" is the title of the book edited by J. Parry and M. Bloch, which deals with the moral evaluations of monetary and commercial exchanges as against exchanges of other kind. The thoughts presented in this collection were very illuminating to me and inspired me in writing this chapter.

Lawonda behave "irrationally". Yet their behavior can also be regarded as "rational", if rationality is interpreted in accordance with Lawondanese perceptions and not restricted to indicate the calculating behavior of a *homo oeconomicus* (cf. Sjöstrand, 1992).

The morality of exchange is not synonymous with "the moral economy". The latter concept, derived from the title of the well-known book published by Scott in 1976, refers to a specific type of economy, geared to providing social and economic security for all the members of the local community. The morality of exchange in this type of economy is already specified by definition: within the community a "subsistence ethic" prevails to guarantee subsistence as a "moral claim" or as a "social right" to which every member is entitled (Platteau, 1991:114). Outside the community, behavior is unrestrained by moral code, and people are allowed to seek their personal advantage. Whether sharing of food and other products between kinsmen and neighbors should be regarded as altruistic behavior was strongly questioned by Popkin (1979). He argued that there was no sense of solidarity or moral code to provide each other with social security in peasant communities, but that peasants, like all people, are basically selfish, and seek to satisfy their own self-interest. The Scott-Popkin controversy presents two motives of peasant behavior in opposition to each other. The debate is formulated in terms of either-or. I prefer to leave the possibility of a combination open, and consequently take the morality of exchange as a subject for empirical research. This allows the motives for exchange, and the rules of transaction in a specific context, like the Uma-economy of Lawonda, to be explored.

In this chapter I present my reconstruction of the traditional morality of exchange in Lawonda. Traditional exchange practices are the entry point used to describe the Lawondanese way of thinking about exchange. In the following sections I discuss how people in Lawonda construct categories of commodities (goods for exchange), how they distinguish between categories of transaction partners, and how they choose between different modes of transaction.

In the introductory story above, the seaman represents the caricature of western thought. His questions originate from the idea that there exists a universal explanation of economic behavior in line with the narrow interpretation of rationality as seeking self-interest. This framework of analysis does not allow for the kind of cultural peculiarities which, for example, explain why the Sumbanese man expressed his gratitude in such an "ungrateful and impertinent" way. Because these ways are intimately characteristic of the Uma-economy, I present this discussion on the morality of exchange at the beginning in this Part One of the book, that deals with the analysis of the Uma-economy. With the morality of exchange in mind, it is easier to assess the importance of the issues found in the next chapters. These issues concern changes in the rural economy and in the social organization of Sumba, with regard to their impact on the Lawondanese economy. Anticipating the issues in Part Two of this book, in which different options to obtain money are discussed, the final section of this chapter describes how the Lawondanese deal with money and monetary exchanges. Its also gives an indication of how the increasing use of money affects the morality of exchange.

## **Traditional exchange practices**

Historically, the Lawondanese have exchanged goods with people inside and outside of their own community. This home community is composed of different layers: at its base are the *Uma*, the Houses, referring to the social groups of people who descend from the couple who founded the House. The sharing of food and other subsistence products within these *Uma* used to be the rule. In retrospect, it is always difficult to ascertain whether actual practices in the past were in accordance with this rule. Not all products are shared or used for personal consumption though. Not every House can produce all of its own consumption requirements. There are specialized craftspersons who make clay pots, rope, or knives. There are also specialized services, like those of priests, midwives and healers. Food, additional subsistence products, and reciprocal-services are exchanged for these specialized products.

The layer of social organization above the *Uma* consists of *kabihu*, the patrilineage and their wives (Geirneart, 1992). The *kabihu* are the social units in ceremonial exchange. The core of this ceremonial exchange on Sumba is the transfer of bride-prices from one *kabihu* to the other in return for the reciprocal flow of bride-wealth. The bride-price consists of horses, buffalo, and precious ornaments. The bride-wealth accompanying the bride to the *kabihu* of her husband, consists of pigs, textiles and ivory bracelets.

I began this section stating the difference in exchange within and outside the home community. With regard to ceremonial exchange it is difficult to say where the home community ends. The flow of bride-prices and the counter flow of bride-wealth links many *kabihu* to each other. This "social chain" extends well beyond the geographical borders of a community.

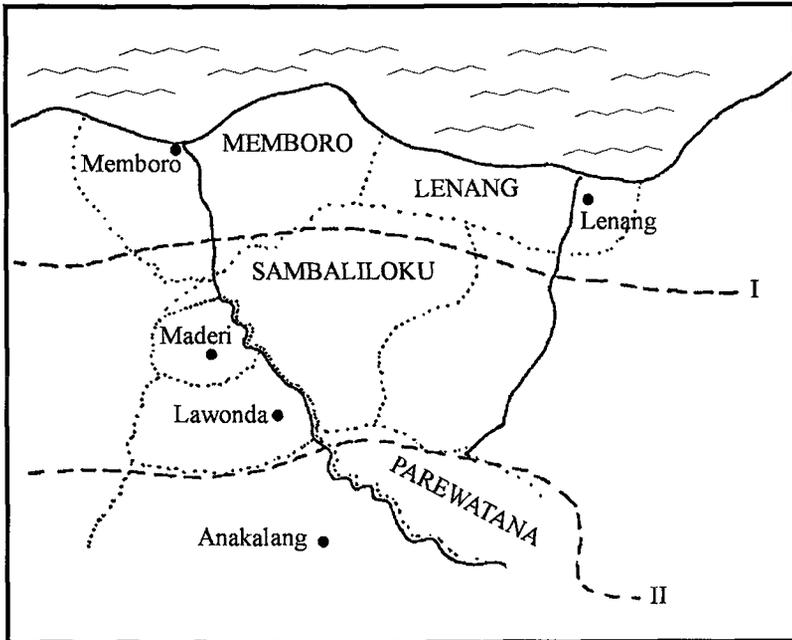
In the more geographical interpretation of community, the most common type of exchange between the inhabitants of different areas on Sumba is *mandara*. Literally *mandara* means making a journey on horseback. This word is used to describe the journey to other regions in search of food.

During times of shortage, people travel to their relatives in other areas to ask for food. *Mandara* implies long term exchange relationships between people living in regions with different climatic circumstances. Due to the variation in landscape within a fairly small area, the different regions are found within a relatively short distance. Lawonda and its surrounding regions are depicted in figure 3.1. The areas of Memboro and Lenang are the coastal areas. Line I marks the contour of approximately two hundred meters altitude. South of line I the mountains rise to approximately six hundred meters, with the highest peak reaching nine hundred meters. South of line II the plain of Anakalang begins with an altitude of nearly 350 meters above sea level.

The dry season in the coastal area lasts much longer than in other areas of the island. Thus, the maize harvest in this region is one or two months later than in the mountainous areas of Maderi and Lawonda. The result is that people from the coast travel to Maderi in January to

ask for maize, while in March people from Maderi travel to Memboro to do the same. Lawonda receives many visitors in July and August, as this is the season of the rice harvest. This is especially true when the harvest is early compared to other regions. The number of "guests" who come to ask a share of the harvest is very large. *Mandara* in this respect is a way to deal with seasonal shortages.

Figure 3.1 : Lawonda and its surrounding regions: destinations for *mandara*.



In former days *mandara* was something to boast about. Traveling to other areas and returning with a horse load of food was a conspicuous sign of good relations and great influence. This boasting reveals that the Lawondanese feel very positive about having debts, contrary to what outsiders, like those involved in credit programs, expect.

Trade is another traditional type of exchange with people outside of the home community. At the start of this century, trade with people from other areas was limited. By this time it was no longer safe to travel outside the territory of one's own *kabihu*, due to the danger of being caught and killed or enslaved. Safety increased after the pacification of Sumba by the colonial government in 1912. Even so, most Lawondanese ignored the options of trade with the wider

economy, because for them exchange remained a local business. It seems that there was no urgent need to go beyond the regional boundaries and engage in the cash economy of "strangers". Economic activities were not aimed at financial wealth. In Lawonda wealth was (and generally is) measured in heads of buffalo and horses, and in the number of people who share the same kinship group. To acquire this kind of wealth, people in Lawonda could do very well without using cash transactions. With the emergence of items based on monetary expenditure, tax for example, the volume of transactions with traders (or other strangers who could provide money) increased.

Summarizing, we can state that exchange has always been part of the economy of Lawonda. There is an elaborate set of exchange arrangements, with different modes of transaction, both inside and outside the region. Traditionally speaking, by far the largest part of exchange is settled in kind.

### **Spheres of exchange**

Exchange "involves a transfer of something tangible or intangible, actual or symbolic between two or more social actors" (Houston, 1987:3). Analytically exchange consists of three parts: the goods or services that are transferred, the actors and the transaction. In Lawonda people distinguish different categories of goods, and they also distinguish different categories of actors. Each combination of a category of goods and a category of actors has its own appropriate mode of transaction. For example, close relatives and neighbors feel free to pick fruits from each others trees and share the harvest without giving anything directly in return. It would be considered embarrassing to sell fruits to relatives, but selling them to traders from other areas is not a problem. To explain the difference between categories of goods in this chapter, the perception of the Lawondanese is described according to what Bohannan called "the spheres of exchange of a multi-centric economy" (1967:124). Subsequently, to grasp the way people in Lawonda categorize transaction partners I use the concept of "social distance" (Sahlins, 1972). A transaction can then be understood as a result of a specific combination of the position of the good involved in the spheres of exchange and the social distance between the actors.

Paul Bohannan was the author who introduced the concept of a "multi-centric economy". It refers to "an economy in which a society's exchangeable goods fall into two or more mutually exclusive spheres, each marked by different institutionalization and different moral values" (Bohannan, 1967:124). One of the characteristics of a multi-centric economy is the absence of a general purpose money (Polanyi, 1968:166). Money is an item used as a means of exchange, a mode of payment, and a standard of value, that can be used to obtain commodities from each of the spheres of exchange.

"The "traditional" economy of the Tiv in northern Nigeria contained three distinct ranked spheres of exchange: a lowest ranking sphere of subsistence goods transacted mainly by market exchanges in which people attempt "to maximize their gains in the best tradition of economic man" (Bohannan, 1968:227); a sphere of prestige goods in which brass rods served as a medium of exchange, standard of value and means of payment; and the highest ranking sphere of rights in human beings and, in particular, of rights in marriageable women" (Parry and Bloch, 1989:12).

The concept of a multi-centric economy is very useful to understand the ways of exchange in Lawonda. It is an analytical concept, and people in Lawonda never speak about different spheres of exchange. I reconstructed the spheres of exchange from the indigenous moral evaluation of transactions. This reconstruction is based on a combination of (a) the list of components of "gifts" between the two parties of the bride-takers (male) and bride-givers (female), (b) a large number of oral accounts on exchange events, and (c) the moral evaluations of these exchanges, which are formulated by the Lawondanese in terms of "good deals", "loss" and "shame". Since men in the area of Lawonda spend a lot of their time thinking about, planning, preparing and negotiating about exchanges, the moral evaluations are a popular ingredient of the daily conversations in the village.

There are two types of transactions in a multi-centric economy. "Conveyances" within a sphere are morally neutral: maize can be exchanged for sugar without causing a feeling of loss. "Conversions" between spheres have strong moral evaluations: "grudging admiration for the man who converted "up", scorn for the one who converted "down" (Parry and Bloch, 1989:12). The story below gives an example account of a series of transactions:

Tenabolo is the oldest son of a farmer in one of the neighboring villages near Lawonda. He is an ambitious and clever boy. He was doing well at the secondary school in Lawonda, but when he was fifteen and in the third grade, his parents could not find enough money to pay his school fee and he had to leave school. He started to work for the project leader of Propelmas, the local development organization, who was very pleased with Tenabolo's help around the house and on the fields. Tenabolo boarded in the project leader's household and he received some pocket money as well. Usually he did not spend much of the money, but it was always very difficult to hide it from relatives who were continuously in financial trouble. He asked the project leader to save the money for him and to disperse it only at his personal request. Even then his relatives continued to ask him for money and Tenabolo felt bad about disappointing them.

When he heard that one of the neighbors wanted to sell a pig in order to get money to pay his son's school fee, Tenabolo used some of his savings to buy the pig. The pig was not safe from relatives either, but to borrow a pig was at least considered as the establishment of a real debt. After a month another neighbor was in trouble. He was in immediate need of a pig as a gift to bring to the funeral of his sister's mother-in-law. At the ceremony he would receive a horse as a reciprocal gift. He proposed that Tenabolo to give him the pig and Rp 10.000 in cash, and after the funeral Tenabolo would get the horse.

### *The morality of exchange*

It was an exciting period when the neighbor returned empty handed from the funeral. He had only received the promise to get a horse. After a month the promise was redeemed and for the first time in his life Tenabolo was the owner of a nice stallion. Proudly he told his story to everyone, showing that time after time he had made a very good deal.

Tenabolo demonstrated a skill for the art of exchange. According to his own moral evaluations of the transactions horses have more value than pigs, and both pigs and horses are a better investment than money in cash. Money is regarded as something similar in nature to food: among relatives it should be shared. Recalling the moral evaluations of many exchanges, I was able to construct three ranked spheres of exchange.

The most common way to distinguish goods in Lawonda is according to two oppositions: ceremonial versus subsistence, and male versus female. This results in three categories of goods: (1) Male ceremonial goods, (2) Female ceremonial goods, and (3) Subsistence goods.

There is a second distinction within the first and second categories that has to do with scarcity. The reason for the scarcity is that production of these goods is either impossible, as in the case of ivory bracelets, or requires a long time and a large amount of skill. Demand for these goods is high because they compose the major part of bride-price and bride-wealth on Sumba. In table 3.1 there are three distinct categories comparable to spheres of exchange in the way Bohannan described them. The goods mentioned in the table do not represent a complete list but they are examples of the kinds of goods that belong to each category<sup>2</sup>.

The categories are ranked according to the local valuation of goods placing ceremonial higher than subsistence, male higher than female and scarce higher than what is readily obtainable.

In the subsistence category I found that people have a different attitude toward rice and chicken. Rice is the preferred staple crop. Historically, people in Lawonda adhere to the norm that every House should produce its own staple food. Whenever the members of a House do not succeed in producing their own food, people will prefer to help them with different categories of food first and save the rice for other purposes. Chickens are special because they are required whenever there are guests or minor celebrations; in the local Animist religion chickens are required by the priests in the ritual of reading fortune.

In daily life it is not always easy to recognize the spheres of exchange. Ceremonial goods are not necessarily restricted to ceremonies. Horses and buffalo are important in daily life too. They are used for transport and to puddle the paddy fields. Women will wear some of the ornaments outside of ceremonial occasions. So, what is mentioned as a ceremonial good may be used in daily life as well.

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<sup>2</sup> There are several traditional ornaments, a *mamuli* is a pendant traditionally worn as earring, a *lolu amahu* is a gold plaited chain and a *kanatar* is a chain of precious metals.

Table 3.2: spheres of exchange in Lawonda

<p>Highest category, scarce ceremonial goods:</p>	<p>A. scarce male ceremonial goods: golden <i>mamuli</i>, <i>kanatar</i> and <i>lolu amahu</i>, (riding) horses, buffalo.</p> <p>B. scarce female ceremonial goods: large pigs, ivory bracelets, antique earrings and beads, highest quality hand woven cloth.</p>
<p>Middle category, other ceremonial goods:</p>	<p>A. other male ceremonial goods: <i>mamuli</i> and <i>kanatar</i> made from other metals than gold, choppers, spears, dogs and heifers.</p> <p>B. other female ceremonial goods: small pigs and handwoven cloth.</p>
<p>Lowest category, subsistence goods:</p>	<p>A. rice and chicken</p> <p>B. vegetables, fruits, roots and tubers, maize, eggs, betel and areca, products gathered from the forest, clay pots, woven mats, rope etc.</p>

Bohannan describes the highest sphere of exchange of the Tiv as that of rights in human beings, particularly rights in marriageable women. For Lawonda I think it is inappropriate to include a sphere of "exchange of brides". In the local perception, a good bride is the best investment one can imagine, but women are not regarded as an "item of exchange". In Lawonda brides are not directly exchanged between men of two lineages: lineage A is either bride-giving or bride-taking to lineage B but can never be both at the same time. Therefore, women cannot be exchanged freely. Their identity as daughters of their *kabihu* of birth determines with whom they can marry and restricts their "exchangeability".

Valued even higher than goods that belong to the highest sphere of exchange are the possessions of the lineage. These are the treasures of the *kabihu* and they usually take the shape of golden ornaments. These objects have a strong ritual and ceremonial meaning for the members of the lineage. They symbolize the unity and strength of the *kabihu* and are only exposed at very special occasions. They cannot be alienated and therefore do not enter the exchange circuit<sup>3</sup>. Because they are not exchanged, they are not mentioned in table 3.1.

Land is another "item of exchange" that is missing from the spheres of exchange. The reason being that land itself is not alienable in Lawonda. In the most literal sense there can be no exchange of land: it is part of the territory of a certain *kabihu* and cannot be transferred elsewhere. Because of its former abundance, land was never perceived as an expression of wealth. Yet, today there are many cases and kinds of land exchanged in Lawonda due in part to the emergence of wet rice cultivation. What enters the circuit of exchange is the right to use a certain patch of land. In the case of pledging, commonly a rice field for a horse, the right to cultivate the rice field is exchanged for the right to use the horse. When the pledger wants to regain the cultivation rights to his rice field he must first return the horse (or a similar horse) to the pledgee. The attitude toward land and the local rules of land tenure will be elaborated upon in chapter six. In this chapter, the absence of land in the spheres of exchange draws the attention to the traditional perception of wealth.

## Wealth

What is the reason for a categorical hierarchy of goods in Lawonda and why do scarce ceremonial goods occupy the highest position in this hierarchy? I find the most plausible explanation to these questions in the traditional perceptions of wealth<sup>4</sup>. In order to avoid the more western interpretation of wealth being based on the total amount of material goods, I approach the local perceptions by describing the characteristics of a "successful" person in Lawonda.

A successful man in Lawonda is surrounded by many people: several wives, many children and some slaves. To indicate the prosperity of his House, the Lawondanese say that the veranda of the house is smooth, without any dust, meaning that it is frequently used as the bench on which visitors and guests sit, and are entertained by their host. In order to maintain a "clean

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<sup>3</sup> The norm is that they can not be alienated. Now that adherence to the *marapu*-religion is declining, many "treasures of the *kabihu*" have been sold to chinese traders. This is always done in secret by lineage members who are in great financial trouble or by thieves, and in general people feel ashamed about this practice.

<sup>4</sup> In chapter seven the Lawondanese perceptions on wealth and poverty are discussed in further detail. There I concentrate on the present day criteria for wealth ranking, whereas in this chapter the traditional perceptions of wealth are described to give the background for the morality of exchange.

veranda" lifestyle, the host must have the means to supply food to all guests. Yet, the successful do not engage themselves personally in food production. A rich man is traditionally recognized by his conspicuous idleness: he sits at home, chews his betel and does little. His wealth shows in the numerous buffaloes and horses grazing freely in his fields. The large herd offers him social prestige and also the possibility to acquire labor and food. People are invited to join in a special type of work for a day or for several days<sup>5</sup>. They are rewarded with plenty of tobacco, betel and a meal with meat. A wealthy man does not have to participate in the physical activity of food production. His subordinates will do this work for him in exchange for access to the resources he controls.

A man in Lawonda can only be successful in the long term if he has a good wife. She has to be of at least an equal social rank, because she will pass this on to their children. Lawondanese women depend largely on men for their social success: first on their fathers and brothers, and after marriage, on their husband. Her father and brothers negotiate on the bride-price which they will receive from her future husband. The size of the bride-price is also important for the bride, as it is the material indicator of her social status. A good bride-price has a good reciprocal bride-wealth, smoothing the way to a respectable position in the husband's *kabihu*. A successfully married woman is the first wife of her husband, and has subordinates who do physically demanding work for her. She should give birth to both sons and daughters. The sons contribute to the continuation of her husband's *kabihu*, whereas the daughters continue the "blood-line". Women embody the links between *kabihu*. These links are significant for men to enlarge their sphere of influence. Good relations with allied *kabihu* involve access to their members' moral support and material assistance. If a wife is not treated with due respect by her husband, the relationship with her *kabihu* of birth can deteriorate.

This brief description of the criteria for both men and women to be successful in Lawonda, reveals why ceremonial exchanges are so important. These exchanges create and maintain social relations. A solid network of social relations is traditionally the best guarantee for social security in times of trouble, and for expansion and prestige in times of success. Livestock is the major material component of ceremonial exchange, and is therefore traditionally the prime expression of wealth: it embodies the ability for continuation and expansion of the *kabihu*.

The special meaning of horses and buffalo on Sumba is described by Onvlee (1980). Livestock is called *banda la marada*, possessions in the field, or *banda luri*, living property, and Sumbanese should strive to obtain and preserve such property (Onvlee, 1980: 195). Above all, wealth is accumulated in horses and buffaloes. A high dung-hill under or beside a Sumbanese house does not indicate a reluctance to sweep and clean, but proves one's wealth of livestock.

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<sup>5</sup> Inviting people to work in this way is called *pawundang* in Lawonda. *Patulung* also means inviting people to do a special job together, but this refers to the mutual help between kinsmen or neighbors. The services of *patulung* are rewarded by reciprocal help when required, and there is no obligation to slaughter and serve a meat-meal.

### *The morality of exchange*

Animals are not just economic goods, they are living property; they have a *ndewa*, a soul. In Lawonda, "personal possessions are singularly linked with the life of their owner. They are not impersonal; rather they are part of the person who owns them and are related to his life in a particular way" (Onvlee, 1980: 196). Horses are very special: an important individual can be called by the name of his horse, evading the delicacy of mentioning his personal name, but also indicating the special relationship between the horse and his master. Part of the identity of a man is represented by his horse. A respectable man travels on his own horse, wears his own knife, and is accompanied by his own dog. If his horse should be stolen, the man's *ndewa*, his vitality, would be hurt. Even after his death he is accompanied by his horse: at the funeral his personal riding horse is slaughtered and the head of the horse is buried along with the corpse of the master.

Animals are the companions of humans. They must be treated with respect. In the season of paddy cultivation, the various activities of tillage are preceded by rituals for the well being of the buffalo. People depend on buffalo for this physically demanding work. Moreover general human prosperity depends on the well being and continuity of the herd. Another sign of respect for animals is found in the way of slaughtering them.



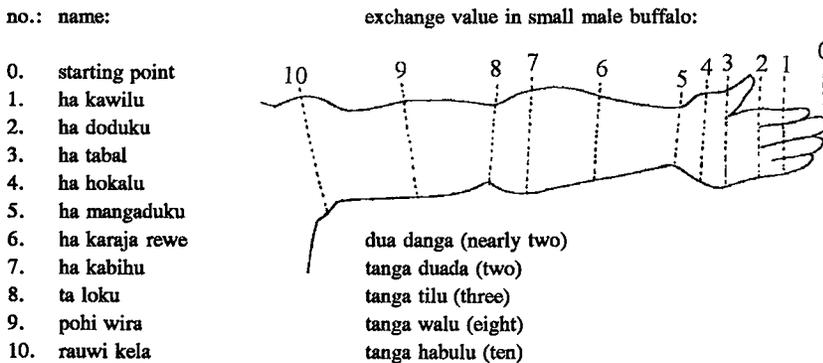
The number of buffaloes slaughtered at a funeral is a clear expression of the wealth of the deceased person

It may sound contradictory that killing an animal can simultaneously be a way of paying respect. For the Sumbanese, slaughtering an animal means allowing it to make the transition to the world of the deceased. The dead and the living both own livestock. An animal, whether a horse, a pig, a chicken or buffalo, may only be slaughtered with due respect, which means that it must be told of the occasion for its slaughter. The liver of the animal is "read" by the marapu-priest and it reveals the signs for good or bad fortune. Slaughtering to honor the deceased is not regarded as a loss. Onvlee recalls the opinion of a village headman in west Sumba:

"If there were no tax on slaughtering animals, would I not increase my slaughter? Of course I would do it. If I provide for my ancestors, they will provide for me. If I feed them, they will feed me. If I give them wealth, they will give me wealth. I give them part of their own property. If I have great wealth, will not my children later give me part of what I myself acquired?" (Onvlee, 1980: 199).

"Since possessions have *ndewa*, vitality, animals seek retaliation when improperly slaughtered" (Onvlee, 1980: 202). Stolen horses are often slaughtered when there is no possibility for quick exchange or export to other areas; this meat is dangerous both because it is stolen and improperly slaughtered.

Fig 3.2 How much is that in buffalo?



The distance between the starting point (the top of the middle finger) and the indicated point refers to the length of the horns of a male buffalo.

People in Lawonda think in terms of livestock. In ritual speech poverty is indicated as *nda ningu na jara kaleti, nda ningu na kau pairung*, "no horse to ride, no buffalo to pull". In conversations about conflicts it appears that the severity of the conflict or crime is measured in the number of horses or pigs that have to be paid as a fine to settle the matter. Buffalo are presently used as a standard of value.

Even modern goods such as radio's are assessed in terms of their exchange value in livestock. The scale of this "unit of value" is specified by the number of animals, by gender, and also by the size of the horns. At ceremonial negotiations one can watch people pointing at their arm. They refer to the length of the horn of a male buffalo. This standard of value is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

Most people in Lawonda do not live the idle life of the happy few. They are more occupied with keeping themselves and their families alive and less with collecting horses and other kinds of wealth. "No horse to ride, no buffalo to pull..." applies to them. Their efforts to surround themselves by as many people as possible come down to maintaining good relationships with a large number of people. They cannot afford to marry many wives, they cannot feed and raise dozens of children, and they cannot afford to be the permanent host of many guests. The best they can do is to be a member of a group with a shared identity. Such a group of people will not bring them wealth or private prestige, but will them provide security in times of trouble.

Above I mentioned that the wealth of a House is indicated by a smooth veranda, the sign of frequent guests and visitors. The members of this House must have plenty of food. Yet, I have never heard that the size of the food-stock in a house was used as the sole indicator of wealth. The first explanation is, that what matters in Lawonda is not the size of the food stock, but the ability to prepare meals for guests. This correlates with the size of the social network surrounding the members of the House, and with their position in this network. A second explanation is that food can never contribute to individual wealth, because amongst close kinsmen and neighbors it should be shared. In the present practice of the Uma-economy, sharing does not imply that the food stocks from all of the members in a *kabihu* are pooled. This is simply the norm for goods from the lowest sphere of exchange, and compliance to this norm implies a willingness to share if a relative or neighbor asks for help. If a person speaks openly about the size of his food stock, it can easily be regarded as a sign of his or her unwillingness to share.

The norm of sharing does not hold true for goods from the middle or highest sphere of exchange. When someone borrows one of these goods, he or she establishes a debt. This debt then requires an equivalent repayment. With regard to horses the personal ties with the owner are clear. In the story of Tenabolo's successful exchanges it was evident that livestock was a better means of maintaining wealth than money. The highest and middle spheres goods are an individual's private property. Individual property contributes to the wealth of the owner, whereas that which is considered shared property within a larger group, *kita punya bersama*, cannot be accumulated as individual wealth.

### Actors: partners in exchange

Following the spheres of exchange of goods, the second characteristic feature of the Lawondanese ways of exchange is the existence of different categories of exchange partners. Categories of exchange partners are distinguished according to social distance (Sahlins, 1972: 192). Traditionally, social distance is defined in terms of kinship. The closest relatives are the members of the same *kabihu*, the patrilineal clan including the wives and children, descended from the founder of one main *Uma*. They are referred to as "we"<sup>6</sup>, although people who belong to the "we" group are not equal. Differences between them are based on gender, generation, and social status, with the extremes being the high nobleman and the young slave. The types of goods and services that one can expect from fellow *kabihu* members depends on one's position in respect to these differentiating characteristics.

The word *kabihu* means clan but it also stands for corner-pillar (of a house). This second meaning expresses that the individuals who form a *kabihu* are a part of a larger totality. In the local language there is "no head term to a social totality encompassing several *kabihu*" (Keane, 1990:57). The members of this totality are referred to as "no others" by the Lawondanese when speaking from their own *kabihu*'s viewpoint. "No others" are members of other *kabihu* with whom the home group has a clearly defined relationship, either as (potential) bride-givers or bride-takers. The prohibition of endogamy within the home *kabihu* postulates a good relationship with "no others". By contrast, "others" are people with whom one cannot trace any relationship in the past or present. These "others" are strangers from another area on Sumba and all other ethnic groups.<sup>7</sup>

Today in Lawonda social distance is not simply a matter of real kinship distance. Neighbors, who according to kinship criteria would have to be regarded as "no others" can be part of "we", and brothers can be on such bad terms that at best they are "no others" to each other. Even strangers, particularly those who live close by and earn a money salary, are adopted as "no others".

Two months after our arrival in Lawonda we organized a house warming party. The local village head eagerly accepted our invitation. He replied that he would very much like to come *secara adat*, as a guest according to local custom. Anticipating the display of local folklore, we agreed. The village head came to our party with a large group of followers carrying a pig and a flag of hand woven cloth. In accepting the pig and cloth as his gift, we acknowledged him as our bride-giving party. So henceforth we had to submit to the obligations of bride-takers. We felt honored to be

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<sup>6</sup> This is the translation of the words used by people in Lawonda, in the Indonesian language: "*kita-kita*", "*bukan orang lain*" and "*orang lain*".

<sup>7</sup> Keane also found three possible relationships between Anakalangese. With a more scholarly expression he categorized them as: (a) partners in shared identity, (b) complementary matches, and (c) enemies (Keane, 1990:84).

regarded as "no others", but we were also worried about the material consequences, beginning with the problem of where to find a good horse to reciprocate the gift.

The dominance of the kinship organization in regulating exchange relations makes it imperative, for new economic relations to be established, to first identify the degree of "kinship" (Raatgever, 1988:234). "Former strangers", like the employees of Propelmas, are incorporated into a category as if they were kinsmen. Consequently, the old rules of behavior within such a category can be applied to these "new kinsmen" or "new allies". This means that the "social distance" between two persons is not determined in advance by their membership in a particular category of people, but that it can be manipulated. By changing the social identity of a person - like the village head changed our identity from strangers into "no others"- the relationship is changed, and with it the most appropriate mode of exchange.

### **Transactions: the morality of exchange**

The three categories of actors -"we", "no others" and "others"- are associated with different modes of exchange. The classical distinction between modes of exchange is: reciprocity, redistribution and market exchange (Polanyi, 1968:149).

Reciprocity refers to the principle of exchanging goods or valuables without overt reckoning of economic worth or overt reckoning that a balance need be reached, to establish or reinforce ties between persons (Harris, 1988:283). In reciprocal exchange the flow of products and services is not contingent on any definite counterflow, with regard to time and quantity. Reciprocity denotes movements between correlative points of symmetrical groupings (Polanyi, 1968:149).

Redistribution is a system of exchange in which the labor products of several individuals are brought to a central place, sorted by type, counted, and then given away to producers and non-producers alike (Harris, 1988:289). Redistribution is dependent on the presence of some measure of centrality in the group (Polanyi, 1968:149).

Market exchange refers to the vice-versa movements taking place as between "hands" under a market system (Polanyi, 1968:149). Characteristic of market exchange is the anonymity and impersonality of the exchange process. Buying and selling on a price market involves the specification of the precise time, quantity and type of payment (Harris, 1988:296).

The compilation of characteristics of the three modes of exchange reveals that the mode of exchange is not similar to one specific set of transaction rules, but that it refers to particular social relations as well. The most prominent mode of exchange in Lawonda is reciprocity. It refers to transactions that establish or reinforce ties between persons, and therefore applies to "us" and "no others". Within these categories, reciprocity is the mode of exchange between partners of equal level in the social hierarchy, for example, between neighbors, or brothers,

or between *kabihu*. Exchanges between such "equal" units are both economic and social activities: they serve the maintenance of relations as well as the actual transfer of goods and services. The system of reciprocity in Lawonda takes the form of a general state of mutual indebtedness, which preferably will last forever, and in which the shape of the debt is not specified in advance. In this sense all people in Lawonda are indebted. Usually they are a debtor and a creditor at the same time, owing a horse to one relative and holding the claim to a horse from another relative. To be indebted is not a shame in Lawonda. On the contrary, it is a sign of many good relationships, and one can be proud to be regarded as credit worthy.

The Lawondanese attitude toward borrowing was quite surprising to me and alien to most outsiders who implicitly expect that being indebted is a universal shame. A confrontation between these two perceptions of debt appeared during the efforts to start a library in Lawonda. There are very few books in this area. Additionally, most people who have left school are *lupa huruf*, which means that they have lost the skill to read because they never practice. The library was initially a great success. Many people were eager to borrow books. However, no one returned the books to the library as there was no urge to do so. There were still books left in the library, so why would you return the single book that you borrowed?

Credit programs are also doomed to failure if there is no clear urge or reason for the debtors to repay their debt. Banks and development organizations are regarded as the rich institutions of "others", and therefore, there is no moral urge for the Lawondanese to repay the credit these institutions have issued.

A general characteristic of reciprocity is that people should repay their debt according to the relationship with their creditor. The first exchange act that fixes the relationship between groups of people is the transfer of a bride or, as in the example above, the acceptance of a group of people as a bride-giving party. The bride-takers are the ones who provide male ceremonial goods to the bride-givers. This rule is valid on every occasion following this first exchange act. So when a Lawondanese needs a horse, he will go to someone who is part of his category of bride-takers. He cannot give a horse in return, but the "loan" should be repaid in what is suitable for bride-givers: in female ceremonial goods of the same exchange value. Inasmuch, horses are usually repaid with pigs. If a horse were to be repaid with a horse, this would imply the denial of the existing relationship and consequently its end.

The concept of reciprocity is further elaborated by Sahlins (1972), who distinguishes three different kinds of reciprocity:

The solitary extreme is called *generalized reciprocity*, and it "refers to transactions that are putatively altruistic, transactions in the line of assistance given and, if possible and necessary assistance returned. In the middle of the 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 the attempt to

### *The morality of exchange*

get something for nothing with impunity, the several forms of appropriation, transactions opened and conducted toward net utilitarian advantage" (Sahlins, 1972:193-195).

Sahlins argues that, the smaller the social distance between two exchange partners, the more the rules of transaction will move toward the extreme of generalized reciprocity. In Lawonda this is true, in the sense that the stronger the ties between two people are, the less specific they have to be about the time and quantity of the eventual reciprocal "gift".

The longer the social distance between exchange partners, the more people in Lawonda think in terms of loans or direct barter. In this case, the kind of repayment for a loan is specified in advance, and the period of repayment is fixed. The risk of dealing with bad exchange partners is minimized in the case of barter, because this implies direct exchange of goods.

The choice between the different types of transaction shows yet another aspect of the morality of exchange in Lawonda. This aspect has to do with the different ways to acquire goods. The Lawondanese rank the different ways according to their normative preference. The first way would be by individual production. Yet, some goods cannot be produced by everyone, and generally people in Lawonda say it is better "not to take a horse from your own stable", but borrow someone else's instead (Miedema, 1989). The best way to obtain goods from the highest and middle spheres of exchange is through ceremonial exchange. The second best is to borrow the desired good from relatives. Ranking third is barter, a direct and balanced exchange. Worse yet is buying a good, that could be obtained in one of the other ways, with money, because this reveals the lack of good relations. Of course, this last remark does not apply for commodities that can only be bought with money, such as industrial products. Corresponding with this preference is the existence of alternative "markets" for various goods. For example, most horses in the area of Lawonda change owner through the channels of ceremonial exchange. It is quite difficult to buy a horse with money. At first glance, it looks as though horse trading is of little importance in Lawonda. Yet, if one does not confine trade to transactions in cash between the local population and traders, the volume of horse trading increases tremendously. The horses that enter the channel of ceremonial exchange or are exchanged along the channel of people who are connected to each other by ceremonial relationships, change hands very often; three times per week is common. Stealing is the most common way of negative reciprocity in Lawonda. If stealing is regarded as a type of reciprocity, it refers especially to the social relations involved: traditionally, in Lawonda it is not a sin to steal from one's enemies. On the contrary, it is appropriate conduct to stress negative social relations. The reciprocal "gift" that can be expected is a return theft. Stealing from kinsmen, or "no others", is disapproved of, and regarded as the worst way to obtain goods.

Figure 3.3 summarizes the different modes of transaction in Lawonda which occur as part of the general system of reciprocity. This diagram also includes two other columns: goods and actors. The total diagram presents the variables of reciprocal exchange acts.

Figure 3.2 Diagram of exchanges in Lawonda

<b>Goods</b> ranked in spheres of exchange:	<b>Mode of transaction</b>	<b>Actors</b> ranked in terms of social distance:
high	general mutual indebtedness	"us"
middle	specified loans	"no others"
low	direct barter	bride-givers bride-takers
	selling	
	stealing	"others, enemies"

The diagram can also be depicted as a three dimensional graph: the scale on the axis of goods runs from low to high in ranking the spheres of exchange, the scale on the axis of modes of transaction from generalized to negative reciprocity, and the scale of the third axis represents social distance. Any particular transaction can be depicted as a point in this three-dimensional graph. The graph for the exchange of one specific good by one specific actor shows in a two dimensional shape. Let me clarify this with an example of distribution of the rice harvest from the field of one particular rice farmer. The part of the harvest that he does not bring home for consumption is taken straight from the threshing floor and distributed through different exchange circuits. A first part of the harvest is given to the people who assisted the farmer in rice cultivation; this can be regarded as a reward for services. The second part is given to close relatives and neighbors. This ranges from assistance to the needy, which resembles a pure gift, to loans in paddy. A third part is given to "no others" or even "others", on more balanced terms of exchange, such as direct barter or credit with a fixed amount and term, and as social distance increases, possibly interest. A fourth part of the harvest is sold for cash. Even in this most business-like transaction, social distance between the exchange partners influences the price of paddy. So, the exchange value of a specific good, like paddy in this case, can be expressed in other goods, labor services, maintenance of good social relations, and cash. The

value of the total harvest is the sum of all reciprocal rewards, which obviously cannot be easily quantified nor expressed in one unifying standard unit.

The three dimensional picture shows how sophisticated the exchange system of the Uma-economy is. It also illustrates that the Uma-economy, in which transactions involving cash play only a minor role, cannot be equated with a simple barter economy. The rules of transaction are complex and there are many more types of exchange in kind than just barter.

Up to this point I have not addressed the question of whether or not the other two modes of exchange, redistribution and market exchange, also occur in Lawonda. In the description of reciprocity I included that this mode of exchange is prominent in transactions between "equal" partners. In the next chapter I describe that the social organization within the *kabihu* and *Uma* is quite hierarchical. Within these units redistribution is the most prominent mode of exchange. These are also the units of production and consumption. Decisions on how the land and labor of the *Uma*'s members will be used, on the distribution of food, and on the allocation of livestock and other *Uma* property (including money) are normally taken by the members with the highest position in the internal hierarchy of the *Uma*, usually the father and his first wife.

Within the larger framework of the *kabihu* there is a similar hierarchy enabling the *kabihu* leaders to appropriate part of the products of their subordinates' labor. The subordinates rarely regard this as exchange, because the flow of material goods and services is mostly one way, reciprocated only by "capitalist" services, such as the land-use rights and buffalo. Redistribution is also the mode of exchange that includes tax payment. Originally, from the Lawondanese viewpoint, tax payment must have been mere appropriation by the central government, because it benefited only those Lawondanese who were appointed as local government officials. Though, as will be described more elaborately in the next chapter, the government gradually extended its services to the rural areas of Sumba. Today, the local schools, hospitals and roads are particularly well appreciated government investments. The tax revenues collected from Sumba presently cover less than ten percent of the budget for government expenditure on Sumba (Corner, 1989).

## Money

The third mode of exchange, market exchange, as suggested in the description above, corresponds with the use of money. When I speak about money, I refer to the coins and bank notes of the *rupiah* currency issued by the Indonesian State. This is a narrow definition of money. A more general definition includes every item which is used as: a means of payment, a standard of value, a unit of account, a means of saving, and a means of exchange (Polanyi, 1968:175). If one specific item performs all of these functions it is called general-purpose money. In the description of traditional exchange practices in Lawonda several kinds of limited-

purpose money were mentioned. The buffalo is used as a standard of value. Livestock is a means for saving or storing of wealth. Rice is used as a means of payment for assistance in cultivation. In order to assess the role of state-issued money in the Uma-economy of Lawonda, it is useful to bear in mind this general definition of money. Does the increasing use of money affect the traditional morality of exchange?

The distribution of money is wide-spread in Lawonda. Yet, most people do not use much money, even though they are familiar with the coins and banknotes. They use this money to pay for sugar and tobacco at the marketplace and to pay taxes and school fees. The introduction of money is not a recent phenomenon. In 1928 a Dutch missionary, reverend P.J. Lambooij wrote:

"Money is very hard to obtain. Especially for Sumbanese and Savunese, who were never accustomed to calculate in money, except recently, since they have had to pay taxes and since traders buy their horses with cash. Now they are able to buy all kinds of things in the small shops which require cash. That is why they started to sell betel and areca, or eggs and chickens and rice. Several Sumbanese who have been appointed as officials receive a salary in cash, and they have quickly learned to express value in terms of money. However, many Sumbanese still think that someone who earns a wage of twenty guilders per month is a rich man, only because he receives money. They do not remember that this amount of money has to be spent on food and clothing etc. They only see the twenty guilders as an amount of money that is five times as much as their annual tax-bill, and they rush to ask for a part of the wage. If every month one receives such a large amount of money, then one can spare some of it for a "poor devil" (van den End, 1987:273).<sup>8</sup>

When this account of Reverend Lambooij's is read in the context of "the morality of exchange" of Lawonda, one can notice more logic in the behavior toward money. Money is used on Sumba in accordance with a way of evaluating and legitimizing transactions in kind. To be able to understand how people in Lawonda deal with money, we have to ask questions similar to those posed with regard to transactions in kind: with whom can one transact using money? And, where does money fit into the spheres of exchange?

Money was introduced on Sumba by traders. With traders, who did not have any kinship relation with the local population, goods were exchanged for money. This money was subsequently offered to another stranger: to the government for paying taxes, or to another trader in exchange for a commodity. Money is associated with the "others". This shows in the reluctance of the Lawondanese to use cash in transactions with people of closer relation. A suitable gift would be acceptable, but not payment in money. This leads to strange situations. Suppose one would need a pig, and ask a good friend to give hers. She would be offended if you would offer to pay her the price in money. Yet, it would be a sign of good relationship

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<sup>8</sup> My own translation.

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if you borrowed the pig, and later on would help her to pay school fees for her children who attend secondary school.

For the people in Lawonda it is hard to imagine money as something tangible, as a sort of commodity. One of the oldest uses for money that I have heard of in Lawonda was as an ornament. The Dutch-Indian *ringgit* was popular as a replacement of a *mamuli*. When seen in this way, it is possible to explain Reverend Wielenga's story more elaborately: the Sumbanese man did not ask for money to pay expenditures, his request was to receive the "foreign" equivalent of a *mamuli*, which is indeed a very suitable gift between brothers. The colonial rixdollar is still a precious ornament when turned into a pendant on a chain of antique beads. The best dancing dresses are decorated with old colonial coins. These coins were used as raw material for *mamuli* production. This ornamental use is confined to the coins of the colonial period. Rupiahs and bank notes are not used as ornaments.



This dancer wears a *mamuli* as earring and pendant and her ring is made of a colonial coin

If people store an amount of cash in their house, the money is something comparable to fruits and vegetables, and is likewise shared. You need a good reason to ask your neighbor to give you his pig; but if the same man has some money, it is not at all indecent to ask him to share some with you. Storing money in the house is therefore not a good way of saving in Lawonda. There are people from Lawonda who have a savings account with the Bank, and this is not because they are attracted by the rates of interest. They use the Bank to safely hide their money from friends and relatives.

In Lawonda, people think of money as being connected to allocations, that is, to the purposes for which cash is required in relation to a particular item of expenditure. Analogous to the spheres of exchange for goods, there is a ranking of the "spheres of allocation" of money.

Table 3.4 Ranking of spheres of allocation of money in Lawonda.

Highest sphere:	School fee for higher secondary and university education, large feasts and funerals, hospital treatment, consult of indigenous healing specialist, automobile or truck, luxurious consumption goods (radio, refrigerator, television, etc.)
Middle sphere:	School fee for secondary school (SMP), house construction, medical treatment, smaller feasts.
Lowest sphere:	Church contributions, tax liability, primary school fees, rice, sugar, coffee, tobacco, betel and areca, (and if there is enough money: cloths, kerosene, soap, kitchen utensils, etc.)
No money is spent on:	Meat, maize, roots and tubers. <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This does not mean that these food-items are not appreciated, but only that people do not use money to obtain them. Meat is an example of a highly appreciated type of food. It is always distributed according to elaborate customary rules, but it is never sold. To slaughter just for consumption of the meat, without an acceptable reason and without sharing with relatives and friends, is regarded as a sin.

In order to trace the connection between the spheres of exchange and the spheres of allocation of money, I inquired as to which allocations people were willing to sell goods from the highest sphere of exchange, for which allocations they would sell goods from the second sphere of exchange, etc. In this way I was able to construct the ranking of spheres of allocation of money. The purposes of expenditure in the highest sphere of allocation of money are considered to be equal with the financial revenues of selling goods from the highest sphere of exchange of goods; for example, it is not a shame to sell buffalo to be able to pay University fees.

The spheres of exchange of goods correspond with the spheres of allocation of money, and there is a similar moral valuation of transactions. It is clever when one can pay the school fees for the secondary school out of the revenues from the sale of garden products; but it is a shame if a horse has to be sold to pay the same school fee.

Government officials and all other people on Sumba who receive a regular income in cash experience the local morality of exchange from another point of view. From a more western perception, one would expect - like Reverend Lambooi did - that the officials use their salary for their household subsistence needs. Yet, it appears that they too, prefer not to spend any money on (staple) food. The salary is regarded as a kind of common resource for a larger group of people. Close relatives feel entitled to claim part of the salary for their own household expenditures from the highest and middle sphere. In exchange for this claim, they provide their relative-official with food, agricultural land, or labor to work the land. In Lawonda, everyone with a paid job cultivates his or her own dry field, and many grow their own rice. Only the part of the government salary that is paid in kind (in rice) is directly used for personal consumption.

Now let us return to the definition of general purpose money. Its four characteristic functions are; means of exchange, mode of payment, storage of wealth and standard of value. In Lawonda, a fifth function could be added, in the case of old colonial coins: the ornamental function. As a means of exchange, money is preferably used in transactions with strangers. As a mode of payment, it is only used when there is no alternative available, as in the case of a school fee or a tax payment. As a storage of wealth, money is not very suitable in Lawonda, except when placed in a savings-account, but this is perceived of as "hiding it from your relatives" and is therefore a sign of avoiding the obligation to share. The most common use of the rupiah as a standard of value is for indicating the amount of goods that can only be purchased with cash, e.g. sugar or coffee. Agricultural products are measured in units of volume or weight: in tins, bags or in "as much as one man can carry". For subsistence products, what matters most is their use-value and not their (potential) exchange value. The exchange value of ceremonial goods is usually indicated by measures of livestock: people in Lawonda know exactly how many and what kind of horses are equivalent to "a pig carried by eight men". The widely recognized standard of value used to indicate the value of larger

objects is the buffalo. The conclusion is that state issued money is used in Lawonda in the four characteristic ways, but not singularly, and in most cases alternatives for money are preferred.

### **Money and the morality of exchange**

To assess the role of money in the local economy of Lawonda, cash transactions have to be placed within the broad framework of the local ways of exchange. What happens when the use of money is expanded? Can increased use of money as a medium of exchange bring about changes in the local economy? In 1959 Bohannon put forward the thesis that the introduction of money in a multi-centric economy affects the rules of transaction and it minimizes the differences between categories of actors and categories of goods (Bohannon, 1959).

With the description of the spheres of allocation of money, I have shown that the existence of a multi-centric economy does not always have to be on conflicting terms with the use of money. The multi-centric economy is one expression of the way in which the indigenous culture imposes rules and restrictions on exchange practices. Increasing use of money is often taken as a shorthand for commoditization, in the sense of a shift toward the economic system where (monetary) market exchange becomes the predominant mode of exchange. What is at stake then, if one poses the question of whether increasing use of money changes the local economy, is how far the market economic system, with its own practices and mode of thinking, enters the local economy, and whether it replaces the traditional morality of exchange, or articulates with it. In Lawonda, the latter is the case. The changes that brought about the increased use of money have created an arena of choice, a repertoire of options.

An example of this repertoire of options, in which the Lawondanese face contradictory norms, and use old practices to deal with the "new" need for money, is found in a contemporary form of *mandara*.

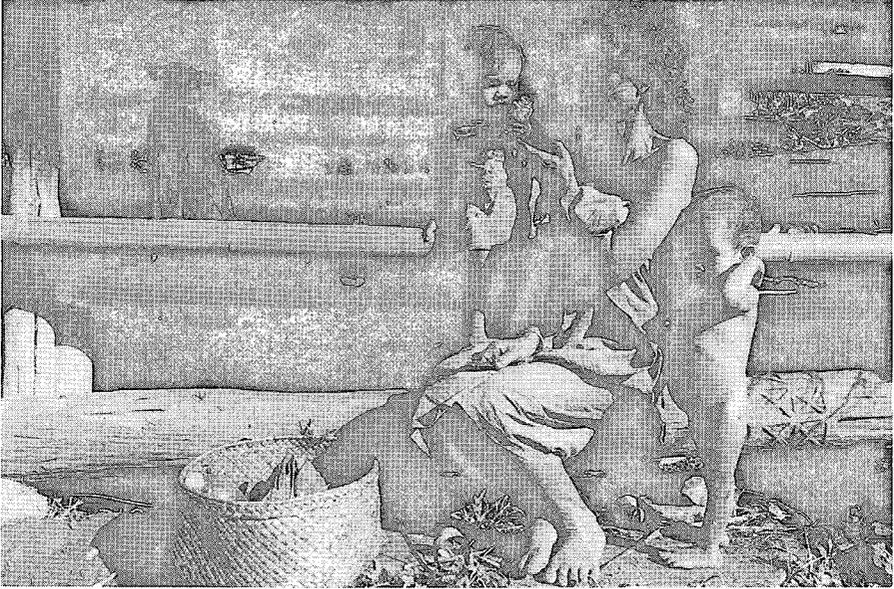
In Lawonda, the opinion concerning *mandara* is changing. The government encourages this change. In speeches of the Bupati of West Sumba it was often stressed that the Sumbanese had to become more production oriented farmers, and that relying on exchange arrangements was old fashioned and would never be a solution to problems of hunger. Nowadays, *mandara* is regarded by many Lawondanese as an indication of severe shortage, an option for the poor who cannot take care of themselves. This change of attitude makes people somewhat reluctant to talk about *mandara*, and boasting about such a trip is now considered improper. Infrastructural changes have also affected this method of searching for food. The increased construction of roads and motorized traffic have changed the character of traveling. People travel more often and they go by bus or truck. Not only are strong, young men able to go on a journey, but also women and older men can travel now as well. A new destination for modern *mandara* is the urban area, and people from the village sometimes admit that their trip to town is in fact money-*mandara*.

### *The morality of exchange*

The traditional morality of exchange provides a good entry point for the analysis of the contemporary Uma-economy. A crucial aspect is the connection between categories of exchange partners in terms of social distance, and modes of transaction. The rules of transaction for one type of good, horses for example, are different with regard to strangers than with regard to close relatives. I think this connection is crucial in assessing the impact of money on the local ways of exchange. It is not so much that money alone can change or even eradicate a multi-centric economy; it is more the increase in the relative share of strangers as transaction partners that changes the average terms of transaction. When trading activities with people from other areas becomes more frequent and involves a greater share of the local products, money will be more important as a medium of exchange, and transaction will be more according to the market-economic model: closed ended, direct, impersonal and isolated (Plattner, 1989: 210). Within the local community the multi-centric economy can still continue to exist. Additionally, as I have argued above, money is pulled into the spheres of exchange.

Whether the spheres of allocation of money will continue to exist over the long term is a question which cannot be answered yet. If the number of items of monetary expenditure increase, and if money is obtained more regularly from different sources, then the link between a particular source of money and a specific expenditure will become blurred. In that case the spheres of allocation of money cannot be distinguished any longer. Yet, according to my own assessment, which takes into account that money has already been used in Lawonda for more than seventy years, this situation will not occur here for at least the next few decades.

*The Uma-economy*



Both history and present: life of poor people in the rural areas of Sumba



Modern Indonesian children on Sumba: respectfully dressed in their bright uniforms they perform the *Panca Sila* ceremony

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## Traders, missionaries, bureaucrats and Uumbu Pay

Every Monday morning the pupils of the secondary school in Lawonda line up on the school yard. Respectfully dressed in their bright uniforms, they perform the *Panca Sila* ceremony, remembering the struggle for independence and its heroes. They sing the national anthem and hoist the Indonesian flag as every spectator gets the message: Lawonda is part of the Indonesian nation.

After reading the chapter on the morality of exchange in Lawonda, one could easily get the impression that Lawonda is an isolated spot on the world map, where the people are reluctant to engage themselves in trade with the outside world. However, Lawonda is part of a larger totality. What is this larger totality? At present, there is no single answer to this question. Lawonda is the popular name for a *desa* of the Indonesian nation. Lawonda is the name of a congregation of the Protestant Christian Church of Sumba. Lawonda is the area of competence of *Propelmas*, the local Protestant Christian development organization. Lawonda is also the geographical area in the middle of the island of Sumba, where the land belongs to the descendants of the first forefathers who settled there. As such, Lawonda has several identities that exist simultaneously. Each identity refers to a different totality, and each defines where Lawonda is situated within the framework of either the nation-state, the church, the development organization and its partners, or the institutions based on kinship. The people of Lawonda are correspondingly distinguished as Indonesians or foreigners, as (Protestant) Christians or Catholics or Animists, as rich or poor, as participants in development activities or people who stay with traditional practices, and finally, as kinsmen or strangers.

This chapter depicts the background of the contemporary "plural identity" of Lawonda. It describes the emergence of different normative frameworks and alternative lines of social organization. The chapter is composed of two major subjects. The first subject concerns historical events on Sumba that affected the local economy of Lawonda and indicate the macro-context of changes in the area. The main issues here are the role of trade, the emergence of the State -first colonial and later the independent Indonesian state-, and the influence of the Christian missions. The description of historical developments reveals considerable insight into

the major issues involved in the study of the contemporary economy of Lawonda. It sheds light on the causes behind the increasing use of money. It also shows the interactions between the traditional economic order, including its morality, and the market-economy prevailing in the large scale setting to which Lawonda belongs. I present two ways of looking at the history of Sumba in this chapter. The first way is the local history as it is told by older men in Lawonda today. The pedigrees of their own kin groups are the framework of their stories about the past. The second way is the historiography, as it is found in the books of colonial administrators, missionaries and traders. These books reflect the outsider's point of view toward the developments that took place on Sumba.

The second subject of this chapter is social organization. Knowledge about traditional social organization is required if one wants to understand the local historical tales. In chapter three, I stressed the importance of social relations in the Uma-economy. The kind of relationship between two people determines how they should behave toward each other, which goods and services they can exchange, and what terms of exchange are appropriate. The traditional social organization is arranged according to kinship and alliance relations, and shows a stratification according to social rank. This pattern of organization has existed for generations and continues to serve as a basis for the contemporary inhabitants of Lawonda to distinguish between groups of people.

Due to the historical developments on Sumba, especially the emergence of the State and the introduction of Christianity, alternative lines of social organization have arisen. They are important for the Uma-economy of Lawonda and are described in the last part of this chapter. The different options for social organization constitute part of the Lawondanese *repertoire of options* in the sense that these alternatives facilitate new choices for economic actions. People are no longer confined to the rules of proper behavior of kinsmen. Contemporary Lawondanese can act as "Indonesian citizens", free to earn money and open a bank account, or as a "Protestant Christians", and slaughter fewer buffalo at funerals than they should have had they been acting as good Animists.

The people of Lawonda are the actors who give shape to their Uma-economy. The Uma-economy is their way of living and is largely based on what people in Lawonda refer to as "our old ways", yet at the same time, this includes the local responses to change.

### **Reconstructing pedigrees: indigenous history and traditional social organization**

The forefathers of the Lawondanese did not write. They told their tales about the ancestors in long poems of ritual speech, and each generation conveyed these stories to the next. The story that people in Lawonda tell today consistently begins with the arrival of the ancestors on

Sumba. The ancestors are said to have crossed seven seas and seven islands and at last landed on Sumba at Tanjung Sasar<sup>1</sup>. From there, they decided to sprawl over the island in groups.

The first group of people that settled in Lawonda were the descendants of Umbu Pay. Lawonda at this time must have been a paradise for wild boar and deer; there was plenty of food for them in the woods that covered the hills and the deer could run and graze in the plentiful grasslands. The hilltop in the middle of Lawonda that was so high it had an open view to the four winds of heaven. Even the sea on the north side of Sumba was clearly visible from the heights, with the island of Flores on the horizon. This was the hilltop selected by the descendants of Umbu Pay to be the first permanent settlement of Lawonda. They built their houses on top of the hill and enjoyed the view for its beauty and for the strategic advantage of revealing all dangers from afar.

Then the story stops. People who now live in Lawonda no longer remember the complete pedigree back to the first settlers, nor do they recall the events that happened centuries ago. In the oral history as it is told by old men in Lawonda, I consistently found three main subjects:

(a) history of the clan, beginning with the first forefather who landed at Tanjung Sasar and who has been the clan-*Marapu* even since. This part of history is important for people living now, because it is the start of a long sequence of forefathers ending with the living relatives. The line of descent is a major factor determining claims on leadership within the *kabihu* at present.

(b) history concerning the area with special attention given to the sequence of arrival of the clans. The clan that arrived first is the *mangu tanangu*, the lord of the land. This clan has the right to distribute land to the clans that followed. At present, authorities still refer to the argument of first arrival in the area and occupation of the land when settling land disputes.

(c) stories about war, raids, murder and various ways to acquire wealth. These acts of heroism are a testimony to the courage, cleverness, power, and importance of the ancestors, and a plea to respect their descendants.

The oral history relates to the events that matter most to the people in Lawonda today. As an example of this kind of historiography, I present the story of the people of Pangadu Jara, as reconstructed from the information I received from older men of the two *kabihu* on this settlement.

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<sup>1</sup> Myths can not be separated from history in this oral accounts. "Seven seas and seven islands" is a way of referring to Sumba as the home-island, because eight is the number of completeness (Forth, 1981:35; Onvlee, 1949:452). If several tales of different parts of Sumba are brought together, the list of islands from which the forefathers reached Sumba is longer than seven islands only: "Semanjung Malaka, Tanabara (Singapore), Riau, Java, Bali, Sumbawa, Sulawesi, Flores (Ende and Manggarai), Rote, Dao, Savu and Reajua (Kapita, 1976b:13).

The pedigrees of the two *kabihu* compose the framework for the stories. I present this "case of local history" in two parts. The first part concerns the period in which Lawondanese society consisted of autonomous *kabihu*. The second part relates to the growing influence of the State and effects of conversion to Christianity on the lives of the Lawondanese. To be able to follow these stories, one must understand traditional social organization, so I will describe this first to explain the local idiom of oral history.

### *Kabihu, Paraingu and Uma*<sup>2</sup>

The groups that sprawled over Sumba after their "journey over the seven seas", are called *kabihu*. The *kabihu* is usually defined as the "patrilineal exogamous descent group" (Onvlee, 1973:23, Forth, 1981:269), and is translated as "clan". More precisely, a *kabihu* in Lawonda includes all patrilineally related descendants, that is sons and brothers, unmarried daughters and sisters, as well as all in-married women (Geirnaert, 1992:18). The *kabihu* is connected to a distinct founding father who was the leader of the group that settled in a specific part of the island. Consequently, these territorial domains are used to indicate distinguished clans. Each *kabihu* worships the first forefather as *Marapu*, a divine spirit who acts as an intermediary between the living and the almighty God. The living include not only the human beings living now, but also those links in a long chain of humans beginning with the first divine ancestor. In the old indigenous perception of the Lawondanese, all activities are in some way a contribution to the ongoing existence of this chain of people. The visible part of this chain can be found in the *paraingu*, translated by Keane (1990) as "villages"<sup>3</sup>.

The people of Lawonda used to build their houses on the tops of strategic hills. The first settlements are the *paraingu bakul*, the Great Villages. These hilltop settlements consist of several homes built around a plaza and in the middle of the plaza, stone tombs determine the look of the *paraingu*. The size and shape of the tombs indicate the social status of the people buried there. At one side of the plaza, there is another inconspicuous stone, the *katoda*. This is the altar where rituals of the *Marapu* religion are performed.

There are specified sites for houses in the Great Villages. The peak roofed houses are called *uma*. Each *uma* in a Great Village has a name and a corresponding ritual specialty (Keane, 1990: 49), e.g. *uma adung*, the house for the harvest rituals, and *uma bakul* where marriage

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<sup>2</sup> In this paragraph, the dissertation of E.W.Keane is a helpful source of information. Keane conducted his research during the period I lived in Lawonda. His research area was Anakalang, situated south of Lawonda.

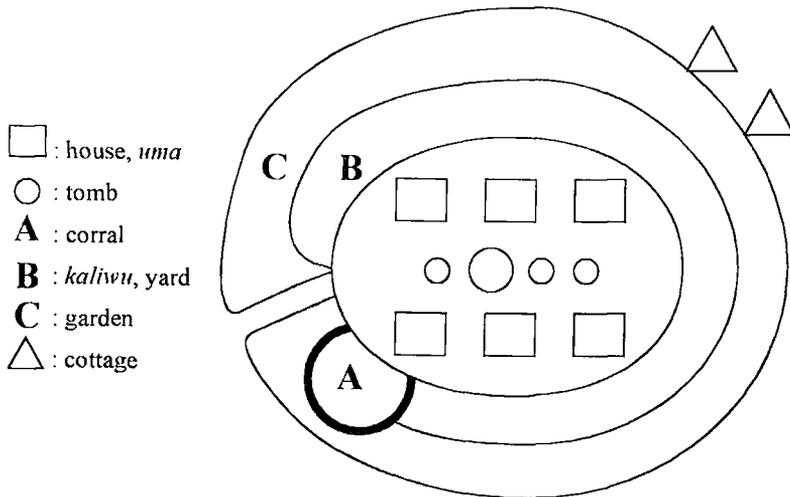
<sup>3</sup> Translating *paraingu* to "villages" is confusing. Only in the section on traditional social organization do I use this translation, following the idiom of the description by Keane (1990). In the rest of this book, I use the local word *paraingu* to refer to a traditional Lawondanese settlement. The word village is associated with larger entities of human settlement, and is often taken as the translation of the Indonesian *desa*, a relatively new administrative unit on Sumba that comprises many *paraingu*.

negotiations take place. Together the houses constitute a totality of which the parts are interdependent. *Uma* also stands for a social group. Confusingly, an *Uma* is often called *kabihu*, though this is actually the whole clan to which several *Uma* belong. Wherever I use the concept in the sense of this social group, I write *Uma*, whereas *uma* refers to the physical structure of a house (cf. Geirnaert, 1992:16).

The founder of the *uma* is also the founder of this social group as a new, distinguishable sub-lineage. The founder will be worshipped ever after as the deified ancestor, the *marapu*, of the house. Founding a new *Uma* is considered as the ultimate proof of high social status (van Wouden, 1956:213).

The members of a *kabihu* that share the same ancestral *uma* do not necessarily live in that house. The Great Villages have branches called common villages or *paraingu*. The *paraingu* are built in the same shape as the Great Village yet they differ in the sense that they do not have the ritual functions. These are the houses inhabited in daily life. The common *paraingu* are often situated in more practical places: close to a spring, to the paddy fields, or to the main road. The map of each *paraingu*, the great and the common, shows the same plan. One finds the plaza with the tombs in the center, and around the plaza are the houses. In the next circle, shaded by various fruit trees, is the corral for the buffalo and the *kaliwu*, the garden of each house where vegetables and herbs are grown. In the following circle, from the hilltop down, one finds the dry agricultural fields, the *mangu*. Here the main food crops of maize, cassava, dry rice, beans and taro are grown.

Figure 4.1: The plan of a *paraingu*



As the number of inhabitants in the *paraingu* increases, the fields around the *paraingu* become insufficient to provide all the food required by its people. New gardens are turned in a wide circle around the *paraingu* and cultivated for a few years using a method of shifting cultivation. If these gardens are far away, garden hamlets are built. The hamlets consist of small houses or cottages for temporary living, though some are continuously inhabited.

The descendants of the ancestor who founded the *Uma* disperse from the *uma* to houses in the branch *paraingu* and the garden hamlets. They may also move to houses close to the main road or even to houses in town. Yet, wherever they live they remain part of the *Uma* from the ancestral house. This is an important distinction to remember when considering units of the local economy: the units relevant in the local model of the people of Lawonda are not geographically restricted to the area of Lawonda.

Original branch villages can gradually become Great Villages, or at least function as Great Villages. A Great Village is distinguished from branch villages or garden hamlets by "the possession of house sites (*yili uma*), altars (*katoda* and *adung*, the harvest altar), stone tombs (*rati*), plazas (*talora*), ancestral rice fields (*talaka marapu*), and ancestral valuables (*tagu marapu*) (Keane, 1990:43). The meaning and importance of the Great Village changes, especially for those people of Lawonda who have abandoned the *Marapu* religion. The altars are no longer used. Religious ceremonies now take place at home or in the Catholic or Protestant churches. What remains is the Great Village's importance as the place for large ceremonies, such as weddings, as the place to bury the deceased elders, and finally as a continuous reminder of one's history and descent. The latter function is very important for claiming land: only by tracing history can one claim the right to a certain plot of land. The *paraingu* Pangadu Jara is now called a Great Village by its inhabitants and their offspring. It seems that the presence of permanent stone tombs and houses is enough for a *paraingu* to perform the functions of a Great Village that are still considered relevant.

People in Lawonda address the traditional social organization in terms of *kabihu*. In the context of exchange relations, I described how the Lawondanese distinguish between "us", "no others" and "others". Traditionally, fellow *kabihu* members belong to "us", whereas members of other *kabihu*'s or "no others" have a clearly defined relationship as either (potential) bride-givers or bride-takers. The prohibition of endogamy within the home *kabihu* postulates a good relationship with "no others". Once the relationship between two *kabihu* is established, it is consolidated by new marriages along the same line. The preferential marriage in Lawonda is the cross-cousin marriage. This means that a boy should preferably marry the daughter of his mother's brother. If this is the case, the *paraingu* of his wife is a special resort for him in two ways. It is the residence of his parents-in-law who are respected and feared because of the material claims they can impose on him. It is also the village of origin of his mother, and therefore the residence of his "blood-companions". In this respect, it may be his refuge in times of trouble, his table when there is nothing left to eat, or the place to find care in times of

serious illness. Therefore, the relations with (marriage) allied *kabihu* are important for social security.

By contrast, "others" are people with whom one cannot trace any relationship in the past or present. These are strangers from other areas on Sumba and all other ethnical groups.<sup>4</sup> This distinction between "us", "no others", and "others" is especially important in exchange. In chapter 3, the matter of social distance is discussed as a factor for determining the rules of transaction.

### *Noble and slave*

There are different rankings of people within the kinship groups. According to Oemboe Hina Kapita (1976), there are three ranks in Sumbanese society: nobility or *maramba*, freemen or *tau kabihu*, and slaves or *ata*. The most distinct ranks are those of nobility and slaves. The freemen are considered the residual group. The three ranks are found within the single *kabihu*, although "most people maintain that all persons were initially of the same rank. Slavery originated when some fell into debt and were redeemed by others, which implies that slavery and nobility came into existence simultaneously" (Keane, 1990: 78). There were two categories within the rank of slaves: the *ata ndai* who have lived in the house of their lord for generations, and the *ata bidi*, who were bought, exchanged or captured. *Ata ndai* are the companions of their lord, and the *ata bidi* are his or her human work force. At birth, a high noble boy or girl obtained a slave boy or girl as a companion. In daily life, the high nobility is referred to with reference to the name of their slave: *Umbu nai Hula*, the lord of Hula. Slaves generally did not have personal rights and they were said to have no honor (Keane, 1990:77). Usually, the slaves were not treated poorly but their lords could do whatever they wished: feed them, find them a wife and pay their bride-price, travel with them, but also sell or kill them.

Slavery is now officially regarded as a phenomenon of the past, making people in contemporary Lawonda typically vague with issues concerning slaves. Slavery has been legally abolished by the Indonesian government and this is a reason why people no longer refer openly to someone as a slave. Another reason is that most people who are descended from slaves live a fairly independent life today, with their own cottage and working their own garden<sup>5</sup>. The few who still live in the house of their lords are called *tau ta uma*, "person in the house". For the people residing in their own house or cottage, the word client is now more appropriate than

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<sup>4</sup> Keane also found three possible relationships between Anakalangese. With more scholarly expressions he categorized them as; (a) partners in shared identity, (b) complementary matches, and (c) enemies (Keane, 1990:84).

<sup>5</sup> They do not really own the land of their garden, which is considered as common property of the *kabihu*. The leaders of the *kabihu* have divided the land for use among its members.

slave (see chapter 5). This is because the lords are no longer able to dispose of their subordinates in whatever way they wish<sup>6</sup>. According to my estimation, about 10 percent of the inhabitants of Lawonda are presently regarded and treated by the Lawondanese as members of the lowest social rank.

The highest rank, the *Maramba*, can be divided into two: the *maramba bokulu*, the high nobility, and the *maramba kudu*, the common nobility (Kapita, 1976:41). Nobility is, in the first place, determined by blood. The mother has to be of noble rank, because the Sumbanese believe that blood is passed on to the child only from the mother (Keane, 1990:66). Yet nobility manifests itself by wealth and influence, and this second characteristic is the difference between high and common nobility. The nobility could always be recognized by the presence of their slaves. A nobleman would personally refrain from physical labor, and would have people to represent him on nearly all occasions. A "real *maramba*" must show his wealth by being generous in helping his subordinates. He must organize large feasts at his home and acquire and maintain influence in society. Influence was formerly enlarged by marrying several wives from different *kabihu*. In this way, the members and the territories of these *kabihu* would be included in his area of influence.

Noblemen in the old Sumbanese society formed a pair with the highest religious authorities, the *ratu*. Both categories represented authority: temporal power was in the hands of the *Maramba*, and spiritual leadership was controlled by the *ratu*. At present, *ratu* as real authorities no longer exist in Lawonda. A few, very old men are still respected and feared because they used to be *ratu*, but they are generally treated as a relic from an ancient time. Yet in those ancient times, when the majority of the population were active Animists, the *ratu* were very important men. They guided the people not only in religious matters, but also in very practical activities. For example, it was the *ratu* who determined the auspicious moments for sowing crops and for consuming the products of the harvest.

*A case of local history: the story of the people of Pangadu Jara (part one)*

This is my reconstruction of the history of the two *kabihu* of Pangadu Jara. It is based on the information I received from several older men who live in Pangadu Jara.<sup>7</sup> The story begins

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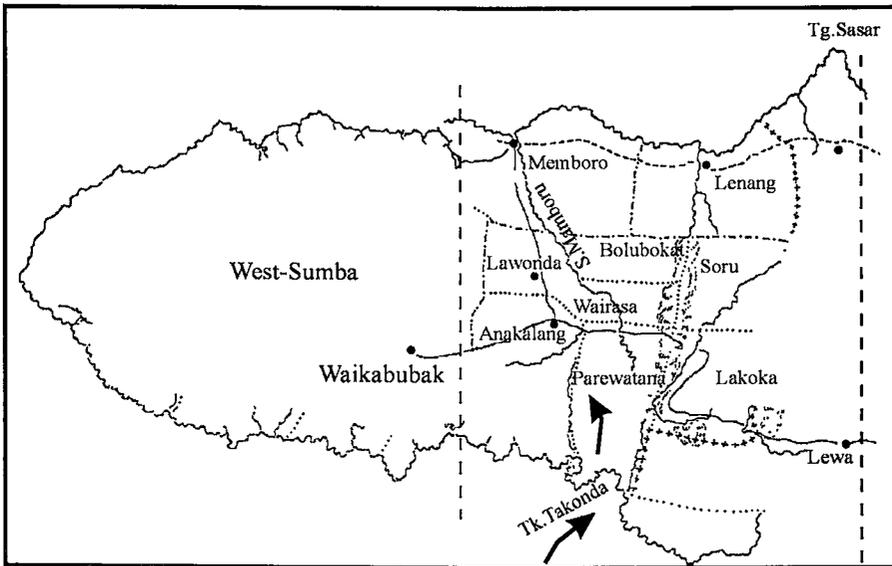
<sup>6</sup> Officially there is protection by the Indonesian government for all its citizens against murder or captivity. Yet in the area of Lawonda, the actual potential of police protection is very small. Moreover, putting oneself under police protection is a bad option, because they treat people of low status poorly. This option is then the last resort for people whose only alternative is to be killed by their local enemies.

<sup>7</sup> I also asked older women to tell their histories. The female accounts of history revealed a pattern that is quite different from the male versions of oral history. If women in Lawonda tell about their ancestors, they refer much more explicitly to their mothers and grandmothers. This results in descriptions of geographical traces, starting in the present with the *paraingu* of the husband, back to the *paraingu* of birth, which is the settlement of her

with an account of the founding father of the *kabihu* and his position in the sequence of the arrival of *kabihu* in the area.

Umbu Pay was the first ancestor of the *kabihu* Wai Maki in the historical tales of the people of Pangadu Jara. He landed on the south coast of Sumba (see figure 4.2). He was very afraid of the sea, and one day he threw his spear into the breakers to frighten the waves. To his utmost terror the waves caught the spear, and as would an enemy in battle, turned it around and threw it back at him. Umbu Pay and his wife retreated to the mountains. They hid themselves in a cave far away from the sound of the sea.

Figure 4.2: West-Sumba



mother's husband, and then onward to the *paraingu* of her grandmother's husband, and so forth. I found these accounts very difficult to follow and even more difficult to register, because with each generation in this female line, there is a different *kabihu*, a different geographical setting, and a different community involved. Yet, within the scope of research on indigenous views of history, female accounts would provide a very interesting and different perspective. For my research, the accounts of men provide more relevant background information, because their stories are connected to the specific geographic area on which my research concentrates.

One day as they were living in the cave, Umbu Diang (the ancestor of the clan of the later *raja's* of Lawonda) passed by. He was hunting for wild boar, and his horse and dog were very thirsty. As Umbu Pay and Umbu Diang met, they started teasing each other. Umbu Pay did not allow Umbu Diang to give water to his dog or horse because he said that it was holy water. Umbu Diang then stabbed the cave with his spear and its wall spit water until the cave was completely filled. This spring, one of the most important springs of Lawonda, became known as Wai Maki. Umbu Pay and his wife were forced to move and finally settled on the hill called Bondo Au.

Although it is clear from the story of Umbu Pay and Umbu Diang that the ancestors of Wai Maki were the first to set foot into the area of Lawonda, it is also generally accepted that Wai Maki was the first *kabihu* to settle there. Bondu Au is seen as the first real settlement where the people of Wai Maki lived and where they worked the fields and kept their cattle. They were considered the *mangu tana*, the ones allowed to decide about the use of the land, and from whom people belonging to the clans that immigrated to the area had to ask permission in order to settle and cultivate.<sup>8</sup>

The living members of *kabihu* Wai Maki do not remember the complete pedigree back to the era of Umbu Pay. The next part of their history begins about a century ago. This period covers four generations counting back from the present young adults. This part concerns the founding of *paraingu* Pangadu Jara and the composition of its community, which traditionally consists of two *kabihu*. It details the pedigree at one of Umbu Pay's great-great grandsons, Umbu Siwa Goga.

Umbu Siwa Goga decided to start his own household outside of the house of his father in Bondu Au, and so built a new house on the top of a nice hill to the south. This was an excellent "place for watching the horses", *pangadu jara* in the language of Lawonda. Because it was safer to live in a *paraingu* of several houses than to live alone, he asked his father-in-law to build his house close to Pangadu Jara. Umbu Lowu, his brother-in-law, moved to this house. From then on, the *paraingu* consisted of two parts, inhabited by people from two *kabihu*. It was referred to in ritual speech as *prai lawouru maja, pangadu jara moni*, "the settlement with slight slopes, the place to watch the stallions"<sup>9</sup>. By the time the two *Uma* formed a pair, the inhabitants were already cooperating. Umbu Siwa Goga gave an area of dry land to the east and two patches of wet land just below the *kampong* to his brother-in-law's *kabihu* Keriyengu. All the low land from the spring Wai Maki down and to the north beyond the *kampong* Pangadu Jara was Wai Maki land.

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<sup>8</sup> For the pedigree of Wai Maki and Keriyengu see the annex.

<sup>9</sup> For Sumbanese "social action seems to require that all possible relationships be reduced to dyads" (Keane, 1990:84) This is reflected in ritual speech: every subject is referred to in pairs, which contain an opposition. In this pair of lines that refer to the *kampong*, the opposition is between female and male, between bride-giver and bride-taker.

The story then follows the generations down the pedigree. The period of the grandfathers of the men who told me these stories is recalled as one of fame and glory, and it illustrates how these attributes were gained in the era of warfare:

After Umbu Siwa Goga had passed away, Umbu Rehi became the leader of *kabihu* Wai Maki. Umbu Rehi did not like agriculture and he had his own way of taking care of his family. He was a notorious robber and murderer, and his infamy gave him power. He was able to take other people's cattle from their field or even from their stable, without opposition. He used the stolen horses and buffaloes to pay bride-prices to other *kabihu*'s, and in this way he obtained four wives. He also exchanged stolen cattle for food. When he met opponents he either killed them or captured them for sale or use as slaves. When his oldest son was about ten years old, around 1910, Umbu Rehi was murdered by people from a *kabihu* of the northern part of Lawonda; this was an act of revenge for the lives of their *kabihu* members which he had taken.

Here I interrupt the story of the people of Pangadu Jara, because in the next episodes the State, and later the missionaries, begin to influence life in Lawonda. Now, we turn to the overview of historical events on Sumba taking place on the scale of the entire island.

### **The history of intervention**

Descriptions of events that happened on Sumba long ago tell a history of the island as seen through the eyes of outsiders. There were traders who marked a "sandal wood island" on their maps because they were interested in exploring new areas for commodities which could enhance their profitable trade. There were colonial administrators who saw Sumba as a potential base for other foreign powers, or as an island inhabited by people threatening the safety of (foreign) traders. There were Christian missionaries who saw Sumba as an area in which they had to spread the Gospel and introduce new norms and values to the population. The traders, bureaucrats and missionaries were the ones who wrote books and papers about Sumba, each for their own purpose. They provided the written material that serves as a source of historiography. Sumba is treated in these writings as a part of the world -the physical world, and the world economic system-, for the purpose of comparing the situation on Sumba with situations elsewhere. Accordingly, the second version of the history of Lawonda is that of intervention.

#### *The pre-colonial era*

The first written evidence of Sumba's existence is provided by the map of Pigafetta, a Portuguese sailor. It dates from the year 1522 and shows a small island called *Chendan* west of Timor. This name means "sandalwood" and indicates that Sumba was known by the traders

only for its forests as a reservoir of valuable sandalwood, ebony and *kayu kuning*. Before the sixteenth century, trade existed between people from Sumba and traders from other islands. The main items in this exchange were wood, leather, dried meat and dried fish. The Sumbanese received cloth, cups and plates, bracelets and beads, knives and choppers, et cetera, from other islands. The slave trade was initiated by traders from Flores in the sixteenth century. Slaves became primary commodities in inter-island trade, and the consequences of this trade in the inner part of Sumba were very important. Every Sumbanese who dared to leave the area of protection provided by his fellow clan members could be captured and sold as a slave. Traveling and living separated from larger settlements was therefore very unsafe. The slave trade also encouraged warfare between *kabihu*, because war captives could be used as slaves and now could also be sold as such.

In the seventeenth century, this vulnerability to war became the main reason why traders, and later the colonial administration, were not willing to occupy Sumba permanently and take advantage of trading opportunities. There always seemed to be wars between the Sumbanese *kabihu*.

Let me elaborate on the reason for internal warfare, because it reveals why trading opportunities were limited for the local population, and because it expresses part of the economic morality which can still be found in Lawonda. Kapita states that the forefathers of the Sumbanese originally decided to live in harmony with each other, *bersatu di dalam persekutuan persaudaraan dan bersemenda*<sup>10</sup> (Kapita, 1976b:14). Yet, on the same page he states that the *kabihu* were accustomed to building their settlements on hilltops to insure their safety from attacks by "enemies from inside or outside". The forefathers' intention to live in peace with each other apparently did not last very long, and the different *kabihu* that settled in an area lived as a distinct tribe. One of the characteristics of tribesmen is that through lacking institutions to maintain law and order "they live in a condition of War. "War does not simply mean "battle" but a general disposition and the right to fight when necessary" (Sahlins, 1968:5). Kapita argues that the main cause of internal warfare was exchange with foreign traders. These traders brought rifles and gunpowder and in this way they stimulated battles between the Sumbanese tribes. This could not be the cause of warfare, because the Sumbanese showed an interest in receiving the arms and were willing to exchange something for them. However, it is quite imaginable that the opportunity to obtain arms broadened the scale and severity of the warfare that already existed. The main "products of warfare" were captives, and these were sold to traders from Ende (Flores). To fight wars was a means for *kabihu* leaders to strengthen their position as leader. To have a common enemy unites the members of the *kabihu*; and they will fight to defend their honor and territory and become distracted from

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<sup>10</sup> "united by the bonds of brotherhood and affinity"

internal quarrels and disputes. The figure who leads his people to victory will be (temporarily) regarded as a hero and will enjoy ample support.

A second important reason for endemic warfare is the material cause. There is a specific limiting factor in each region. This can be arable land, hunting ground, or even forest land, in which the availability of wild fruits or food is limited. Although local populations often mention other reasons for warfare - fights over women, or revenge for previous killings- "warfare ultimately results from competition between groups for prime agricultural land" or other scarce resources (Johnson, 1989:69). Wars between the *kabihu* on Sumba always resulted in capturing people and selling or keeping them as slaves, and in robbing foodstuffs, cattle, and chickens. The material need that stimulated warfare was the need of food. Food was in short supply not because of a lack of agricultural land, but usually because of a shortage of capable labor to work on the land. Laboring on the land continues to be regarded as poor people's work. "The end of the dry season had been the traditional season for head hunting (known locally as *wulla kambohi* or "the months of fear"). Thus, war parties were often motivated by real needs of subsistence as well as desires for revenge when raiding highland villages" (Hoskins, 1989:427).<sup>11</sup>

#### *The colonial era: of traders and advisors*

The Dutch United East India Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, VOC) was the governing institution in many parts of Indonesia during the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1655, the VOC appointed its first official representative (*Opperhoofd*) in Kupang, Timor, with the task of controlling trade in the area of Timor and its surrounding islands. Occasionally, there was contact between officials of the Company and people from Sumba, but generally Sumba was of no interest to the VOC. There were reports of trading opportunities on Sumba, especially for commerce in wood, slaves and cotton, but the general lack of security on the island was the convincing argument not to establish permanent trading activities. This period lasted until 1799 when the VOC ceased to exist and surrendered all of its possessions to the Dutch colonial government.

The Dutch Indian government never paid much attention to Sumba. Its main interests were to keep the islands out of the hands of other colonial powers. A British ship wrecked on the south coast of Sumba in 1838. The persons onboard were captured and sold as slaves and the cargo was raided by the local population. *Resident* D.J. van den Dungen Gronovius from Kupang was sent to Sumba at this point in order to investigate how the island could be made safe and governable. Gronovius sent one of his staff members, a man of Arab decent called

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<sup>11</sup> The novel by Johan Fabricius (1959), "De Heilige Paarden", provides a beautiful account of an endemic war on west Sumba. This book is based on the notes of reverent Wielenga. The main character of the book is an important ancestor of the people of Lawonda.

Syarif Abdurahman bin Abubakar Algadri, to carry out the investigations. Syarif returned to Kupang with a proposal to initiate horse trade with Sumba. Supported by Gronovius with FL 14,000 he started his trade, which soon turned out to be very profitable. In 1843, Syarif settled on Sumba close to the beach in a settlement that later grew to become the capital of the island, Waingapu. He was born a member of the family of the *sultan* of Pontianak and was therefore influential within the Islamic community of Ende, and soon Syarif became a very influential person on Sumba. He was a shrewd and clever person, very polite, civilized and pleasant. He could speak many languages, including Sumbanese, Timorese, English, Chinese and could understand Dutch very well. He gradually became so important that he acted as if he were the King of Sumba. To the Sumbanese he represented the Dutch Indian government -on his own initiative- and he levied taxes on every horse exported. He favored the Endenese, who were feared as slave traders (De Roo van Alderwerelt, 1906). In 1862, people from Ende were hired by the *raja* of Kapunduku to assist him in his war against the people from the mountain area and to sell the war captives as slaves. The *raja* from the mountain area asked the government in Kupang for help and they sent a warship that caught a transport of slaves to Ende. In 1862, 400 people from Savu were transmigrated to Sumba for the purpose of protecting the coastal area against raids from the Endenese. They were eager to move to Sumba because they received good arable land as compensation, and land was very scarce on their own island Savu.

In 1866, the first government official was put on duty on Sumba, *Kontroleur* S. Roos. He had three different tasks: (a) to receive reimbursements for the load of raided shipwrecks, paid in horses; (b) 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 according to Sumbanese adat), (c) to prevent slave trading, and, unofficially, (d) to keep an eye on the activities of Syarif Abdurahman. Roos was not to be the "ruler of Sumba" with these tasks: to the Dutch Indian Government he was a political agent, and to the *raja* he acted as an advisor while leaving them to govern their own areas.

Roos was the first government official who involved himself in the internal welfare problems of the Sumbanese population. In 1869, there was an epidemic of smallpox on Savu which caused the death of half the population on the island (Kapita, 1976b:29). When the disease spread to Sumba in 1870, Roos acted as vaccinator and saved many people from death. He was interested in exploring agricultural possibilities and so he started paddy cultivation (sawah) and imported horses from Australia. Troubles with the Sumbanese population -or more specifically with its leaders- started after Roos had left (1873) and was succeeded by other Dutch officials.

There was a great internal war, the *perang Mbatakapidu*, in 1874. One of the parties asked for help from the government in Kupang. The Resident gave his permission to recruit men from Savu to fight the *raja* of Mbatakapidu and also supplied a ship and guns. The Dutch government gradually increased its involvement in the internal affairs of Sumba. Syarif Abdurahman was called to Kupang in 1877 to justify his behavior; the *Kontroleur* had complained that Syarif's influence in Sumba was too great and too negative: he was stimulating

internal war as a result of his profitable involvement in slave trade. Three months after his arrival in Kupang Syarif died. In 1880, the house of the Dutch Kontroleur was surrounded and threatened by a violent group from the *raja* of Lewa-Kambera. This demonstrated the vulnerability of government representatives with limited authority. It was only because the central government in Batavia had not yet given permission for military intervention that the *Resident* in Kupang decided to offer a large reward for the one who handed over the *raja* of Lewa-Kambera. Yet, no one did so, and nothing happened. The *raja* died of old age in 1892. His successor started the war of Lambanapu, and in 1901 there was a rumor in Waingapu that this *raja* would capture the town within a month. This time, the Dutch colonial government provided military help. The action started with the defense of the inhabitants of Waingapu and was extended to include a search for the *raja* Lewa-Kambera. It took until 1907 to find the *raja* and his main companions. They were brought into exile on Sumatra, and were only allowed to return to their former area only after the pacification of the island was complete in 1912.

Before the war of Lambanapu, the Dutch Indian government had adopted a policy of non-interference regarding the internal affairs of Sumba. It confined itself to contact with, and advice to the local leaders, although it seemed that the Sumbanese did not give authority to advisors. The strongest local leaders were those who acted as real despots, whose power and prestige was clear from their war victories, the number of enemies they killed, and the size of their area of influence. According to the Sumbanese, the power and prestige of a leader is not primarily due to his personal capacities, but reflects that his *Marapu* was the most important one, and should be honored and feared by all people in the area (Couvreur, 1917). Couvreur (1917:209) argues that respect for the Dutch government's authority came only after it had clearly shown its physical prowess by resorting to violence in order to pacify the island.

Couvreur's analysis draws attention to the different styles of leadership. Although there have been many changes in administrative structures and rules on Sumba since the start of this century, tension between the policy of negotiating and advising on the one hand, and direct suppressive rule on the other, still exists in every arena of Sumbanese politics.

### *Colonial government on Sumba*

The war of Lambanapu, which began in 1899, is a landmark in Sumbanese history. The Sumbanese refer to the period before this war as *tana Sumba* (independent Sumba) and after the war as *tana Jawa* (the colonial period)<sup>12</sup> (Kapita, 1976b:46). The war of Lambanapu signaled the beginning of intervention by the Dutch colonial government. From 1906 to 1912, military actions intending to pacify Sumba took place all over the island. The pacification

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<sup>12</sup> *Tana Humba* literally means "The land of Sumba" and *tana Jawa* means "the land of strangers". The translation above is made by Kapita.

included four major policy measures: (a) the release of slaves and prohibition of slave trade, (b) prohibition of internal warfare, and the decree that all guns and arms must be handed over to the government, which in turn instituted its own monopoly of violence, (c) obedience by the people of other government orders, such as to assist in road construction, and (d) to comply with taxes levied by the government (*amahu hilu katiku*, "money for a head"). Local government officials were appointed and, in fact, the same system of government still applied, with the only difference being that the *raja* were now subordinate to the central colonial government. The *raja* had lost warfare as the means to demonstrate and consolidate power, but taxation was a new source of suppression used to the benefit of the *raja* and his family.<sup>13</sup>

In 1912, Sumba was classified by the colonial administration as one *Afdeling* consisting of four *onderafdelingen*, each containing four or five *landschappen* roughly following along the ethnolinguistic divisions on the island (Keane, 1990:40). In 1922, the government decided to unite the *onderafdelingen* leaving only the division between west and east Sumba. The *raja* of Lawonda had always played an important role in local government, and following the pacification, Lawonda became a *landschap* of its own.

Figure 4.3  
Landschap Lawonda  
(1912-1930)

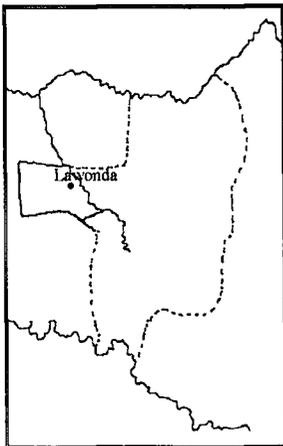


Figure 4.4  
Umbu Ratoe Nggai  
(1930-1962)

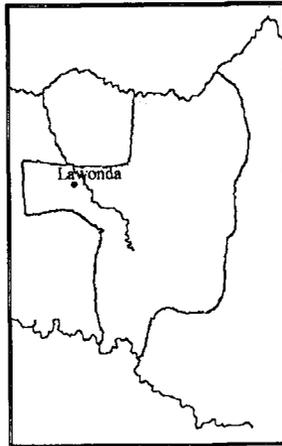
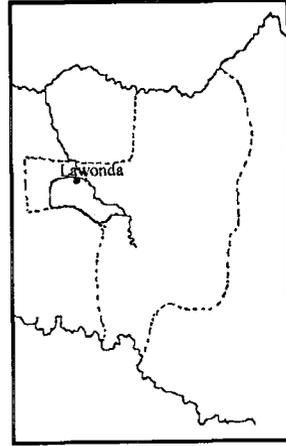


Figure 4.5  
*desa* Prai Madeta  
(1962- )



<sup>13</sup> People usually did not have money; then the local officials allowed them to give their contribution in kind. The monetary value the officials attributed to the goods was much less than what they would have received from selling the goods to traders. This same method of appropriating part of the local populations' wealth was still used in 1989 by government officials.

From 1915 tot 1930, several other *landschappen* were united with Lawonda, and this area received the name of the forefather who was considered Marapu for the population of the entire area, Umbu Ratoe Nggai. Head of this new administrative area was the *raja* of Lawonda, Umbu Siwa Sambawali. Each former *landschap* was also given its own assistant *raja* (*onderbestuurder*). This division lasted until 1962 when Umbu Ratoe Nggai was combined with Anakalang forming a new district, *Kecamatan* Katikutana. The original *landschap* Lawonda covered the same area as is presently covered by the *desa* Prai Madeta (referred to as Lawonda by the local population), *desa* Maderi and *desa* Pondok. The maps (figures 4.3 to 4.5) show these different areas.

### *Protestant missions on Sumba*

Concurrent with the increase of government influence, Protestant missions extended their area of influence to include Sumba. The mission of the Dutch Reformed Church (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland) started to work on Sumba in 1880. In Holland, the council for mission work of these churches followed the advice of the former Resident of Timor, and chose Sumba as their second working area after central Java. Reverend J. Van Alphen was the first missionary, arriving on Sumba in 1881. By that time, there were already two Savunese congregations. The island of Savu had been part of the Protestant missions' territory since 1870, and the new religion had spread to the Savunese immigrants who lived in the coastal areas of east Sumba. For many years, until the arrival of Reverend D.K. Wielenga, the Protestant missions worked only in the coastal areas among the Savunese population and the inhabitants of Waingapu. Only on occasion was there some contact made with the Sumbanese people. Parallel with the change in policy of the government from non-intervention to active governance, Reverend Wielenga opted to involve himself directly with the Sumbanese. In conflicts with other ethnical groups, he publicly chose the side of the indigenous Sumbanese population, while criticizing the government officials for being interested only in material gain. He regarded the Buginese and the Endenese as the greatest enemies, being slave traders and Islamics (van den End, 1987:94).

The relationship between the missions and the government was ambiguous. On the one hand, the missionaries were active supporters of pacification, since their own work was not very manageable in the situation of continuous warfare and general insecurity. On the other hand, they did not want to be identified with the government or the military. They wanted to gain trust, not power. In this respect, Reverend Wielenga never traveled in the company of government officials nor of military men. He never carried a gun and traveled with few companions (van den End, 1987:150-152). The government and the missions generally co-existed on good terms; sometimes on bad terms, most notably in cases where their work spheres overlapped. The work sphere of the Protestant church consisted (and consists) of formal and informal education, medical care, socio-economic work and the study of language and culture for purposes of translating the Gospel. Because of this involvement in constructing

welfare institutions, the people of Sumba generally have a positive attitude toward the Dutch, who are more associated with hospitals, churches and schools than with tanks, canons and warships.

*Part of modern Indonesia*

The Second World War was the next landmark after which many things changed on Sumba. It ushered in the period of "modern Indonesia". On Sumba, the government and the missions are together regarded as the driving forces in creating this identity of modern Indonesia.

During the war, all Dutch missionaries and government officials were taken prisoner by the Japanese and were unable to continue their work. After the war, the state of affairs was different. Roads, buildings, churches and hospitals had not been maintained and were thus in bad shape. In the absence of the Dutch, many organizations of the church had collapsed. The most important change however was the emergence of nationalism and anti-colonialism. Although nationalistic feelings were much stronger on other islands of Indonesia, and the Sumbanese population was not typically antagonistic toward the Dutch, general events in Indonesia substantially affected the situation on Sumba with regard to the government and church. In 1945, Indonesian independence was declared by its leader Sukarno. In 1946, the Protestant church of Sumba (*Gereja Kristen Sumba*) declared itself independent from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (*Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*, GKN).

These developments in the church were in accordance with the change in government from colonial to independent. Yet, the change did not end the role of the Dutch church and missionaries on Sumba. Due to the national political situation, it was no longer acceptable for Europeans, especially Dutch, to openly act as leaders. The local church was therefore encouraged to become independent in order to protect its right to exist in the case that all foreigners and foreign organizations were expelled from the country. In light of this, the missionaries officially adopted the new charge of simply being advisors.

All the years spent teaching and training the preachers and teachers had resulted in a indigenous cadre of people eager to take over from the colonial authorities. Yet, a great number of problems could not all be resolved at one time: lack of experience, lack of funds, and lack of organizational qualities. As a compromise between these contrasting tendencies, the context of the Dutch missionaries work changed. In the spiritual area of their work, they gradually stopped serving as reverends connected to particular congregations and subsequently concentrated on what they considered to be the general tasks of the church: teaching and training local church cadres, translation of the Bible into the Sumbanese languages and advising in organizational matters.

Responsibility for medical care and education, as well as the ownership of church buildings was handed over by the mission to two Sumbanese foundations. The GKN continued to send

financial and personnel support. Apart from these religious, medical and educational tasks, the missions favored giving more attention to socio-economic development work as the material situation on Sumba had deteriorated considerably following the second world war. The authority of the colonial government over various public works had ceased to exist, and had not yet been taken over by the new Indonesian government. The Sumbanese Christian Church appointed a Dutch lecturer on agriculture at the *Theologische Opleidingschool*, along with several technical experts, to assist and to train Church functionaries in building schools, churches, constructing roads and irrigation systems, and putting up a workshop for making agricultural tools and repairing machines. The agricultural training center in Lewa, *Pusat Latihan Petani Kristen*, began anew in 1967, this time having the triple function of training center, model-farm and center for agricultural extension services.

1965 was the year of a coup in Indonesia, and it marked the end of power for president Sukarno and the related communist sympathy. The communist party PKI was eradicated and many hundreds of thousands of adherents were murdered. Even on Sumba there was a hunt for communists. Many of the victims were young people who were only said to be communist, and some of these were accused simply because people did not like them anyway. The coup was followed by the period of the *Orde Baru* (the new order) of the Soeharto government. Government influence on daily life gradually increased, even in the remotest areas like those of rural Sumba. "Like the Dutch period, and unlike the Japanese and guided democracy periods, the new order sought to control rather than mobilize the population; it believed that the government's primary responsibilities to its subjects could be fulfilled through economic development and welfare politics" (Ricklefs, 1981:272).

Foreign policy of the government of Soeharto favored western countries and, subsequently, Indonesia began to receive impressive amounts of development aid in the early 1970's. The other major event in macro-economics was the "oil-boom", which caused enormous increases in oil exports. The revenues from this were spent on building schools and small village clinics, and on constructing roads and bridges. The increase of government influence could be felt in various other ways in the rural areas of Sumba. First, government services more often reached the village level through officials such as the agricultural extension officer (PPL). Second, the national campaign for family planning (*Keluarga Berencana*) began. Third, the process commonly referred to as *Golkarisasi* began.

*Golkarisasi* "implies that the state party of Golkar dominates the national, regional and local elections, and that the national *Panca Sila* ideology penetrates to the village level through the so called P4 (*P-empat*) indoctrination courses" (H. Schulte Nordholt, 1991:7). Golkar is short for *Sekretariat Bersama Golongan Karya*, the Joint Secretariat of Functional Groups. It functions as the political party of the government. All civil servants, including the village heads and teachers in the village school, are members of the national organization KORPRI (*Korps Pegawai Republik Indonesia*) under the control of the ruling Golkar party. One of the ways in

which Golkar creates and binds adherents is by actively promoting life according to the Guide for the Mental Experience and Implementation of the *Panca Sila* (*Pedomen Penghayatan dan Pengamatan Panca Sila*, or P4). Members of KORPRI must attend P4 refreshing courses at least annually. Additionally, every few years a P4 course is organized for the whole village community and all villagers are obliged to take part. In this way, Golkar is a very powerful, government funded institution used to secure top-down control over political life.



One meets the sign of *Golkarisasi* on Sumba in many shapes

In the period of the New Order, the missions gradually withdrew from the services taken over by the government: medical care, formal education, road construction, et cetera. Although most government officials on Sumba are Sumbanese Protestant Christians, most policy decisions are

not made by Sumbanese but rather by higher levels of the Indonesian bureaucracy on other islands. This implies that the content of the work has changed: at school, religious education is relatively less important than it used to be, whereas many school hours are now spent on issues of government ideology. In socio-economic work, especially with regard to agricultural extension and primary health care, the methods of the missions and of the government differ considerably. Government agents use a top-down approach in their task of bringing national (or regional) programs to the village. The GKS and the missions started a local development project in 1976 called Propelmas, *Proyek Pelayanan Masyarakat*. In contrast to government programs, Propelmas works "bottom-up", by identifying the needs and potentials of the local population as a first step.

Another major development in recent Sumbanese history is the enormous increase of members of the Protestant Christian church. Up to the 1970's Christians were a minority on Sumba. They strictly applied the rules as they were taught by the missionaries, anxious to distinguish themselves clearly from the Animists. From the end of the 1970's the number of Protestants began to increase. Today more than ever, it is considered backward and old-fashioned to be an adherent of the Marapu religion. Another stimulus for conversion is provided by the government which propagates that every Indonesian citizen should be adherent to one of the five recognized religions (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Catholic, Protestant). Nearly all government officials (and other educated people) are Christians on Sumba. In district politics, people are distinguished according to their religion: Catholic or Protestant. Political power, as expressed by number of GOLKAR seats in the district parliament, is divided according to the number of registered adherents to each of the churches. This has evoked a desire for the churches to find new members.

### **Changes in Lawonda**

The historical developments depicted above only partially affected Lawonda. Outside influence on Sumba entered from the coastal areas, but Lawonda is situated in the mountainous interior of the island. First contact with strangers came with the traders from surrounding islands. Real outside intervention in Lawonda's society started only after 1910, the year of pacification and prohibition of warfare in the area. The increase in safety was not as dramatic for the villagers as it was for the foreigners. There was not yet a police force or similar institution that could or would safeguard them while traveling in other *kabihu's* territories. They were not inclined to trade with the outside, since their own ways of exchange were suitable enough to provide what they needed. The most important consequence of pacification was that warfare was no longer a readily available means for indigenous leaders to show and consolidate their power. Other ways had to be found to get enough food for their subjects, to acquire enough labor, and

to prove their courage and masculinity, outside of taking the head of an enemy (Hoskins, 1989).

The obligation to pay taxes was an intervention with stronger direct consequences for the common local people. It forced them to find a means of obtaining money. Without money, taxes would be levied in kind, preferably in land or cattle, and the tax value determined for this means of payment was always very low. Differences in economic position between *kabihu* in Lawonda increased: the *kabihu* of the *raja* became very prosperous, while other *kabihu* gradually lost their paddy fields and cattle and fell in to poverty. The foundation of a school in Lawonda in 1914 was a very important event in the history of the area. In the beginning, there were only a few pupils and their number remained modest for a long time. Yet in looking back, the importance of the school was the entry to a new world. The school teachers lived in Lawonda subjecting their different way of living, their values and their beliefs to daily observation. Only a few families allowed their children to go to school, but those who did go told the new things they had learned to their relatives at home. The first government officials from Lawonda came from these families. They acquired good positions in the village and in the town, and provided their families with access to money, paid jobs and political power.

The second part of the story of the people of Pangadu Jara provides a good illustration of the changes in Lawonda. Above, I interrupted the story at the point where Umbu Rehi was murdered, around 1910.

*The story of the people of Pangadu Jara (part two)*

After Umbu Lowu passed away, Umbu Kota became the leader of *kabihu* Keriyengu. Umbu Lowu had given him full control over de *kabihu*'s dry land resources. The ancestral wetlands were divided between Umbu Kota and Umbu Lowu's son. Umbu Kota gained great influence not only within the *kabihu* -where he became the principal receiver of all bride-prices paid for the *kabihu*'s daughters-, but also in the wider area. He was appointed as *kepala leti*, a government official comparable to *kepala dusun* today. One of the sources of his power was his magical skills. These skills frightened people and enabled Umbu Kota to gather people's wealth without objection. He used part of his wealth to acquire more land. He exchanged food and cattle with Umbu Rehi for land, thereby giving *kabihu* Keriyengu ownership over more and more of the low land suitable for paddy cultivation. The other part of his wealth did not last very long. Many of the buffaloes died because of disease or were bartered for small amounts of food. Only 20 buffaloes were left when Umbu Kota died in 1965, and because in that year there was a famine, the sum of the remaining animals were bartered away for food.

For both *kabihu*, the story of the grandfather's period of leadership did not have a happy end. Both histories are used in Lawonda to illustrate that if wealth is acquired by theft or other illegal ways, it is "hot", and it will not result in lasting benefit. The following period, that of

the fathers of the men who live in Pangadu Jara now, is characterized by a decline in wealth and status.

Umbu Kota's oldest son was a notorious robber-chief. Yet, he would never be the leader of his *kabihu*, because he chose a woman from *kabihu* Wai Maki to be his wife. By doing this he offended the rules of marriage, because *kabihu* Wai Maki was supposed to be wife-taking and not wife-giving to *kabihu* Keriyengu. This son was expelled from the *paraingu* and lived in a garden house. He in turn had two sons. The youngest went to school because he was a clever boy, and he reached the second grade of the teachers' seminar. The other boy was not as bright, and after he married, he was allowed to build a new house in the *paraingu* from which his father was expelled. Here he cultivated the fields he and his brother inherited from their father.

Umbu Lowu's son was a silent young man and a good farmer. He voluntarily moved to a nice patch of agricultural land at the east side of Lawonda, close to the large river. While these two sons moved away from the *paraingu*, Umbu Kota continued to live there with his two wives and young children. One day his first wife decided that she would like him to take a third, younger wife, who could take over many of the women's tasks. The young girl selected was from the same Uma as the first wife and was closely related to her. The girl subsequently fell in love with one of Umbu Kota's slaves, and they had three children together. They never officially married, and thus their offspring occupy a lower position within the *kabihu* Keriyengu.

The two younger sons of Umbu Kota struggled to be recognized as their father's heir and become the leader of the *kabihu*. The elder of the two had the strongest claim because of his seniority, but the younger, being more industrious and calculating, had the advantage of relative wealth. Since the death of their father, they have been disputing each other over land, buffaloes, and whatever issue they find suitable for their continuing fight.

It was also a period of decline for *kabihu* Wai Maki. Umbu Rehi was killed when he was still relatively young and his sons were but small children. They were raised by their mothers. His father, Umbu Siwa Goga, was still alive though already quite old. He managed the agricultural activities of the *kabihu* together with his brother from *kampung* Bondu Au. Some paddy fields were cultivated by slaves, though they were eventually sold for "a bag of paddy husk" or killed after the work was done. Apart from slaves, women and children participated in growing food crops on the dry land. The people of Wai Maki managed to survive, but it was a period of great difficulty. Whenever the local government levied taxes, there were problems. There was no money in the *kampung* so they paid the tax with buffaloes: one buffalo was worth merely 25 cents according to the government. The *raja* was able to acquire many buffaloes in this way. Subsequently, because he had the buffaloes to use for trampling, his relatives and slaves started to work on the paddy fields that lay fallow. They simply took the land and considered it their own. In this way, *kabihu* Wai Maki lost much of their paddy fields, especially close to the spring Wai Maki.

In this account, the influence of the emerging State on village life in Lawonda becomes clear. Matters of local leadership are not internal *kabihu* affairs any longer.

Of all the sons of Umbu Rehi, Umbu Kauwa was the most notorious. He was a well known robber and killer, and even his own brothers were afraid of him. Although he did not own a single buffalo, he was able to marry six wives by either taking them without paying a bride-price, or paying the price with horses and buffaloes taken from other people's stables. To some extent times had already changed, and a leader of his type was no longer tolerated by the government. Because of this, he had to hide himself by living in caves now and again. He was caught several times by the police and imprisoned. Obviously, Umbu Kauwa was not acceptable to the local government as its representative in Pangadu Jara. Umbu Kauwa's oldest brother's son was appointed as *kepala RK (rukun kampong)*, head of the neighborhood, until this function was canceled in 1986. The title was replaced by *kepala dusun*, whose area of competence involved the larger area of two former *rukuns*. In 1963, Umbu Kauwa moved away from the Pangadu Jara and started a new *paraingu*. He built a main house and more importantly, buried the corpse of his long deceased father, Umbu Rehi, in this settlement. The children of his brothers were bereft of the protecting vicinity of their closest forefather by this act. He was not the only one who left the *paraingu*. All of the inhabitants of Pangadu Jara moved to another place when the whole *paraingu* burned down after being hit by lightning in 1967. The old *paraingu* was still considered "hot" and could only be inhabited again after a cooling ceremony. Umbu Kauwa's brothers founded new settlements or lived in temporary garden houses during this time.

Living outside the ancestral *paraingu* turned out to have its advantages. The younger people enjoyed living on their own and could be more independent from the older generation. Today, fights between young wives and their mother-in-laws, or between brothers living in the same house are often a reason to move. Living closer to the spring or river, and closer to the garden or sawah were other advantages of moving. Over the course of time, the dry land gardens had been shifted to places further away from the *paraingu*. This was because the gardens close to the hilltop settlements no longer yielded enough to feed everyone. Living close to the garden made it possible to effectively safeguard it from wild boar, monkeys and thieves.

In the memory of the people now living in Lawonda, changes in daily village life have occurred only since the 1960's. This memory is likely strengthened by the repetitive rhetoric of the government that initiated its presence at local level in that same period. Formerly, living in a garden house in this way would have been too dangerous but the security situation in Lawonda has significantly changed since this time. Slave trade, warfare and murder were prohibited by the central government and, if still occurring, the crime will be punished.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Of course, whether or not the government is asked for help in case of crime depends on the situation. In Maderi, a young man was murdered in 1986. He was a notorious horse-thief, who stole even from his own clan-members. One night he was caught in a trap set up for him and stabbed to death. This was never reported to the

Without the benefit of captive and slave workers in the fields, people had to become farmers themselves. The government also encouraged farming, especially rice farming, through programs which more or less forced people to cultivate paddy fields.

This brought about another problem for many people of Pangadu Jara- Prai Lawouru: they had inadequate numbers of buffalo to work the fields. The members of *kabihu* Keriyoutu started their own buffalo herdsman group. *Kabihu* Wai Maki opted to join the herdsman group, *kelompok pakeri*, of the village head. They had a good relationship with the village head as he had lived in Pangadu Jara for a time as a child to recover from a severe illness. Thereafter, he considered himself a brother, protecting his younger brothers when necessary and contributing in *adat* matters as a brother. As both parties became less wealthy, the relationship became progressively more symbolic and less practical. In fact, the people from Pangadu Jara felt exploited for having to work hard as herdsmen while receiving little in return. Recently, most of them stopped cooperating with the village head's herdsman group and joined the group of Prai Lawouru.

The 1960's was also the period for the foundation of the Protestant congregation of Lawonda. They introduced not only the new religion, but also the social organization of the church into village life.

The villagers were not the passive recipients of innovations from outside in these events. There were villagers who actively participated in the introduction of every new development, either motivated by conviction or by the feeling that the innovation concerned could benefit them in some way: entry to funds, power, or political support.

Gradually, the inhabitants of the old *paraingu* were scattered in new *paraingus* or garden houses. They no longer lived together as a group in daily life and conflicts arose between brothers. This effected their religious life, because formerly they were all adherents of the *Marapu*-religion, and practicing the rituals of this religion involves close cooperation and respect between fellow *kabihu* members.

Two sons of Umbu Kota were the first ones of Prai Lawouru who were converted to Christianity. One of them married a woman from the *paraingu* where the first teacher of the Christian school of Lawonda had lived. The other son and his family were attracted to Christianity through his son, who became familiar with the new religion at school. Umbu Kauwa and his sons were still active Animists. They practiced the rituals in Pangadu Jara and Maderi, the *paraingu* of origin for some of the wives. Gradually, being an Animist was associated by people in Lawonda with being old-fashioned and not willing to become a modern Indonesian citizen. The inhabitant of the main Wai Maki house of Pangadu Jara became a Roman Catholic in 1987. Many of his *kabihu* fellows followed after him.

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police, and silently everyone agreed this murder was a cruel but the best solution to end the intolerable practices of this young man.

### **Alternative lines of social organization**

The emergence of the church and the incorporation of Lawonda into the Indonesian nation state have created alternative lines of social organization. Alternative circuits of legitimation are available in the present Uma-economy. School children learn to see themselves as Indonesian citizens and not only as members of a certain lineage in this small area of West Sumba. The teachers stimulate them to classify other people as fellow Indonesians rather than "no others" or "enemies" as was common in Lawonda. Instead, the pupils are trained to classify according to religious adherence: those who have "not yet been converted", fellow Protestant Christians, or Catholics, the latter being the same as the "others". The normative and organizational frameworks of the State and the Church interfere with traditional social organization. They not only blur distinctions based on kinship, but also those of traditional stratification. Today, wealth is necessary and is used to pay for good education of the children. They will be able to obtain good jobs with this education, preferably in the government bureaucracy. There is consequently a "migration of nobility" to the urban areas. Their *umas* in Lawonda are inhabited and maintained by lower rank *kabihu* members as there is presently no high nobility living there. The last widely recognized noble was the uncle of the present village head. The character of his nobility was partly determined by the fact that the colonial government appointed him as *raja* over the area. His nephew, the village head, is more a *maramba kudu*. He still maintains a number of "persons in the house" and prefers to behave himself as a nobleman, but due to a history of forsaking his obligations and cheating he is not respected enough to be considered as a high nobleman. Less than 10 percent of the population in Lawonda is regarded as (common) nobility. Without slaves, they have problems in delegating their physical work and many "noblemen" are so impoverished that they must accept the "humiliation" of working on their own fields and growing their own food.

The change in religion has infringed upon the core of traditional Lawondanese society, the belief in the existence and powers of the *marapu*. The first divine forefather represented the common identity of the *kabihu*. The hierarchy amongst the living kinsmen was dictated by the *marapu*. Sanctions on bad behavior were imposed by the *marapu* who had the power to determine the fate of the living. People who have abandoned this belief completely are, to a certain extent, no longer tied to the traditional rules.

Conversion to the Protestant or Catholic church does not always imply an immediate change of values and norms. It usually initiates a situation where alternative options of legitimizing behavior with reference to either Christian values or to the traditional values exists. In chapter 2, Table 2.1, figures about religious adherence in *desa* Prai Madeta, Maderi and the two research areas are presented. According to these statistics, adherence to the "world religions" in *desa* Prai Madeta is nearly 90 percent and the village government is proud to be heading "such a progressive population". In Pangadu Jara, there is a relatively large number of

Catholics. There are three main arguments for individuals, if they want to become a Christian and must choose between the Protestant or the Catholic church. The first argument is that one prefers the religion of close relatives. Several of the married women of this *paraingu* were born in areas of Anakalang where many people were converted by Catholic priests long ago. These women brought their religion along to their new house in Pangadu Jara. A second argument in the choice is loyalty to patrons or leaders. The third argument concerns the costs of membership and it favors of the Catholic Church, as it does not ask large contributions from its members.

The majority of the population in *desa Maderi* is adherent to the *Marapu* religion. Yet, even in this village, which has the reputation in the wider area of being traditional, the number of Christians increased significantly during the later 1980's. Over half of the population in my research area Yami Pahuruk had become Protestant Christians by the end of 1989. Their number doubled in the period 1988-1989, due to the intensive conversion campaigns of the Sumbanese Protestant Christians who came mainly from the district capital.

The figures in table 2.1 also indicate that there is a considerable number of people who do not regard themselves as Christians. They are gathered in the category of *Marapu* adherents, although there are only a few people left in Prai Madeta and Maderi who actually practice the rituals of the *Marapu* religion. On the other hand, most of the converts still have some faith in the power of their forefathers and the spirits, though to what extent is hard to say. If belief in spirits, in *marapu* and *ndewa*, were to really vanish, the consequences for the economy would be great. If land is no longer basically the property of spirits and if the deceased elders cannot affect the living, then land can be privately owned. If possessions in general and livestock in particular do not have *ndewa*, a soul that is connected to the vitality of the owner, then they can be alienated without any trouble.

Categories of people are distinguished in terms of kinship and alliance in the traditional social organization of Lawonda. The government divides the population according to geographical criteria. The church does the same with its adherents, dividing them in the units of the church organization. In table 4.1, the units of social organization of the government and of the church are listed from the level of the individual in Lawonda up to the level of the island of Sumba. The Indonesian word and the name of each unit are added as well as an indication of the average number of people comprised within the unit.

In addition, I have listed the units of traditional social organization as a description of a similar hierarchy with regard to size of the units. The latter units cannot really be compared with the administrative and church units, because the traditional social units are not restricted by geographical characteristics.

A consequence of the alternative lines of social organization is that categories of "us" and "no others" and "others or enemies" can be defined in different ways. Protestant people in Lawonda nowadays speak about the "Christian family" and while thinking in these terms, they regard a Protestant Christian Savunese from east-Sumba as at least "no other". Their brother who has

Table 4.1 Units of social organization

number of people involved (indic.)	administrative units English/ Indonesian	name of example	units Protestant church English/Indon.	name of example	traditional social units
1	Indonesian citizen warga negara	Umbu Dena	member of congregation warga jemaat	Umbu Dena	Sumba-nese man or woman
7	household rumah tangga		household rumah tangga		Uma (small)
8-50					Uma (large)
100	neighborhood rukun kampung	Pangadu Jara			Paraingu
200			quarter "waik"	Dasa Elu	<i>kabihu</i>
350	quarter dusun	Wai Maki			Wai Maki
900			center of congregation Pusat jemaat	Lawonda	
1100	village/desa	Prai Madeta			(8 <i>kabihu</i> )
5000			congregation jemaat	Lawonda	
15,000			classis	Ana-kalang	
24,000	sub-district Kecamatan	Katikutana			
250,000	district Kabupaten	Sumba Barat			
400,000	two districts	Sumba Barat and Sumba Timur	Protestant Church of Sumba (about 200,000 members)	Gereja Kristen Sumba	Sumba
3.27 (mill.)	Province Propinsi	N.T.T.			

become a Catholic is regarded as belonging to "us" when thought of as brother, but belonging to the enemies while thought of as Catholic. This is confusing and facilitating at the same time. For people who have access to different circuits and who can identify themselves in different terms, the co-existence of alternative lines of organization opens various options for action. For example, the government line is used to obtain funds or services from the central government while the church line is used to gain political support or to make acquaintance with people in town. Yet, the old kinship line is used in matters of marriage. Dealing with the repertoire of options requires good skill in the "art of mixing", that is, in trying to get access to each line of organization and selecting the most promising one for action.<sup>15</sup>

For people in Yami Pahuruk Propelmas provides yet another line of organization. Since 1985, Propelmas has cooperated with Anakara, the women's group of Yami Pahuruk. Anakara is one of the many farmers' organizations that cooperate with Propelmas, and has therefore become part of a local network of farmers' groups throughout the area of the congregation of Lawonda. Sometimes, if there are workshops or people from afar visiting Anakara, it becomes evident that Anakara is a member of an even larger network of non-governmental development organizations. The staff of Propelmas has good access to the circuits of government and the church, and Anakara can make use of these connections. For example, seed-credit available at the department of Agriculture to be distributed in the district of west Sumba was channeled to Anakara through the connection with Propelmas.

The alternative lines of social organization described up to this point represent different, formal categories of people. The Lawondanese also differentiate between "rich" and "poor" people. This distinction is no longer equivalent or analogous to the distinction between noble and slave. The division of Lawondanese into categories of rich and poor, in the material meaning of these words, represents another type of social differentiation. In chapter seven, I will elaborate on this differentiation in Lawonda.

A last distinction that has recently become more relevant is between urban officials and the rural population. The urban area -although towns on Sumba are quite small and would give a spectator from Java the impression of being rural- is the domain of school, politics, and trade. The rural area is associated with the basic agricultural resources of land and livestock and their produce. Some people from Lawonda migrate: they move to town or find employment elsewhere, usually as a teacher in primary school. At present, the ideal of many young people in Lawonda is to become a government official or to get another job with a good salary. The long way toward reaching the desired status starts at school and education as a road to wealth is only accessible to the well-to-do part of the population. There have to be other people available to replace the school children's work force. There also has to be a means to invest in education. The expenditures for primary education are mostly paid by the parents. Yet, for

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<sup>15</sup> This side of the "art of mixing" is illustrated in "Umbu Hapi versus Umbu Vincent, legal pluralism as an arsenal in village combats" (Vel, 1992).

secondary school, where annual fees mount up to 100.000 rupiah per year at the SMP, a more permanent source of cash must be made available. In most cases, this source is found in the salary of a close relative with a paid job as a teacher or at an office somewhere in town. Once a network of relationships with "sources of cash" is established, carrying the costs of the children's education becomes a shared responsibility of the network's members.

Education has become part of the long term survival strategy of the rural population. Apart from the financial fantasies that seem to be the most important motives to attend school for pupils, education is also important for communication with the urban area. The higher schools are situated in town, as are all of the offices of the government, army and police. Boarding school children out to an urban household, means creating a solid relationship with the people of the urban area. In *dusun* Wai Maki, of which Pangadu Jara is part, the number of young adults who are still in school for secondary or higher education together with the ones who left the area to work as government officials or wage-laborers has mounted to about forty percent of the total number of youth between 15 and 30 years of age of this *dusun* .

The Lawondanese try to create and keep up social relations with urban dwellers. The networks that evolve in this way can also be regarded as alternative lines of social organization, and are very important in the contemporary Uma-economy.

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## From brothers to network partners

During a speech delivered at the festive occasion of the opening of Propelmas' new main building, the Bupati of west Sumba stressed his concern with the continuous occurrence of food shortages in the district. He praised Propelmas' activities designed to increase food production in Lawonda. He also stated that one of the main tasks of Propelmas' staff, according to him, was to teach the Lawondanese to use their time and labor more efficiently, because "most farmers in this area only work one hundred days per year".

With this last remark, the Bupati indicated his interpretation of work: a human occupation can only be regarded as work if it contributes directly to material production. Probably one should add that this direct link has to be clear and visible to the outside observer, in this case the Bupati himself.

It is not only the Bupati of west Sumba who has a narrow interpretation of work. The concept of work itself allows for many interpretations, as it includes the range of activities that varies from paid employment to subsistence activities, from production in large enterprises to physical reproduction of people and the reproduction of immaterial aspects of the home community (cf. Pahl, 1984:125). If we want to study how the members of a specific society use their labor and understand why their organization and division of work makes sense to them, the whole range of activities should be investigated, in their own historical, socio-economic context. In Lawonda, a narrow interpretation of work, such as the Bupati's, only feeds the caricature of lazy peasants, whereas it does not include many occupations that are also important for the reproduction of Lawondanese society. This chapter discusses the issue of work in the context of the Uma-economy.

There is no idiom in the Lawondanese language to translate the English word labor. Many words refer to work on the land and indicate all the different operations in cultivation. A

general definition of work, distinct from other human activities, cannot be expressed in local idiom<sup>1</sup>. There are just many tasks that need to be done, and together they can be called work.

In the Uma-economy there is no (price-)market for labor. Instead the organizing principle in the division of work is the social organization. Work is done by members of an *Uma* for their collective well-being. Each individual's task depends on his or her position within the social organization. The traditional division of tasks within the *Uma* is based on differences in gender, generation, and social status. The *Uma* cannot be equated with "household". The *Uma* is a social unit, and not always a co-residential unit, because its members do not necessarily share one and the same house. In the present day Uma-economy the inhabitants of one house make up a distinguishable sub-unit of an *Uma*, which they refer to with the Indonesian word for household, *rumah tangga*. However, one should be cautious not to attribute to these sub-*Uma*'s all the characteristics typically, and often implicitly, associated with households.

Organizing work within the *Uma* is part of this social unit's strategy to make the best use of resources under the given social and economic conditions. The primary concerns of the members of an *Uma* were and are to get enough food and to secure its continuing existence. The emergence and increase of rice cultivation, the abolition of slave trade, and the increasing need for money have affected the relative scarcity of land, livestock and labor. Today, there are additional requirements, such as money and industrially produced consumption goods, which cannot be produced by the *Uma*-members themselves. In such cases, cooperation with persons outside the *Uma* is required. In rice cultivation a new form of cooperation emerged in which buffalo services are exchanged for labor. Relations with "urban officials", people with a regular income in money, are established in patterns of networks for exchange of resources. Labor turns out to be not only a resource for production on one's own land, but also a resource for exchange: against land-use rights, use of buffalo herds, assistance in ceremonial obligations and, sometimes, against gifts of money. An example of strategic use of resources is presented in the case study of "the household of Boku Dena". It illustrates how the different units of social organization, *Uma*, *rumah tangga* and *kabihu*, and two forms of cooperation, the *kelompok pakeri* and the network for exchange of resources, play their part in the contemporary Uma-economy. The case study reveals that even relatively poor farmers can have good skills in the management of resources, and this is clearly demonstrated by the numerous exchange arrangements in which Boku Dena is involved.

"Making ends meet" is the title of the section, in which the case study is further analyzed and diagrams are presented to illustrate the different units involved in the case study.

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<sup>1</sup> This is not a particular feature of the Uma-economy only. Pahl (1984:18) refers to M. Godelier who "has reminded us that the words "work", "to work" and "worker" took on their meanings in our language at a certain period and it was not until the development of political science in the nineteenth century that the idea of work became a central concept".

## **Social units and the traditional division of work in the Uma-economy**

Social relations of production "refer to the access of different groups of people to productive resources, and hence to control over what they produce" (Ellis, 1988:46) In other words, social relations of production refer to the dominant way production is organized in societies over spans of time. Each person's task in food production, share in consumption and role in distribution depend on his or her position in the social organization, as distinguished according to kinship, rank, gender and generation. The traditional social organization in Lawonda even includes the deceased forefathers, the *marapu*, who are feared and worshipped and who influence the fate of their living relatives. When I use the word traditional to describe social units or the division of tasks, it indicates the main pattern of organization that has existed over generations and continues to serve as the basis for the contemporary inhabitants of Lawonda to distinguish between groups of people.

The basic units of traditional social organization are the *Uma* and the *kabihu*. In general, the Uma-economy is aimed at the perpetuation of the *kabihu-Uma*. This aim is best served when the *kabihu* flourishes: plenty of food, a large herd of cattle as potential to obtain wives, and many children. Weddings, funerals and construction or repair of the main house, the *uma*, are considered the common responsibility of the *kabihu*. Daily subsistence is a matter of each house -the actual dwelling- individually. In the present day Uma-economy, the household is the third basic unit. What a household is, and who are counted as its members, are not quite as obvious as it might seem.

People who share the same house constitute the "co-residential unit", and for statistical purposes this is usually equated with "household" (Wong, 1984:33). People frequently give this same meaning to "household" in the common speech of Lawonda, but sometimes they use the term when referring to a smaller social unit, as when people say that a house is shared by two households. The government's statistical definition is used when referring to tax paying units. Yet, given the type of houses in Lawonda, all single-family dwellings and no apartment buildings, it rarely happens that people say two households share the same house.

Co-residence seems to be the clearest characteristic of households (von Benda-Beckmann, 1990). The other features are neatly formulated in a description of a household<sup>2</sup> I encountered in a report on the position of women in agricultural production in Tanzania:

"A household is a self-sustaining, co-residential unit comprising persons who are usually related by family or marital ties. The persons who belong to the household contribute to its subsistence and

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<sup>2</sup> This description of a household especially refers to rural households in Tanzania. I have selected this description because it comprises the characteristics that were attributed to households in discussions with Propelmas' staff. A more general definition of the concept, is the UNO-definition referred to by Huesken (1988:115), which puts the "provision for food and other essentials for living" as the only constant characteristic of a household.

maintenance and share in the food that is produced and prepared on a household basis. It is a socially recognized unit headed by one person, either a man or a woman, who represents the household in village and community matters, and who controls its economic and social management. As a farm and productive unit, a household has access to land, the labor of its members and other resources for its subsistence and maintenance. Decisions concerning the organization of household production, including its agricultural production, are taken within this unit." (Aarnink and Kingma, 1991:11).

Although this definition is perhaps specific for the Tanzanian context, it gives a good summary of the characteristics that are often, consciously or not, associated with households. With these characteristics in mind, we can see which problems occur if the inhabitants of the sixteen actual dwellings in Pangadu Jara are taken as social units of analysis:

(a) co-residence was not constant in nine of the 16 houses during the 14 month period of research in this area. Some of the men temporarily migrated to other areas where they obtained access to paddy fields, while in most cases the old parents or the small children had no permanent place of residence, staying part of the year in one house and part in another. Yet, they were undoubtedly counted as members of the household.

(b) in four of the 16 houses, people who did not have kinship or marriage ties to the other inhabitants of the house were members of the household. Two of them were (former) slaves, and the other two were children from more distant relatives, accrued by the relatively richer households to strengthen their work force.

Household, in this book, refers to the group of actual inhabitants of a dwelling, usually a nuclear family and the old aged (grand-) parents, and in some instances the unmarried brothers or sisters of the male head of the household. This interpretation of household is similar to the meaning of *rumah tangga*, as used by the government for administrative purposes. An *Uma* consists of at least one, but usually more households.

There are two more deviations from the definition of household of Aarnink and Kingma which are especially important if households are used as basic units of the economy:

(c) the independence of the households is disputable. Although they are all counted as autonomous units by the government, in many cases they are represented or ruled by people from other households. For example, marriage negotiations are conducted by men appointed by the lineage elders and not by each household individually.

(d) the households of Pangadu Jara all have access to agricultural resources, but not equally. Decisions concerning agricultural and household production very much depend on the extent of control over resources. Control is not the same as ownership; control implies that one is free to decide about the use of the resource. There is a household in Pangadu Jara that actually owns paddy fields, but since it has pledged the fields, its members have lost control over them. With regard to land and buffaloes, the extent of control varies considerably. Decisions about

work on the paddy fields are generally taken by the owners of buffaloes. They decide on the sequence of trampling the fields and consequently about the other tasks<sup>3</sup> involved in paddy cultivation.

Table 5.1 Control over land and buffaloes among 16 households of Pangadu Jara

Control over:	number of households
dry land + wet land + buffalo	4
dry land + wet land	4
dry land only	5
no land or buffalo	3

The distinction between buffalo owners and buffalo-less is one kind of social differentiation which has great consequences on the use of labor. I will elaborate on this difference in the next section.

The older type of differentiation is found in the differences in rank and according to social position. Deciding about *kabihu* matters of common responsibility is the task of the highest rank. The *Uma* of a *maramba* comprises several houses: the main house, a branch house and one or more cottages in the fields. It is not easy to determine what is considered as a separate household, especially if the *maramba* is polygamous. Some of the tasks and responsibilities are collective, others are individual per dwelling. Table 5.2 illustrates the dependency or even unity of different entities in the *Uma*-economy. It lists the normative division of tasks in paddy cultivation.

In this table there are three types of households:

(1) the household of a nobleman, *Umbu*<sup>4</sup>, and his wife, *Rambu*, a son, a slave and a few unmarried girls. *Umbu* owns paddy fields and a few buffaloes.

(2) The household of a freeman, who owns some paddy fields but no buffaloes (between wealthy and poor); the household consists of father, mother, adult sons, adult daughter, and some small children.

<sup>3</sup> Tasks of men, because they are the members of the *kelompok pakeri*. Women's work in the paddy fields is performed separately but its schedule has to be coordinated with the men's work.

<sup>4</sup> Noblemen are addressed with "umbu", sir, and their wives with "rambu", lady.

Table 5.2 Division of tasks in rice cultivation operations in Lawonda

Task:	executed by in household number (1)			male or female
<b>Management tasks</b>				
selecting members <i>kelompok pakeri</i>				
deciding on turns within the <i>kelompok pakeri</i>	umbu	(father)	-	male
choosing a <i>kelompok pakeri</i>	umbu	-	-	male
decisions concerning land	-	(father)	-	male
getting seed	umbu	father	-	male
inviting labor assistance	son	father	-	male
distribution of harvest from the threshing floor	son	-	-	male
distribution of harvest from the house	umbu	father	-	male
storage of seed	rambu	mother	(mother)	female
repayment of debts in rice	rambu	mother	mother	female
selling rice (paddy)	son	father	father	male
	umbu\son	father	(father)	male
<b>Cultivation operations</b>				
sowing	son	father	-	male
preparing the soil	slave	son	father/son	male
construction of dikes	slave	son	father/son	male
uprooting seedlings	slave/son	father/son	father/son	male
transplanting	young women rambu +	mother/ daughter	mother/ daughter	female
cooking and serving meals at the paddy field	women old slave	mother	-	female
scarecrowing	son/slave	children	-	male
harvesting	slave	father/son	father/son	male
threshing	specialist	father/son	father	male
winnowing	specialist	father/son	-	male
gathering paddy in bags	slave	father	-	male
transporting paddy home	son	son	father/son	male
storing at home		father	father	male

(3) The household of people of low social and economic status. They do not own paddy fields or buffaloes. They work for others in exchange for part of the harvest. Composition of the household: father, mother, son, daughter and small children.

One can see from table 5.2 that the nobleman's household controls and performs all tasks in paddy cultivation. The third household's members participate in the execution of the work, but they have no part in the management of paddy cultivation. At the fields, the father from the third household cooperates with the son or slave from the first household. The second household can do most tasks by itself, but must depend on buffalo owners, such as Umbu of the first household, for the services of their buffaloes to prepare the fields. This is a strong dependency, not limited specifically to agricultural practices. The three types of households in Lawonda are linked to each other, and with regard to paddy cultivation, there are no small, completely independent units.

To some extent the households of the *Umbu's* depend on the dry land production of the poor people's households. If the *Umbu's* household is short of food, or needs a specific type of food, it takes part of the harvest of the poorer household as if it were common property.

The members of the poorer household are once again treated as if they were still the slave rank dwellers of the garden hamlets.

Table 5.2 illustrates the division of labor between people of high and low social rank. There are two other distinctions relevant for the division of tasks within the *Uma* and households in Lawonda. These divisions are based on gender and generation.

Paddy cultivation comprises a group of activities in which the gender division is particularly clear. In table 5.2, I have added in the last column to note whether the task at hand is considered as male or female. The routine tasks performed in every household compose another group of activities, which are normatively clearly divided in men's and women's tasks. In table 5.3, an overview of these tasks is presented along with comment about who should perform the tasks according to the norm. The norm does not differentiate according to generation, and this easily leads to the impression that all tasks mentioned in the table should be done by adults in the productive period of their life-cycle. Yet, the contribution of both grandparents and children in household tasks is considerable. The data in the table originate from the evaluation survey among the female farmers' group in Maderi in 1987, in which 27 households were, among other questions, asked about actual division of household tasks.

Table 5.3 shows that the division of tasks is not completely according to the norm. Children take over a considerable part of the work, and grandparents do the physically less demanding jobs close to home. One reason why the normative division of tasks can be different from the actual is that not every household has a sufficient adult male and female workforce to do the work according to the rules. The poorer households tend to be small, and in such cases the work in the fields is done by the husband and wife together, while most of the work at home is left to the grandparents and children.

Table 5.3 Division of "routine" household tasks within 27 households in Maderi.

Actual division of tasks in 27 households in Maderi (percentage of total):					
Task	norm	women	men	grand-parents	children
fetching water	fem.	61	5	-	34
collecting firewood	fem.	54	13	3	30
cooking	fem.	80	-	3	17
shopping and selling at local market	fem/ male	74	21	-	5
pigs and poultry husbandry	fem.	81	5	7	7
horse husbandry	male	14	54	-	32

There is also a division in high status and low status work within the categories of female and male tasks. Table 5.2 gives an example of this distinction: the Umbu performs the high status tasks, whereas the slave must do the lowest ranking jobs. In each household, there is a hierarchy within the two gender groups. For women, I found the following hierarchy:

1. the first wife of the master of the house
2. a. the second wife of the master of the house or  
b. the wife of his son.

Ranking between these two women depends on who came first: if the son was married before his father married a second wife, the son's wife will have a higher position.

3. daughters of the master of the house, in sequence of age,
4. other women of the same social rank as the master and lady of the house, daughters of close relatives for example,
5. other women of lower social rank, such as daughters of distant relatives who boarded in as school children, or slaves.

The higher one's position within the internal hierarchy, the larger the say in decisions about what kind of work will be done and how the tasks will be divided. In general, all female management tasks are done by the married women within the household.

The last distinction between members of a household, relevant to the division of tasks, is between old and young. The younger generation, composed of *Uma*-members between the ages of about twelve to about thirty years, are the workforce of their parents' households. The power of the parents over junior *Uma*-members is based on control over livestock. Young men need horses and buffalo to get a bride, and until the bride-price is completely paid, they have to comply to their father and father's brothers wishes in order to maintain the elders' support in gathering the bride-price. This power of the lineage elders through their control over livestock is the core of the "lineage mode of production" (Raatgever, 1988). This is a fact that every young Sumbanese man faces, and there is nothing voluntary in being a "client" of *Uma*-patrons". Similarly, a girl depends on her parents and the brothers of her father to find her a husband (or agree with the husband she chooses), to negotiate about the bride-price, and provide her with bride-wealth. As long as she stays with her own parents, she is regarded as "*paberang tabu uhu*", the one who's rice plate will break. This means that she is destined to leave the house and live with her husband. The broken plate indicates that she has no rights in her own *kabihu*, since after marriage she is a member of her husband's *Uma*.

If the parents do not have cattle, they lose an important means of power over their sons: they are not able to provide what is needed for a bride-price. The situation is even worse if the parents do not have control over land. Then the sons will have to find a source of providing for themselves, and it is no longer assured that they will take care of their parents.

### **From bothers to network partners**

The description of work organization in the *Uma*-economy reveals a division of tasks which reflects the hierarchical relations within the *Uma*, and shows an asymmetrical pattern. This pattern is similar to what in literature is called patron-client relationships. The characteristics of these relationships, as they are usually understood in literature, are summarized by Platteau (1991:132) as: "(1) they are highly asymmetrical; (2) they usually comprise, or are perceived as having, a strong element of affection which evokes the emotional tie between a father and his son; (3) they are comparatively stable (they typically apply for an indeterminate period of time)....; (4) they involve multiple facets of the actors concerned, and imply a set of reciprocal obligations which stretch over a wide and loosely defined domain." Traditionally, the *Uma*-elders are the patrons, and their position was primarily based on generation and social rank. The younger generation and the people of lower social rank were in the position of clients. Within the process of change in the *Uma*-economy described in chapter four, the correlation between old age and social rank on the one hand, and the position of patron on the other hand, has become less obvious. The present day patrons in Lawonda are still the ones who have control over land and livestock, but now they share this position with "urban" officials, such as teachers who earn a salary in money, and government officials who can offer their clients

access to modern patron-assets, like money, education and employment outside of agriculture. The Lawondanese who do not have land or buffalo are not necessarily the clients of their *Uma*-superiors, but they can enter patronage relationships with non-kinsmen, if the latter offer more promising rewards for the clients' labor services.

In the perception of the Lawondanese, there is a difference between the relationship *Uma*-members share, and the patron-client relationship with non-kinsmen. The latter relationship is contractual in the sense that either party can end cooperation. In a contract between non-kinsmen, the patron and the client do not belong to the same social unit. In the relationship between *Uma*-members, the division of labor is within this social unit. People in Lawonda identify themselves with the *Uma*. Traditionally, they do not regard their relatively large share in the physical work as exploitation by others, but as proper behavior which they will expect later from their own children. Normatively this still holds true. Yet, due to three major changes, patronage relations with non-kinsmen have gained importance over this "natural" division of labor within the *Uma*.

The first change was the prohibition of the slave trade. This put an end to the possibility of acquiring a new work force for the *Uma*. To keep slaves was not prohibited, but "slaves will not remain a distinct group without special recruitment from outside the society" (Kloos, 1981:103). All work had to be done by the *Uma*-members together -slaves, freemen and nobility-, and social rank as the basis of the division of labor became less clear. This stimulated a tendency toward more individually operating households within the larger entity of the *Uma*.

The second major change was the increase of wet rice cultivation. There were only a few buffalo owners who cultivated paddy fields before 1960. Paddy cultivation was not organized distinctively from other kinds of food production. The noble lords sent their people to cultivate the paddy fields just like they did for the cultivation of the dry land. The subordinates were all members of the noble lord's *Uma*. This changed after 1960. In that year, the government started a program called *Komando Operasi Gerakan Makmur*, which compelled the population to grow paddy. The demand for buffalo services increased suddenly, because in Lawonda buffalo are used to till the soil of the paddy fields. People who did not own buffalo sought a cooperative relationship with buffalo owners. This is the origin of the *kelompok pakeri*, a group of rice farmers who cooperate in rice cultivation during the working season, and herd buffalo during the rest of the year. The members of this group who do not own buffalo are called *mapakeri*, the followers, because their own paddy fields will be cultivated only after the fields of the buffalo owners (Miedema, 1989:57).

The *kelompok pakeri* of Umbu Botu counted seven members in 1988. The members took weekly turns in herding the 40 or so head of buffalo, many of which belonged to Umbu Botu. The other part of the herd was the property of his father and of two brothers, who worked as teachers and no longer lived in Lawonda. The four owners do not participate in the *kelompok pakeri*; where two of them

were represented by subordinates. The five other members of the *pakeri* group were cultivators who did not own buffalo.

In the working season, the *kelompok pakeri* changed from a herding group into a working group. The members worked together on the paddy fields, starting with the fields of Umbu Botu. He was the one who decided on the sequence of cultivation. First, all the nurseries were prepared one after the other, and then the heavy period of trampling the paddy fields began. Umbu Botu had many paddy fields, and each year his harvest approached one hundred bags, or about eight tons of paddy.

One of the followers had several paddy fields too, and his average annual harvest was about fifty bags of paddy. The other members of the group never harvested more than twenty bags per year. The division of land within the group was very disparate, but the fields were cultivated collectively, and the workload divided into equal shares. This implies that the members who own few paddy fields had to perform a disproportionate share of work for the others.

In 1989, a few members of the group became very discontented. They had worked very hard for many days for other people, especially for Umbu Botu, while on top of that they saw little consideration being given to their personal interests. They repeatedly received the last turn for trampling, so that rice could only be transplanted in their fields way beyond the optimal planting date, ultimately resulting in a crop that did not grow well. They decided to leave the *pakeri* group of Umbu Botu, and began to look for another group to join. Their departure implied a large increase in the workload of the remaining members, who were reluctant to accept the new situation. Umbu Botu had to quickly find new followers.

This herding group shows a different kind of cooperation. The members do not necessarily belong to the same *kabihu*, and so the basis for their cooperation is the uneven division of buffalo ownership. The buffalo owners try to mobilize as much labor as they can to work on their own fields; the group members accept the work as the price for buffalo services, but they withdraw from the group when they feel the limit of exploitation is exceeded. The fact that the followers of Umbu Botu actually left the group indicates that this cooperation arrangement is voluntary or contractual. The freedom to determine the control limits of the arrangement is especially apparent for followers who do not belong to the same *kabihu*. The relationship with the buffalo owner is then single stranded, or at least not as multi-stranded as with followers who are also the buffalo owner's subordinate or tenant.

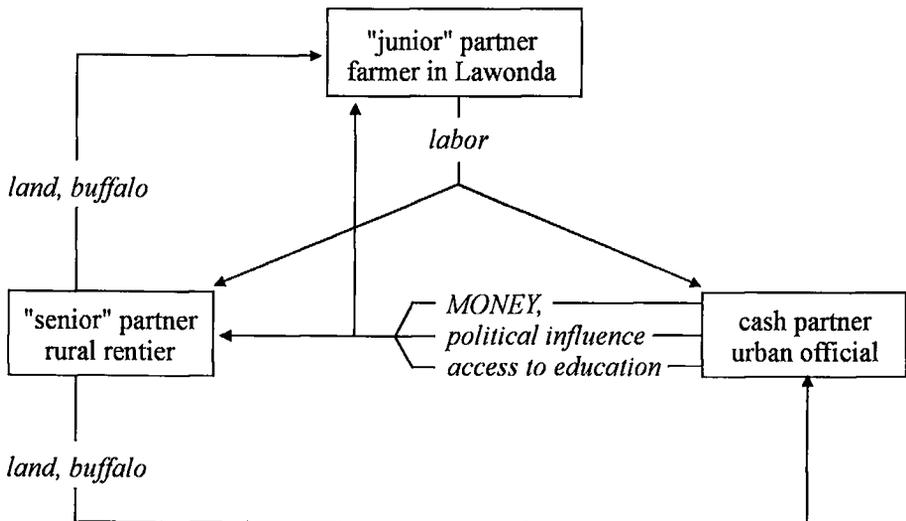
The third major change that affects exchange and cooperation arrangements in Lawonda is the shift toward the "urban sector". For boys and girls in Lawonda, it is no longer assured that they will remain in the village of their parents. Most people stimulate their children to go to school with hope that they will acquire a paying job (or marry some one with a paying job). For many decades, only a few families in Lawonda sent their children to school, and, unlike the Lawondanese without educated relatives, these families can now enjoy the advantages of having a relative in town: access to money, a boarding place for the children who attend secondary school and access to politics. In the eyes of people who live in Lawonda, the change is not a physical shift to town, but an increase in the relative importance of urban resources.

The three changes mentioned above have led to the emergence and increasing importance of, what I call, networks for exchange of resources. People in Lawonda do not refer to these relations as "networks", neither do they have a local word for it. The exchange network described here is an analytical rather than an empirical concept.

Networks for exchange of resources exist between households that complement each other's access to resources. The Lawondanese deliberately seek network partners. If they succeed, the network for exchange of resources ties together three parties: the junior labor supplier, the senior land- and buffalo supplier and the urban money-politics-education agent.

The three parties are mutually dependent on each other. The senior land- and buffalo supplier suffers from the decrease in the available labor force. There are only a few slaves left, many young people attend school as long as they are allowed to, they choose their own marriage partners, and some even leave Lawonda to work in town for a time. The migrants who have succeeded in getting a paying job face other problems: they are short of help for their domestic tasks, and they cannot produce their own food in town or take care of their own fields and livestock in Lawonda.

Figure 5.1 The pattern of the contemporary network for exchange of resources in Lawonda.



The bargaining position of the junior labor supplier has improved compared to his position in the internal hierarchy of the *Uma*. Both the land- and buffalo supplier and the urban official need the work assistance that the junior member's household can provide. The senior network partner supplies land and buffalo services to both the junior partner and the urban official so that they can produce food. The junior partner cultivates the fields for himself, for the senior partner and for the urban official. His children board with the other two partners to help them with domestic work, and the partners give them food and cloths (and even school fees) in return. The urban official provides money to his rural network partners, and represents them in the urban circuit.

When compared to the relationship between the buffalo owner and the herdsmen, it is much more difficult to say anything general about the power relations within a network for exchange of resources. First, land and buffalo ownership is a source of prestige, but old, wealthy people who have no domestic help and no one to cultivate their rice fields are condemned to poverty. Second, every network can have different terms of exchange between its members, sometimes leading to a superior position for the land owner, and sometimes for the urban official. In chapter eight I give more information concerning networks for exchange of resources and elaborate on how people in Lawonda make use of them to obtain money.

Up to this point, the units of social organization, the use of labor and new forms of cooperation and exchange have been discussed rather abstractly. What it means in the daily lives of the people who live in one of the houses of Pangadu Jara is described in the story of the household of Boku Dena.

### **The household of Boku Dena**

When Boku Dena was about five years old his mother gave birth to twins. The delivery was so difficult that both mother and twins died. This left the family with only three members. Boku's older sister, Toga, did not attend school and small though she was she did most of the women's work in the house. Fortunately, Boku's father had a good garden that yielded enough to feed his small family. Yet, by no means could he gather an adequate bride-price for a second wife. Toga was married off when she was about fifteen years old. Her husband was actually too poor to be a good affiliation, but he was not a bad man, and Toga liked him. She then moved to her husband's place. Boku stopped attending school when he was in the sixth grade to become a paddy farmer. He joined a *pakeri* group, and received assistance with working his father's paddy fields in return. The two person household survived, but neither Boku nor his father liked to cook, fetch water or do all of the other woman's tasks.

Boku did not want to marry a girl of lower status than his own, and consequently he had difficulties in finding a wife. He could have taken Boba, the widow of his deceased cousin, as his wife, but she was so ugly that none of the brothers or cousins even wanted to take care of

her, so she returned to live with her own parents. Even without being married to Boku, Boba helped his household in times of trouble. She represented Boku's household in the women's group for transplanting paddy in return for two bags of paddy at harvest time. The girls he liked were too expensive in terms of bride-price.

In the mean time, Boku's father invited Toga and her husband and children to live in his house. They would all share the in tasks of the house, and he would give land to his son-in-law in return. Toga and her husband agreed for lack of a better alternative, as Toga's husband did not own land. Moreover, he could not refuse his father-in-law's offer, because he had never paid a good bride-price for Toga. The house revived with the new inhabitants, yet Boku was not very happy.



Boku (left) and his relatives at one of the many ceremonial events in Lawonda

Boku did not like to work hard in the fields and wanted to do something else for a change. He heard that the leader of the development project in Lawonda, Pak Vincent, could use another helping hand, and when he applied for the position he was accepted. Boku moved to Pak Vincent's house on top of the hill on the other side of the small valley. For him this was a considerable improvement, because he received good food, shelter and cloths and even a small money allowance. Yet, as Boku's father grew older he complained more and more. He did not mind taking care of the horses or watching his small grand children, but he could not

do all of the heavy work in the paddy fields. Toga's husband was not much of a help to him, because he preferred to gather bird's nests and was therefore away from home so often that he could not be a reliable representative of the household in the *kelompok pakeri* or other groups that assist each other in agricultural work. One terrible day, Boku's father brought the horses to the fields to graze and when he returned in the afternoon to fetch them they were gone, stolen by people who knew very well that he had no time to watch the animals all day. Boku had to come home again.

Boku's father had found a good wife for him, yet he did not like the girl very much. She had a sharp tongue, and she had already been married before, but the prospect of having a wife of his own was sufficient for Boku to agree with the plans. His father organized a *sisuk*, and invited every richer man he knew and dared to invite to come to his house for the ceremony in order to contribute to the bride-price for Boku's wife. The attendance was disappointing, but generous enough to make a serious start to the wedding negotiations.

Beginning in April, Yuli stayed in Boku's house. A period of many troubles followed. There were endless sessions of negotiation concerning the bride-price and the ways to get a hold of the required horses, buffaloes and food. Yuli was a good help in the house, but she brought new problems as well. Her sharp tongue caused tension with the neighbors. Yuli was also an active Catholic, who eventually wanted to marry in the church, and therefore urged Boku to become Catholic, too. Boku was experiencing difficulties at this point. Toga's husband had been a member of the Protestant church since he was a small boy, and Toga had become Protestant too when she married him. Boku's loyalty to Pak Vincent also told him that if he would ever give up his *Marapu* religion and be converted to one of the world religions it should be the Protestant Christian religion. On the other hand, the members of Boku's lineage had mostly become Catholic, headed by Boku's uncle who was his spokesman in adat negotiations and one of the main buffalo owners of the neighborhood. The next urgent problem emerged even before Boku could take a final decision in this matter.

Yuli, who was now pregnant, had stopped by at her parents' house after visiting the medical clinic. Once there, her family did not allow her to go back to Boku's house until Boku had paid the next installment of the bride-price. Bad rumors were circulating that Boku had fallen into an *adat*<sup>5</sup> trap, because there had been a comparable circumstance with Yuli's first husband. The total bride-price negotiated for Yuli was so high that Boku would never be able to completely pay it. Therefore, Yuli's family would always be entitled to take her back, and the children that she delivered at her parents' house would be counted as members of her own *kabihu*. Fortunately, Boku managed to get a horse and give it to his father-in-law, allowing Yuli to return to Boku's house. Yet by this time, trust in Yuli was declining.

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<sup>5</sup> Adat is the Indonesian word for customary law, but here it refers to the total set of rules and practices in the process of arranging marriage and negotiating about the terms of ceremonial exchange.

The next problem was to find a new *kelompok pakeri*. The season before, Boku had had a conflict with the buffalo owners of his *paraingu*. During his turn to use the buffaloes for puddling, he had used them to work the sawah of his cousin, too. The buffalo owners were angry, because the cousin was not entitled to use the herd. Boku replied that he was the share cropper of his cousin, because he had provided the seed and they would share the harvest between them. The buffalo owners did not accept the excuse, eager as they were to take the opportunity to drop a buffalo-less member from their group. The best option for Boku now seemed to be to lend half of his paddy fields to his colleague at Pak Vincent's house. In return, his colleague would get a herd of buffaloes to work Boku's paddy fields and his own at the same time.

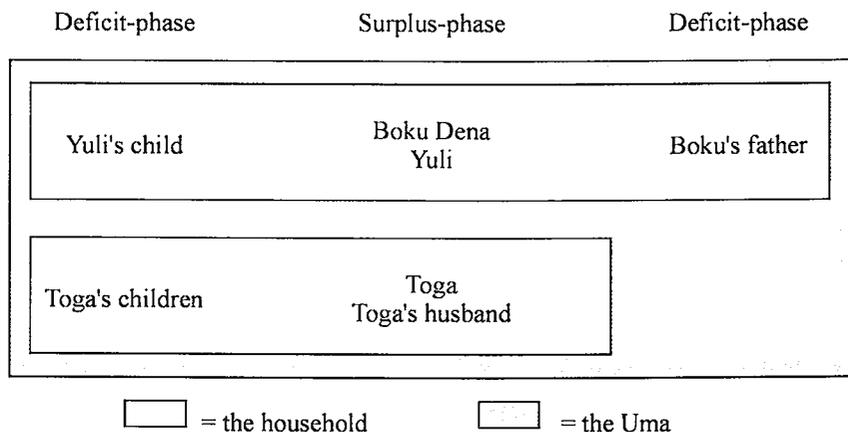
As time goes by new problems emerge, and Boku has to find solutions. Fortunately, he is a very well tempered boy, and most people enjoy his company. He is not the most industrious farmer in the area, and certainly not a very courageous hunter, but he is one of the best and funniest dancers of the neighborhood. This personal asset will help him to survive. Perhaps one day Boku's dream will come true: a nice new house for his wife, sons and daughters in *paraingu* Prai Ui, where they can live peacefully, not bothered by diseases and hunger, with a nice tomb in front, showing that his father and mother are buried respectably. Boku still has a long way to go to fulfill this dream.

### **Making ends meet**

The most obvious message of this case study is that making ends meet in Lawonda involves a complicated process of managing resources. Making ends meet comprises many activities: producing food, providing shelter and care for children and old aged, arranging access to necessary resources, and acquiring brides. Depending on the activity at hand, Boku Dena acts as either the head of his household, comprising his father, his wife and her child as well, or as a member of a larger unit. To clarify this, I have depicted the units involved in the case study in diagrams.

The first unit is the *Uma*, which in this case comprises two households (*rumah tangga*). The diagram shows the different generations within the *Uma*. The middle generation consists of adults who produce more than their own individual requirements. Therefore, these adults are able to contribute to the needs of those in the deficit phase of their life cycle, the children and old aged (*cf.* Freiberg-Strauss and Jung, 1988:230). The distinction between household members according to these life-cycle phases, or the "intergenerational circulation of subsistence" (Meillassoux, 1983:56), makes the labour situation of an *Uma* easily assessable.

Figure 5.2 Boku Dena's *Uma*

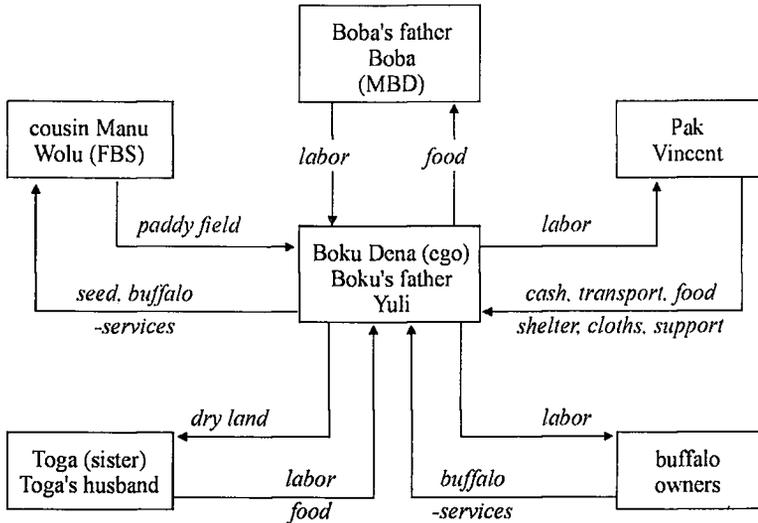


Central in this diagram is the *Uma*, that is the group of people who consider the house (*uma*) of Boku's father as their own main house. The two households share the house in the agricultural off-season. During this time, they cook and eat together, they take care of the children, feed the pigs and chickens, fetch water, etc. The diagram of Boku's *Uma* shows that its members are few. The ideal situation would have been different: Boku's mother still alive and able to do senior women's tasks (physically light work, care, cooking, management of food stock), providing her daughter-in-law with the opportunity to work in the fields and relieve her from her tasks whenever she was pregnant or nursing. An unmarried sister would have been of great help for the physically demanding work, such as fetching water and transplanting rice. For several years after Toga's marriage, Boku and his father were the only members of the *Uma*, and this made their *Uma* too empty: too many tasks for only two men. Now that Toga and her family have moved in again, and Boku has married Yuli, the shortage of labor is less, but still exists. In the wet season, Toga's family moves to a garden house in the valley, where they cook, eat and keep their own chickens.

Boku's father owns about 0.8 hectares of paddy field, and one hectare of dry land. He does not own buffalo. Their "farm enterprise" comprises a dry land garden of about 0.4 hectares where they grow maize and cassava, a yard with fruit trees, small livestock (one small pig and two chickens), and several wet rice fields. Their preference is to cultivate as many rice fields as they can. Therefore, rice cultivation is the basis of the enterprise. Rice cultivation requires land (wet rice fields), seed, buffalo services and both male and female labor. Boku's household can provide land, seed and part of the labor, but buffalo services and additional labor have to

be obtained from other households. The solutions Boku has found for the relative shortage of labor are depicted in the next diagram (figure 5.3), showing Boku's relations for exchange of resources.

Figure 5.3 Boku's network for exchange of resources



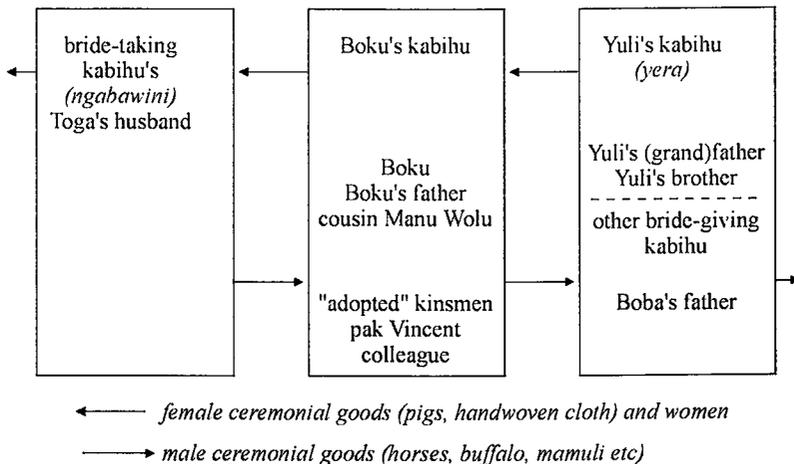
The diagram depicts a flow of resources to and from Boku's household. He receives a paddy field, female labor, cash, transport, food (maize and meals at Pak Vincent's house), shelter, cloths and buffalo services. In return, he gives rice seed, part of the buffalo services, food (paddy), male labor, and the right to cultivate his dry land to other households. The terms of exchange vary. The exchanges with the household of his sister Toga resemble sharing; Toga and her husband are dry land farmers, whereas Boku's priority is rice cultivation. The terms of exchange with the buffalo owners is more fixed. Boku is supposed to participate in the *pakeri* group, to take turns herding the buffalo and cooperate in the rice cultivation operations of this group; in return he can use the buffalo herd to trample his own rice fields. The story mentioned that Boku violated the terms of exchange when he used the buffalo to trample his cousin's field. The buffalo owners consequently expelled Boku from the *pakeri* group, which shows the strictness of the terms of exchange. The next season, the diagram of exchange relations will change and cousin Manu Wolu and the buffalo owners will no longer be partners in exchange. Instead, the colleague at Pak Vincent's house will appear as the intermediary

between another buffalo owner and Boku, and Boku will no longer exchange (male) labor for buffalo services, but part of his paddy fields.

Up to this point, I have discussed the patterns along which people in Lawonda organize their subsistence. Yet, making a livelihood in Lawonda comprises more than just material survival. Ceremonial exchanges constitute an important part of the Uma-economy. The case study relates, for example, the efforts to gather livestock for bride-prices, and within the framework of ceremonial exchange, again, a different set of relations are relevant. These are depicted in figure 5.4.

The most relevant social units in ceremonial exchange are the *kabihu*. The relationship between two *kabihu* is fixed by the flow of women: a *kabihu* is either bride-giving or bride-taking and may not be both at the same time. The role in this relationship fixes the kind of goods that are exchanged: bride-takers have to present male ceremonial goods, and bride-givers female ceremonial goods.

Figure 5.4: Boku's relations for ceremonial exchange

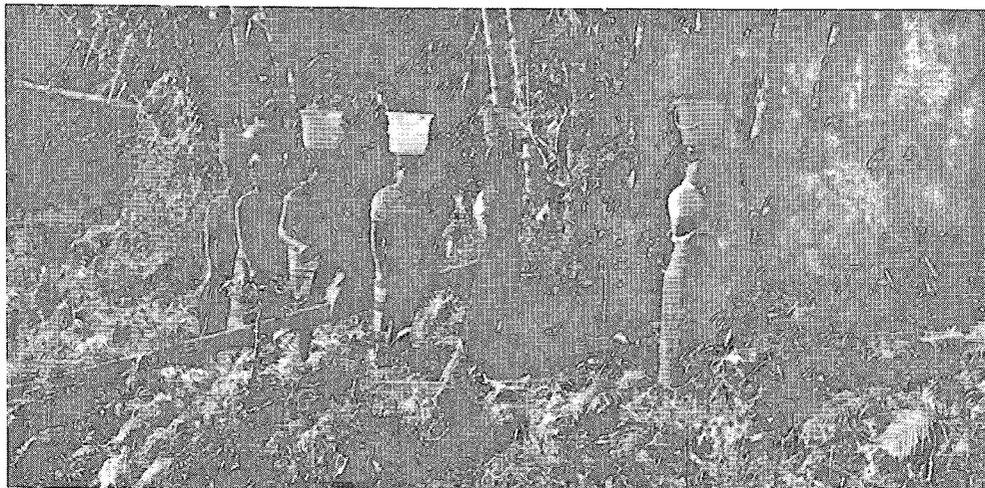


Within this ceremonial circuit, there are many long chains of debts. Thus, whenever a person acutely needs horses (male ceremonial goods), he will try to remind all of his bride-taking affines of their debts, or invite them to accept him as their debtor. This is what Boku's father did by organizing a *sisuk*. Fellow men within the same *kabihu* contribute whatever they can and what is required most; often their contribution is food to prepare the meals for the participants

in the ceremony: rice, coffee, sugar and livestock for meat. Below the category of fellow kinsmen, I added a category of "adopted" kinsmen. These people are treated as if they were brothers within the same *kabihu*, and they contribute in the same way, which means whatever is most urgently required.

The flow of goods is central in the presentation of this diagram. The diagram does not show the work involved in ceremonial events and exchanges. For instance, many days of work were involved in the hosting the *sisuk* alone:

(1) planned the occasion and made a guest list, (2) traveled to the houses of the guests to invite them with due respect, (3) gathered and prepared food for the occasion: Boku and his father asked their fellow *kabihu*-members and "adopted kinsmen" to boil rice and bring it to their house on the day of the *sisuk*, and asked for chicken and small pigs for meat at this occasion. Toga coordinated all the cooking activities, starting days in advance with the roasting and pounding coffee, and was assisted by many female neighbors and kin. Boku went to the market one day to buy coffee beans, sugar, tobacco, salt and chalk. On another trip, he collected a large quantity of areca and betel. Young girls and boys from the *paraingu* assisted in fetching water and firewood. Young men slaughtered the animals for meat on the day of the event. Toga borrowed plates, spoons and glasses from the neighbors. Practical work on the day of the *sisuk* consisted of preparing the meal and hot drinks, serving the guests, fetching water and washing dishes. The ceremonial part of the day involved the explanation of the event by Boku's father and the *kabihu*'s expert of ritual speech and adat procedures, negotiations with the guests about their contributions, and finally, enjoying the festive meal together. After the event, Boku and his father spent days picking up the promised contributions of livestock.



Fetching water is one of the many contributions in labor

The impressive list of tasks that are involved in the relatively small event of a *sisuk* reveals how much time, energy and food is spent on ceremonial events. In Lawonda, people are convinced that organizing a *sisuk* is the proper way to collect livestock for a bride-price. This conviction legitimizes the way they use their resources.

The contributions of fellow *kabihu*-members within the ceremonial circuit can be understood as shared responsibility. In the case of marriage, the bride becomes not only the new wife of a single man, but also one of the women who must give birth to new *kabihu*-members. This shared responsibility also appears in other kinds of "investment". We can take the example of house construction. If people build a main house, *uma*, many other people assist. Traditionally, no money is required for house construction. What is needed is construction material: bamboo, wood, grass, liana (to serve as rope) and the bark of pinang. Bamboo and pinang are cultivated, wood and liana are found in the forest, and the fields are covered with grass for thatching the roof. The *mangu tana* has to give his permission to take these materials from the forest and fields. Cutting grass, collecting wood and carrying it all to the village is a lot of work. These preparations of the work are done by the members of the *Uma*, which means by brothers and neighbors.

Table 5.4: Contributions in house construction at *Pabotung Manu*, Maderi 1989

Contributions from the members of:		
The <i>kabihu</i>	larger neighborhood ( <i>dusun</i> )	allied <i>kabihu</i>
<b>contributions in labor:</b>		
chopping wood	assistance in thatching	some assistance in thatching
gathering liana	bringing own contribution in	
cutting grass	liana and grass, assistance in	
transport of materials	cooking, fetching water and	
thatching,	firewood	
cooking, fetching water,		
fetching firewood, serving		
the guests		
<b>contributions in kind:</b>		
same as members of <i>dusun</i> ,	boiled rice, coffee, sugar,	<i>yera</i> : pigs and cloths
and additionally dogs, goats,	tobacco, wine, grass, liana,	
pig (for meat)	bamboo, areca, betel, chalk	<i>ngabawini</i> : horses, <i>mamuli</i>

For the actual construction, a larger group of people is invited. This includes people who have special skills in house construction. Nowadays, a carpenter is hired to coordinate the work and instruct the workers. The largest group of people is needed on the day the roof is thatched, and thus all members of the larger neighborhood are invited to this event along with several groups of lineages with whom the host is allied through marriage. In 1989, a main house in the research area of Maderi was constructed in the traditional way. The type of contributions given by the different categories of assistants is listed in Table 5.4.

The example of house construction shows the pattern of ceremonial exchange, while at the same time it begins to describe the category of the larger neighborhood. Some of the neighbors are partners in networks for exchange of resources, some contribute only for this special occasion, hoping that whenever they build a new permanent house their request for assistance will be similarly rewarded.

In the case study, two kinds of "investments" are mentioned as Boku' dream: a new house and a proper grave for his parents. Both investments are postponed, because Boku lacks the ability to raise the necessary funds. Yet, both the grave and a new house represent important goals of economic activity. The traditional local assessment of priorities puts a new *uma* and a proper grave for the parents higher than possible "productive investments", such as agricultural tools. It is a man's best achievement if he can become the founder of a new *Uma* (see Van Wouden, 1956:213). Proper graves are an obligation to the ancestors. In the *marapu* religion, the divine ancestors are attributed with the power to influence the fate of the living, and consequently, the sanction on bad behavior toward the ancestors is ill fate for the living. If ill fate is due, there is no sense in acquiring material wealth. Therefore, reconciliation with the deceased forefathers is a prime priority. When the means are available in the future, that is, food and cash to buy sirih, tobacco, sugar and coffee -gained as the direct reward for labor assistance, along with the ceremonial goods necessary to meet the requirements of both investments, Boku will gladly use them to build a grave and a new house.

A general conclusion of this section on "making ends meet", is that the units of household, *Uma*, networks for exchange of resources and *kabihu* all exist simultaneously. For each activity, the most appropriate unit or proper circuit has to be selected. This is one of the features of the Uma-economy that leads me to characterize this economic system as a repertoire of options.

### **Labor in the Uma-economy**

Analysis of labor and work in the Uma-economy encounters similar problems as the ones raised in the discussion about commodities and goods. The difference between commodities and goods is that the former are intended for exchange, and the latter for use. Similarly, the classical distinction between labor and work is that the former is the use of human energy to produce

for exchange, and the latter to produce for use. It is not easy to separate the two uses in the Uma-economy. Monetary payment for human services is very rare in Lawonda. There is no fixed, standard value for a unit of labor. The reward for services to others varies, for example: food, use of land or buffalo, return services, patron-services of protection and support in times of trouble, and sometimes, assistance in paying financial expenditures. The terms of exchange always depend on the relationship between the person who provides his or her labor, and the person who receives the assistance. Therefore, it is only possible to understand how people in Lawonda divide their energy between direct production for their own household and services to others, if these activities are situated in the social context which is specific to the Uma-economy.

We can distinguish different units in this social context. Traditionally, the *kabihu* is the largest unit, and it appears most openly in the ceremonial domain. At ceremonial events, people act as members of their *kabihu* and perform the tasks that suit their individual position within this kin group. Social relations within the *kabihu* are relevant to the division of work in daily life as well. The fact that young men depend on the *kabihu* elders to gather the livestock for a bride-price, puts them in a subordinate position, and as a consequence, they have to work hard for their elders.

Within the smaller unit of *Uma*, the division of tasks is determined according to social rank, gender and generation. The combination of these criteria is decisive for packaging the tasks of an individual, and it is not sufficient to simply distinguish between men and women, or old and young for the division of work. There are local norms about work which indicate that some tasks are for women and others for men, and that management tasks are performed by those who occupy the highest position in the internal hierarchy, whereas the physical work is done by men and women who have a subordinate position. The actual division of work can only be in accordance with the norms if enough human and natural resources are available within the *Uma*. A widower, who cannot afford to marry again, will have to do some female tasks himself. Those who are buffalo-less, even if they are old or of high social rank, have to subordinate themselves to buffalo owners, if they want to cultivate their paddy fields.

Due to the changes in the Uma-economy, critical being the prohibition of the slave trade, the emergence and increase of wet rice cultivation, and the shift toward the "urban sector", labor exchange with non-kinsmen has become more important. The *kelompok pakeri* and the network for exchange of resources are the main units of the organization of labor exchange between non-kinsmen. Both the *kelompok pakeri* and networks not only concern the exchange of labor, but are also institutional arrangements for the exchange of the other resources which are important in the Uma-economy, that is, land, livestock and "urban resources". Labor use in these arrangements cannot be analyzed only in terms of gender, generation and social rank, but must be strongly correlated with the difference between rich and poor, as defined by control over resources other than labor. Further empirical information about networks for

exchange of resources is presented in chapter 8, whereas the *kelompok pakeri* is discussed in more detail in chapter 10, which deals with rice cultivation.

Another consequence of the changes in the Uma-economy is that the individual households comprised in an *Uma*, do not depend solely on each other in daily life, but now depend on people or households that do not belong to their *Uma* as well. I indicated in this chapter that one should be cautious not to associate this social unit with the characteristics that are often, consciously or not, attributed to households. The analysis of the case study "the household of Boku Dena" depicts that the meaning of this concept in Lawonda is: a group of people that shows in many colors. Elaborated for the situation of Lawonda, a household is a group of people who share daily living; it is a link in the chain of marriage alliances between lineages; it is a partner in the network for exchanging resources; it is one of the homes for children and old aged people to stay in; it is a participant in a working group; it is a partner in occasional arrangements for mutual help; and it is a link between relatives who are ultimately responsible for the care of deceased forefathers and their graves.

This is not a very practical definition, yet it seems that only a list of shapes like the one above can approach the meaning of household in the Lawondan context. For practical reasons, I will use the word household in this book to mean a co-residential unit; but whenever it means more or less than that, the difference will be explained.

In this chapter about labor in the Uma-economy, the specific ways of labor exchange are presented as characteristic of this economy. Labor is the only resource for survival in some cases, especially for the poorer households, who do not own land or buffalo, and do not earn a sufficient amount of money to pay their financial expenditures. They must use it to produce their own food, and to do all their own household tasks. Their own labor force is also an item of exchange in return for the use of other people's land or buffalo. They may offer their services because in times of trouble they hope to obtain protection, support or financial assistance in return. This implies that the poorer households in Lawonda employ their labor to the full extent. In the introduction of this chapter, I described the impression of the Bupati, that farmers in Lawonda only work one hundred days a year, in other words, that their problems and shortages can be blamed on their laziness. In general, this impression is false, because many occupations that are not recognized as work according to definitions like the Bupati's, are work in the eyes of the Lawondanese, and are important for their survival and the continuation of their society. Perhaps the poorer households in particular work only hundred days per year on their own fields and in their own houses, but the rest of the year they work for other people.

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## Land in Lawonda

Land is the main resource in the Uma-economy, next to labor. People in Lawonda share particular perceptions with regard to land, and these perceptions are just as basic to the Uma-economy as the morality of exchange of goods and cash. Traditionally, land tenure corresponds with the social organization: the land originally belonged to the spirits, but when occupied by human beings, it becomes the common property of the *kabihu*. The individual's access to land is determined by membership in the community to which the land belongs (Bruce, 1988:25). For Lawonda, this means that access to land is determined by the individual's position within the *kabihu*. There were no individual rights to land in the past. Until the middle of this century, the Lawondanese produced their food through shifting cultivation. At that time, differentiation in the types of land was based on fertility and geographical location. Land was ample in supply. From the stories about internal wars between the *kabihu* on Sumba, the impression emerges that the stake of such an expedition was not to capture land, but enemies, who were subsequently exchanged for food or turned into slaves to cultivate land for their new masters.

Yet, this description does not fit the present day Uma-economy. In the preceding chapters, I described the changes that took place in the rural areas of Sumba. The increasing influence of the state, conversion to Christianity, incorporation into the market economy and the introduction of new agricultural activities are processes of continuous change. They each have their impact on the Uma-economy of Lawonda. They intrude on the mode of thinking by presenting alternative normative frameworks. They interfere with traditional social relations by redefining these relations in terms that are relevant for the government or church administration. They shed a different light on the use of resources. What these abstract expressions entail for land, as the main resource of the Uma-economy next to labor, is the subject of this chapter.

Traditional perceptions of land and land tenure still exist, but their validity is now negotiable. There is a tendency toward individualization of land rights, especially for paddy fields. The area that is suitable for wet rice cultivation is limited in Lawonda. Many people want to grow paddy, and therefore this type of land has become scarce. Land tenure of paddy fields reveals the convergence of traditional perceptions of land with a mode of thinking that fits the present

day circumstances of scarcity. The former include that land cannot be alienated, and the latter leads to exchanges of land-use rights.

I start this chapter, I start with the description of traditional land tenure. I then elaborate on the differentiation of land use in the present day Uma-economy. In the third section, individual land tenure appears to be defined in different ways. The farmers refer to their land rights as members of their *kabihu*, but they also use tax registration as proof of their individual rights to land. In daily life, the area they actually cultivate is the most relevant issue of land tenure.

Incorporation into the wider economy and the increasing need for money have not yet led to a price-market for land. Yet, land-use rights have become an important item of exchange. They are exchanged for labor services and for buffalo services. Land is also an important asset for creating relationships within a network for exchange of resources.

## Land tenure

Long ago, the area of Lawonda was covered with trees. The oldest people that I met in Lawonda still remember the scenery of their childhood filled with forests. The first *kabihu* that settled in Lawonda is considered as the *mangu tana*, the lord of the land, who divides the land for use.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the *mangu tana* or other human beings do not "own" the land. The land was thought to be the area of spirits, who occupied and ruled it long before there were any human beings. Forth writes how land is perceived among the people of Rindi in east Sumba:

"in the widest sense all land is hot, which is to say, infused with spirit(s), and so potentially dangerous if treated improperly. (..) Land given over to habitation and fields, however, is spoken of as cool, since before an area is turned to human use a cooling rite must be performed in order to placate and displace original spiritual inhabitants. As these spirits are thought to have been present on the land before the arrival of the ancestors, it may be said that the Rindi see themselves as intruders, deriving originally from the sky, or in any case, from overseas, who must respect the prior claims of these indigenous occupants." (Forth, 1981: 104)<sup>2</sup>

Once people settled in Lawonda, they started to cultivate. The largest part of the area was free land: everyone could make a garden in this free land area, with the consent of the elders of the *kabihu* to which this part of the land was assigned. At the end of the wet season, around the

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<sup>1</sup> This is known as "the principle of first occupancy", which occurs in "regions where the inhabitants arrived in successive waves of migration" (Adeyoju, 1976:29), as they did on Sumba (see chapter 4).

<sup>2</sup> The spatial pattern of hot and cool lands is similar to the map of human settlement (see figure 4.1). The *paraingu* in the center (inside) is cool and moving to the outside the land becomes hot, with the fields as small cool spots in between. In correspondence with this hot-cool opposition, the garden hamlets are associated with dangerous hot places and their inhabitants are seen as humans who live between the spirits, which comes close to witches.

month of May, one could put a *witi*, a sign of occupation, at the edge of a piece of land to show his intentions to make a garden. After a few years of cultivation, this site would be abandoned and the garden shifted to another part of the free land. Of the total acreage of *kabihu*-land, the largest part is fallow land, which is used for grazing livestock. The *kabihu*-members also enter these fields and forests to gather its wild products. The rest of *kabihu*-land is either cultivated in the private use of the *Uma*'s, or reserved for special, ritual purposes.

The land for ritual purposes has three different categories<sup>3</sup>:

(1) Sacred land. It is common land of the *kabihu* and it is not cultivated. It is referred to in ritual speech as "*tana da pabari, loku da palola*", the land that is not divided, the river that is not sectioned. It is prohibited to cut the trees on this land. The trespasser will be punished by a strike of lightening. This land was always situated near a spring or a river. In times of crisis, especially drought, all *kabihu*-members were allowed to make a small irrigated garden, or *mondu*, to be able to preserve seed for the next wet season. This part of the land could never belong to a house or a person individually, and no houses were allowed on it.

(2) *Tana ratu*, is the land of the marapu priest, the *ratu*. The members of the *kabihu* cultivate this land together on behalf of the *ratu*, who obtains the harvest. This was only done for great priests, who were called: *ratu maramba, hagula hangaji*, the noble priest, who protects his people. The lower rank *ratu* did not have *tana ratu*.

(3) *Tana biha* is the sacred land for religious meetings. The *kabihu* had an altar at these places where its members put the sacrifices for the *marapu*. This part of the land could not be cultivated, and it was prohibited to build houses on it.

Land is no longer used for these ritual purposes in Lawonda. Yet, especially the first category still exists to a certain extent in the hearts of the people. Nowadays, no one has yet dared to build a house close a spring on sacred land.

When the founder of the development project in Lawonda asked the village head for a place to build the project center, a piece of land was offered by *kabihu* Wai Kajawi. Most members of this lineage were Christians and therefore they did not practice the activities proscribed by the *marapu*-religion any longer. According to their old religion, the land offered to the development project was sacred. A few years earlier the village office was built a little further away on the same area of sacred land. Close to that building, one of the servants of the village head was killed by a strike of lightening. During our stay in Lawonda there was often very violent weather, but lightening did not affect the project center. When the small valley of this formerly sacred land was flooded in 1988, with only the roofs of some of the project center

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<sup>3</sup> I obtained this information from the village secretary of Lawonda, and the description here contains his Lawondanese terminology.

buildings still in sight, the members of *kabihu* Wai Kajawi were glad they had still treated the land as a forbidden area for themselves.

This elaboration on the perception of land is important as a background to understand why land cannot always contribute to a person's private wealth. The answers to questions about ownership and land-use rights, depend on the legal framework within which these questions are posed. According to the Lawondanese, land tenure is the domain of customary law. Within this legal framework, there is no distinction between private and public property, since traditional social organization does not include a central governing institution like the state. The land of Sumba is divided between the Sumbanese *kabihu*, and each of these *kabihu* can decide how the land is used within their own area. The internal division of land-use rights has evolved over generations, and led to a pattern which resembles individual property, be it still that no part of the *kabihu* land can be alienated to non-members without the consent of the fellow *kabihu* members. Since there is no hard, written proof of land ownership, disputes over land are settled by negotiations. In these negotiations, historical claims to land are respected, but often the parties involved both tell a different version of history. The party who can dispose of the strongest means to convince the authorities of his version of history will win the dispute. For poorer farmers who tend to be involved in a dispute over land, it is a wiser strategy to evade open problems and negotiate in private, or accept some injustice in silence. In his article on ritual feasting and resource competition in Flores, Deang (1988) makes a connection between the increasing scarcity of land and the characteristic way of solving land disputes:

"..when land pressure was lowest (although existent), land disputes were resolved by open warfare. When land pressure and population density increased beyond a certain point, such disputes came to be resolved by competitive feasting.<sup>4</sup> In the most recent development, as land pressure and population density have reached even higher levels and as competitive feasting has been restricted, a system of competitive adjudication has evolved through which land disputes are now resolved" (Daeng, 1988:266). If land disputes cannot be resolved by traditional moots, they are handled by the state court. "In the latter case, decisions are based on the oral testimony of the disputants and witnesses, and on the inspection of boundary markers. In addition, each party to the dispute uses the social, political, and especially the economic influence at its disposal to sway the government to its point of view. Moreover, the parties to the dispute in this endeavor, -for example, two households- are not limited to the use of their own resources. Typically, each party draws on the material resources of its entire clan" (Daeng, 1988:262).

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<sup>4</sup> A competitive feast is a celebration in which two parties compete for the largest exposure of wealth. "The logic of the feast was based on the assumption that the ancestral spirits knew who was the rightful owner of each plot of land, even if the living did not. For the spirits of the ancestors to make their decisions known both parties to the dispute had only to compete in a livestock slaughter. Whichever side held out longest by virtue of having the most stock was adjudged to be the true owner of the land" (Daeng, 1988:255)

During the period I lived in Lawonda, the local and district government refrained as much as possible from interfering in land disputes. They left settlement to the disputing parties under the guidance of the village head, according to the customary rules, *secara adat*. Only in case the parties did not reach a consensus, could the *camat*, or even higher officials, be asked to interfere. Their interference bears the risk that the land be declared *tanah negara*, land owned by the state, which implies that the government could decide what to do with it. No government official liked to get involved in land disputes, because interfering in "local, private matters" created enemies and could have bad consequences for the official personally.

State law could be used in Lawonda to establish and legitimize individual land-property. Yet, there is no one in this area who possesses a *sertifikat kepemilikan tanah*, an official certificate of land property obtained from the government. Apart from the question of whether such a document would really be helpful to a person who loses a land dispute settled *secara adat*, it is much too expensive to obtain a certificate<sup>5</sup>.

### Land use and scarcity

*Desa Prai Madeta* covers an area of 1900 hectares. The larger part of the *desa*'s surface is not cultivated. It comprises abandoned gardens and patches of land that can be turned into dry land fields in future. The uncultivated area also includes forests and fields where the Lawondanese gather fire wood, wood, rope and grass for house construction, clay and sand for pottery, and various wild food products<sup>6</sup>. The fallow lands are hunting fields and also as grazing fields for the herds of horses and buffaloes. The enumeration of the various ways in which the Lawondanese people make use of the fallow land and forest reveals that although this large area is not cultivated, it is an important resource for many activities in the *Uma*-economy.

The traditional use pattern of the dry land can be found on the map that was used to explain the meanings of *Uma* and *paraingu* as units of traditional social organization (fig. 4.1). In the center of the map, one has to situate the *paraingu*. The agricultural land beside the houses is the *kaliwu*, the yard where herbs, fruit trees and some vegetables are grown. The *kaliwu*

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<sup>5</sup> The costs of registration by the government are about Rp 30,000 per hectare in 1989, additional costs not included. For people in Lawonda this price is extremely high, especially if they compare it to what their dry land yields.

<sup>6</sup> Members of other *kabihu* can ask the *mangu tana* for permission to collect "wild products" from the fallow land and forests. Usually this is not problematic. I heard of two cases in which permission was not given: some men from Maderi asked a landlord of Pangadu Jara permission to enter his fields and cut grass (*alang-alang*) for roof-thatching. The landlord knew that the men were intending to sell the grass, and he refused to give them permission. Permission is also not always granted in the case of gathering birds' nests. This leads to the impression that gathering "wild products" is allowed freely as long as it serves direct consumption of the gatherers; gathering to sell is restricted to members of land-owning *kabihu*.

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belongs to the house (*uma*), and it will never be given for use to those other than the inhabitants of the *Uma*. Close to the house, from the village on the hilltop downward, there is the *mangu*, the garden, where cassava and maize are grown, and sometimes dry rice and other food crops. This is a permanent garden, which, just like the *kaliwu*, never enters exchange. Further away are temporary gardens. A field is used for several years and then left fallow to regenerate. The area suitable for this shifting cultivation is quite large, and sites for making a field are plenty. People prefer to work on fields close to the village, because the closer field is the easier it is to watch it, and to carry the products home from. The Lawondanese also prefer to have a field close to other people's fields, so that protecting the crops against wild animals can be done together.

Table 6.1 The division of land use in *desa* Prai Madeta, as a percentage of the total surface area (my own estimate).

Total surface	dry fields	irrigated gardens	houses, yards and roads	paddy fields	rest (*)
1900 ha	28 %	< 1 %	5 %	6 %	60 %

\* = fallow land, forest and grazing fields

The density of cultivation increases as one approaches a source of water. Gardens around a spring are permanently cultivated. Even in the dry season the crops will flourish if the field can be irrigated. At the eastern border of Lawonda, along the banks of the Memboro river, people usually make a dry season field, a *mondu*, where they grow maize and vegetables. Most Lawondanese, however, have no access to this land, and would not want to obtain it either, because it takes about an hour to walk to the river from the center of the *desa*. One would have to make a temporary cottage to stay close enough to the *mondu* to be able to guard the crops against wild animals and thieves.

Paddy fields are situated in the valleys. The ancestral rice fields were already mentioned as one of the distinctive possessions of a Great Village (Keane, 1990:43). These fields have a name, and are cultivated by the *Uma* of the leader of the *kabihu*. Working that particular field is a sign of high social status. Before the government programs began to encourage paddy cultivation, only the buffalo owners in Lawonda were engaged in this type of agriculture. I was told that the first *sawahs* -fields deliberately prepared for wet rice cultivation- in Lawonda were the spots of low land close to a spring, where buffaloes would roll about in the mud. At that

time, rice was a luxury food for special occasions. In the 1960's, the Indonesian government started a program to stimulate rice production, and all farmers who could were obligated to engage in paddy cultivation. Since only the valleys were suitable to make sawahs, the land area for this type of cultivation was limited. By 1980, the limit of about 120 hectares sawah was reached. Further increase in rice production can now only be accomplished by raising the yield per hectare.

The individual property character of the ancestral rice fields and the fields of the buffalo owners was extended to all plots in the valley. The land in the valleys was part of the *kabihu's* land. Practice showed that the *kabihu* member who first occupied the land for paddy cultivation was considered as the owner afterwards. The family of the former *raja* of Lawonda "owns" a large number of paddy fields. Some of the fields were obtained from people who were not able to pay their taxes; some were just occupied and no one dared to protest.<sup>7</sup> Nowadays, sawahs are treated as individual property. This means that the owner can decide by himself what to do with the field. All people like to have access to paddy fields, because rice is the main and most preferred staple food. Yet, the access is not equally distributed. The two largest farmers of the *desa* cultivate about six hectares of paddy field, whereas many people have only a quarter of a hectare or less.

The limited availability of land suitable for paddy cultivation, and the fact that many people would like to cultivate wet rice, has made paddy fields scarce in Lawonda. Scarcity shows in the willingness to pay a price for the use of this type of land. Yet, paddy fields in Lawonda are not sold, but land-use rights of paddy fields have become an item of exchange.

### **Individual land tenure**

What is the present position of individuals within the general land tenure system in Lawonda? I already mentioned above that in general -in societies like the Lawondanese- the individual's access to land is determined by membership of the kinship group, in this case the *kabihu*. So the basis of access to land is found in the individual's position within the *kabihu*. This position can be characterized by rank, generation, and gender, but is also influenced by economic status. The higher the individual's position in the internal hierarchy of the *kabihu*, the stronger his say in decisions concerning the distribution and allocation of land. The old and wealthy nobility are the most obvious "landlords".

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<sup>7</sup> Onvlee has a similar remark on the actual meaning of being the *mangu tana*: "With regard to the factual influence of the *mori tana* (west-Sumbanese for *mangu tana*) within a certain area, bearing this name does not mean anything yet. It can occur that others who arrived in the area subsequently, surpass the lord of the land with regard to wealth, eloquence and resolute behavior, so that they in fact have more influence in the area" (Onvlee, 1973:61).

The position of women is weak with regard to land tenure: land in Lawonda is "owned" by men. Land is inherited by male members of the *kabihu*, and women do not inherit land. Only on very rare occasions can a woman receive a field as part of her dowry, but I have never heard of an actual example of this in Lawonda. If land is registered, it is under the name of a male member of the household. A widow can still use her late husband's land, but it will be registered for tax purposes under her son's name and not her own. Of course, women work on the land, and often have a garden, *mangu*, in which they are able to decide which crops are grown and what is done with the harvest. Especially in large households, with several wives, or a mother and daughter-in-law sharing the house, dry land fields are divided between the women. They talk about their individual share of the land in terms of seed, such as "a patch of three cups of maize seed". Paddy fields are not divided between men and women within a household. The only case I have heard of a co-gender division of a paddy field was for cultivation using the GORA technique, which can be regarded as a hybrid of dry and wet rice cultivation (see chapter 10). In this case, the daughter-in-law, the first and second wife and the husband each contributed a share of the rice seed. The work was done collectively, and afterward the harvest was shared. In general, women and men can both have control over seed and labor, but in Lawonda women do not have control over land.

Inquiring about the type of land that a man in Lawonda considers "his", I discovered three kinds of relations to the land, each of which are relevant in a different context: (a) the land of his *kabihu*, to which he, as a member of the lineage, has access, (b) the land for which he pays tax, and (c) the land that he and his household actually cultivate. "It depends on the situation" which kind of answer is most suitable.

The land of the *kabihu* is thought of as *kita punya*, "our land", using the distinction between people in categories of "us", "no others" and "others" as described in chapter 3. The cultivated fields are part of this, but also the fallow land which was cultivated in the past, and that which will be cultivated in future. Different sites in this land have names using natural terminology, like the name of a spring, or a rock or a special tree.<sup>8</sup>

Land is registered as individual holdings for taxation purposes. It is registered in surface units (hectare), although in Lawonda land was never actually measured. Usually, the amount of dry land for which one pays tax is larger than what is actually cultivated. The uncultivated part of the land is only temporarily fallow. This total area of dry land is regarded as the agricultural territory of the house, in which its members can shift their fields.

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<sup>8</sup> A similar perception of land is described by Gudeman for a village in Panama: "The natural map stood for the fact that land was free from individual or village appropriation. The land was part of nature, and available to everyone. It was unbounded by a social grid. Being impermeable to human history, to human intervention and to human control, the land remained constant while people moved and used it on a short-term basis." (Gudeman, 1986:9).

The third type of individual land tenure concerns cultivated land. Individual farmers cultivate dry land and paddy fields. The total acreage is the sum of their own fields added to the fields they have borrowed from others -in whatever arrangement, pledging, share cropping, or borrowing without any specific reward for the landowner- and less the fields they have given out to others. Cultivated land is measured in seed: dry land in maize seed, and paddy fields in rice seed. Measuring in terms of seed not only takes the size of the land into account, but also refers to the quality, determined by soil fertility, the amount of rocks, and the situation with regard to sunlight. It is a unit of local experience. What matters to the Lawondanese is what a patch of land yields, but this is not a suitable unit to indicate the size of cultivation, since the yields vary considerably due to natural contingencies.

One should be cautious in using data about land "ownership" in Lawonda as an indicator of wealth. To become wealthy one needs access to land. Yet, wealth does not show in land possession itself, but more in the ability to make the land productive for the benefit of one's household. This can only be done by combining land with labor and capital (food, seeds and livestock). The case of the household of Boku Dena in chapter 5 provides an example of a farmer who has control over a considerable amount of land, including paddy fields, but he is not able to use his land as productively as possible due to a lack of access to labor and buffaloes. His dry land is left fallow, and his paddy fields are given out to others, leaving only a small share of the harvest is his own household.

### **The land market**

Until 1990, no land in Lawonda had ever been sold for money. Yet, exchange of land-use rights is common, and sometimes even money can be involved in the transaction. The money is not intended as rent or price, but as a part of a more general set of reciprocal relations. I use the word market here in the broad sense of arena of exchange.

The economic position of a household in the Uma-economy depends on the package of resources it can dispose of. Access to land by itself is not enough to be able to cultivate this land. A certain amount of labor is required for each acre of land, and each patch of paddy field can only be cultivated if buffalo are available to trample the soil.

The demand side of the land market in Lawonda is composed of people who are short of land as compared to the amount of other resources they dispose of. The first group that wants to obtain access to land in Lawonda consists of immigrants from other areas, and the second group are Lawondanese who have a relative surplus of buffalo and labor compared to land.

The most respected category of immigrants consists of officials who are assigned by the government or any other organization to work and live in Lawonda. Their first need is for land to build a house, and most of them want to have land to make a garden or even to grow their own paddy.

One of the staff members of the local development organization wanted to build a private house in Lawonda. He preferred a site close to the project center. When discussing the possibility of obtaining ownership of this patch of land with the representative of the *kabihu* in control of this area, he found that this was very problematic. Asking for a piece of *kabihu* land is equated in Lawonda with trying to obtain the according relationship with the *kabihu* members. This requires the same complicated ceremonial arrangements as if he wanted to marry the landowner's daughter. To open the negotiations he would have to bring at least a horse and some *mamuli*, and he would have to take care of the meals during the negotiations. Subsequently, he would have to give more livestock. Originating from another area, he did not have relatives to support him, and he would have to spend a fortune in money to buy the required horses from traders. Following the advice of his Lawondanese friends, he canceled the idea of trying to get the official property rights, and just borrowed the land from the owners. The consequence was a permanent indebtedness, allowing the landowners to demand services and support in times of (financial) trouble whenever they needed something.

Borrowing land is fairly easy for immigrants who have something to offer for the local population. As the farmers in Lawonda are always in need of money, good relationships with officials who earn cash salaries are beneficial to them.

The prospects for farmer immigrants in Lawonda are different. Most of them belong to *kabihu* that moved to Lawonda after the land had already been occupied by other *kabihu* and divided between them. They have the status of permanent immigrants, and they only have access to land in return for support to the *kabihu*, that settled earlier. For them, it is usually not difficult to get land-use rights for dry land. When their cultivating activities show signs of permanency, their bad position regarding land tenure becomes obvious.

One of the main activities stimulated by Propelmas is soil conservation. The technique consists of making contour-terraces on the hillside dry fields. The terraces are strengthened with stone ridges and by planting a species of fast growing trees. This program was done with a group of farmers in Maderi who are considered as "immigrants". As long as their activities were confined to growing annual crops, there was no problem. Yet, the landowners did not like the idea of planting trees. Planting a tree is regarded as the first sign of a permanent claim to the land. There was no open dispute about this matter, because the landowners were reluctant to offend the government or Propelmas, which were both strongly promoting soil conservation. One night there was a big fire, and all the newly planted trees were burned.

The second type of "farmer-immigrants" in Lawonda is composed of men who live on the land of their fathers-in-law. Normally after marriage, women move to their husband's house. If the husband cannot pay the bride-price, he has to stay with his father-in-law and work for him long enough to pay a sufficient part of the debt. Very poor husbands voluntarily leave their own area and live on the land of their wives families. If the father-in-law is able, he lends his daughter and her husband some land, dry land, for a garden, and if available, a paddy field-"so that they can eat". A man in this situation is completely subordinate to his father-in-law.

There is also a demand for land from Lawondanese farmers who have land-use rights themselves, but are able to cultivate more than just this land, because they have sufficient access to labor, seed, food and livestock. People in desperate need of a horse or a pig pledge a paddy field to them. Livestock is most often the limiting factor of production in this respect. Horses, pigs and buffaloes are the most preferred items of wealth to be exchanged for paddy fields. Wealth in livestock opens the option to specialize in rice production. Then, household labor is extracted from the dry fields and shifted to the newly obtained paddy fields.

We find people who supply land on the other side of the land market. There are four categories land suppliers in Lawonda:

(a) emigrants from Lawonda. Government officials often do not work in their village of birth. Their paddy fields are entrusted to their relatives in the village or to others, if that is convenient. The villagers cultivate the paddy fields, and the terms of sharing costs and benefits are negotiable and differ according to the relationship.

(b) land suppliers in the local market consists of farmers who have a relative shortage of labor, seed, or buffalo, or a combination of these resources. They do not have the means to use their land, and are therefore forced to lend it to others. Sometimes this is a positive strategy of combining the available production factors as efficiently as possible, but it can also be a sign of real misery, especially when the full harvest of the paddy field is required to meet the household's food needs. Old people belong to this category. They are not physically able to cultivate the land themselves anymore. They lend their land to people who can offer them labor. Again, the terms of exchange, comprising the division of costs of cultivation, harvest and tax are negotiable.

(c) "emergency-suppliers". People who suddenly need livestock pledge their paddy field when they have no other way to obtain it. This is especially possible in the case where a man's father- or mother-in-law passes away. Then it is absolutely necessary for him to bring a buffalo to the funeral without delay. In this category of emergency supply, another group is composed by the losers in gambling. Gambling is usually done with paddy, but if the playing debt has become very large, the loser may have no other choice but to resort to pledging his paddy field.

The government is not active in the land market in Lawonda. The only restrictions on land use concern the forest area, where no trees can be cut without the consent of the district authorities, but there is little control over actual practices. Regarding pledging, there is no sign that Indonesian state law applies in Lawonda. This law includes the rule that after a fixed number of seasons the use rights of the pledged land should be returned to its owner, without any further payments or remaining debts. The local rule in Lawonda is that the paddy field should only given back to the pledger when he pays back what he had initially received for it (a horse or a buffalo), or an equivalent payment. There are no time limits to the pledging arrangements as there are on e.g. Java, and like there should be according to the state land law.

## Exchange arrangements

Lending and pledging are the two predominant types of land exchange in Lawonda. In both types of transaction, the land-use rights are transferred from one party to the other. The motives for transaction, the relationship between the two parties and the terms of transaction are different in these two arrangements.

The motive for lending is a to obtain a better combination of resources, for both parties involved. The lender and borrower in this transaction create or strengthen their general exchange relationship. The lender keeps control over the land, and the borrower only has the use rights. The kind of material reward, and the time span of the arrangement are not, or not completely, specified. The borrower often obtains a general indebtedness, and the lender can ask the borrower to provide him with whatever suits the lender best.

Our neighbor presented a nice example of such a strategy: he lent us a paddy field without asking any specific service or price in return. He calculated that he had the loss of several bags of rice, but his problem of where to find buffaloes, food and labor to cultivate this field did not exist any more. The benefit he expected from the deal was a good relationship with us, opening up the road to cash loans and transport to town, and a cup of coffee or a meal whenever he wanted one.

Share cropping is another kind of lending arrangement. In the case of share cropping, the lender receives part of the harvest as the reward for the use rights of the land, whereas another part of the harvest is the reward for the borrower's labor. The third part of the harvest is the reward for the one who provides buffalo services, and this can be either the lender or the borrower of the land. The division of the harvest is specified in advance.

In two cases in Pangadu Jara, there were share cropping arrangements between a father (lender) and his son-in-law (share cropper); in one case, the son-in-law provided the buffalo and the harvest was shared in two equal parts, whereas in the other case, the father bore the costs of buffalo services, the division was three quarters for the father and one quarter for the son-in-law.

In speaking about lending and borrowing between people who are closely related to each other, it is important to be aware of the various possibilities to assess the situation of an individual household with regard to land tenure. Data about land ownership are ambiguous in Lawonda. For taxation purposes, the land is registered as the property of individual households. When I asked men in Pangadu Jara about their "own" land, fathers often included the land of their sons, and sons spoke about the land of their fathers as if it were already their own. It is common practice in Lawonda that a father divides his land among his sons when he becomes too old to cultivate the land by himself. He gives them the use-right, and only after his death will the land become their property. The *Uma* is a more suitable unit in the assessment of land property. Within the *Uma*, land is used similarly to labor: decisions about how a field will be used, by whom, and how the yield will be divided are taken by the *Uma*-members who have

the highest position in the internal social hierarchy. The actual cultivation work is done by the members who have a lower position. Lending arrangements between households can be regarded as internal divisions of resources and tasks between *Uma*-members. At present, there are also coalitions of households that resemble the pattern of cooperation within an *Uma*, but cannot actually be called an *Uma*, because its members do not belong to the same *kabihu*. Especially in poorer communities, like the two areas of my research, it often happens that a married daughter lives on the land of her father, if her father has more land than the father of her husband. The son-in-law lends land from his father-in-law, and subsequently they often speak about this arrangement in the idiom of *Uma*-members who share their resources, even if they agreed in advance about how to divide the harvest.

Paddy fields may also be lent to someone who is not closely related to the lender, if there is a temporary reason why the lender cannot cultivate the land himself. There is an example of this in the case study of the household of Boku Dena in chapter 5: Boku Dena could not participate in a *pakeri*-group in that year, because he worked for the advisor of the development project. Therefore, he did not have access to buffalo services for trampling the soil of his paddy field. He lent a paddy field to another man who could arrange access to buffalo, but did not have a paddy field of his own. They agreed to share the harvest, because both Boku and the other man needed rice for their families.

In Lawonda, share cropping is an arrangement only for the exchange of land-use rights on paddy fields. Lending dry land is always done on less specific terms. Although the lender of dry fields can always ask the borrower for part of the harvest from this dry field, the reward for the land-use is usually something other than food: financial assistance, labor assistance, and moral or political support. If the value of the dry land increases for the user, for example, because he built a house on this land, the lender can ask for larger rewards. The relationship between lender and borrower fits in the pattern of the network for exchange of resources, in which flow of resources between the members of the network is a matter of continuous negotiation.

Pledging is a different type of transaction. I found that often the parties in a pledging arrangement in Lawonda often have a strained relationship, especially if pledging was the outcome of dispute settlement. Pledging is a bad arrangement for the pledger, because he loses both control over and use of his land. A paddy field remains connected to its first owner, but sometimes this only shows in the name of a field, or in the tax register. A pledgee can use the field according to his own wishes, and can even lend it to a third party. If the pledgee wants to stop cultivating the paddy field he obtained, but the "owner" of the field (the original pledger) cannot give him back the horse or buffalo he received from the pledgee, the latter can ask a third party to give him a similar horse or buffalo, and replace him as pledgee in the pledging arrangement. It appears, from what I have heard of the terms of pledging in Lawonda to be very difficult for a pledger to find the means to re-obtain his land.

In the survey of Pangadu Jara, there are five different cases of pledging a paddy field. In all cases, the supplier of the field was in urgent need of a good for ceremonial purposes: a horse, a pig or a buffalo. If there really are no other ways to get such a ceremonial good, pledging a paddy field is the last resort. It is perceived as a loss to pledge a paddy field, because it means less food, and the debt remains, because in Lawonda the use of land does not pay back the debt. For the one who obtains the land, it is a productive way of storing livestock. Horses that are given out to other people do not have to be cared for by the owner; these horses cannot be easily recognized as the owner's property, and are therefore safe from relatives who come to "borrow" a horse. Last but not least, a horse that is -temporarily- exchanged for a paddy field, yields paddy.

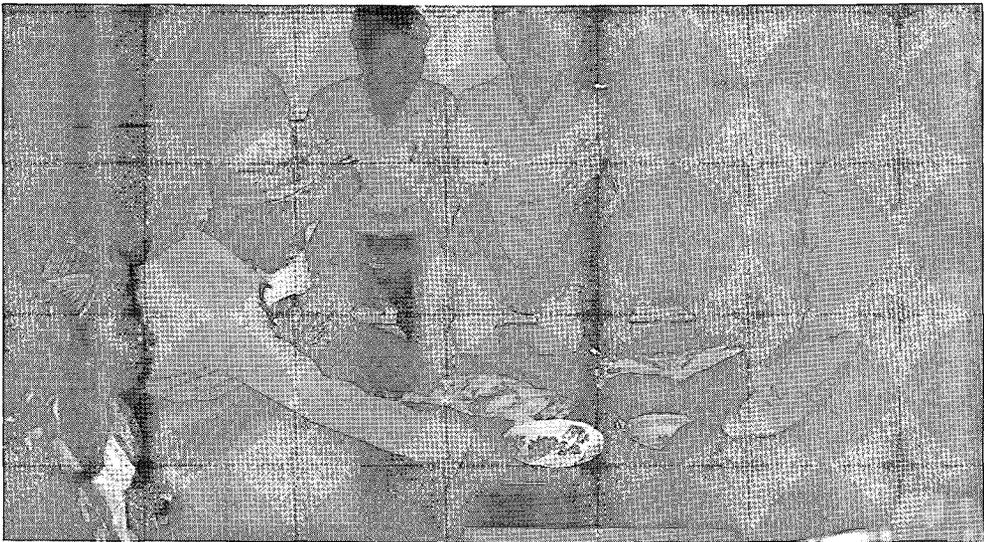
### **Rural change and the local land market**

The rural changes on Sumba (see chapter 4) have their impact on the local land market. One of the consequences is the increasing need for money. In Lawonda, land is not only used as a factor in production which can eventually yield money, but also in a more direct way. If a field is lent to a school teacher, for example, the aim of the lender is to create a social exchange relationship with the teacher. As a teacher earns a salary in money, he can assist the land owner in paying his financial expenditures. The exchange pattern of which these transactions of land-use rights are a part is the network for exchange of resources. In chapter 8, more empirical data about using (cultivation rights of) land as an item of exchange are presented.

One of the most obvious influences of the state in Lawonda is the obligation to pay tax. This tax is connected to land property. For taxation purposes, land is registered as if it were individual property. The Lawondanese are ambiguous about the obligation to pay tax. They always find it hard to locate money to pay these taxes, and in this sense they complain about this obligation. Yet, on the other hand, registration for taxation is regarded as one means of proving their ownership. In land disputes, this "proof" is an argument in favor of the one who pays the tax for the disputed field. The argument gains weight if the village government is involved in settling the dispute. The meaning that the Lawondanese attribute to this tax registration explains why they seem to be eager to pay land taxes, even for a field which has been pledged to others for a long time.

Here again, we encounter features of pluralism, which lead to the characterization of the Uma-economy as a repertoire of options. In most cases in Lawonda, land tenure is taken as a subject in the domain of customary law; but an alternative normative framework is available. If an issue of land tenure cannot be dealt with satisfactorily by customary law, the parties involved switch to the idiom of state law and government regulation.

The same feature appeared in the single case of land sale that happened during my stay in Lawonda. The land on which the buildings of Propelmas were built, was eventually sold. For this case, the transaction was not between two individual persons, but between the land owning *kabihu* and a church foundation. The two parties agreed to treat each other -after long sessions of negotiation- as members of the "Christian family", avoiding the matter of arranging new ceremonial ties. The price of the land was fixed without regard to potential agricultural yield or any other kind of unit connected to the use-value of the land. The owning *kabihu* members assessed the potential and willingness of the church foundation to pay in order to fix their price. The Board of the church foundation offered to pay a third of this price, not in money, but in livestock, and this was accepted. This exceptional case shows how, in the land market of Lawonda, people apply the idea of "idiom shopping".<sup>9</sup> They make use of the repertoire of options within the Uma-economy, leaving the customary rules, which usually apply to land exchanges between members of the local community, for what they are, and acting according what is proper behavior among members of the church.



The negotiations about the sale of land to Propelmas were conducted in the same way as *adat*-negotiations, with many representatives of both parties present and using *adat* symbols to express that the parties reached an agreement

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<sup>9</sup> Analogous to "forum shopping", in which the parties involved in a dispute select from a range of possible fora, the one that, according to their expectations, will be most susceptible to their own arguments, and most beneficial for their own interests (see K. Von Benda-Beckmann, 1984).

I expect that in the near the future, land will be sold in Lawonda, and the first kind of plots for sale will be sites for houses along the main road. That people want to build their houses close to the main road in Lawonda is a phenomenon of the last ten years. The roads have been improved considerably in this period. During my stay, there were land disputes over patches along the main road, with both competitors acting as if they only wanted to make a garden there, while in fact they were trying to get hold of a site for house building.

To be sure that a housing site will not be the subject of a land dispute in future, it has to be registered with the government as the house owner's individual property. The first step in the process of becoming an individual house owner is buying the land from its owner(s). In Lawonda, selling is the only mode of transaction for land in which the land owner agrees to refrain from further claims on this land (and its possessor); *jual habis* is the Indonesian expression used in Lawonda to indicate the end of the relationship between the owner and the object he sells. As the case of the Propelmas staff member who wanted to build a house illustrated, buying land can be very difficult in Lawonda. If the land owner expects more benefit from a continuous relationship, he prefers lending (and creating exchange network ties) over selling. In fact, the owner's choice is between a larger amount of money or livestock at once, or permanent access to smaller amounts of the borrower's financial resources over time. If the relationship is such that the borrower can refuse the landowners requests for assistance, the owner will be more inclined to sell the land. The increasing need for money is also a reason why people will sooner be tempted to sell their land instead of lending it.

South of Lawonda, along the main road from Anakalang to the district capital, Waikabubak, it has already become common practice to sell sites for houses. With the ongoing improvement of the roads in the area of Lawonda, and the subsequent increase of motorized traffic, land along the main road will become even more popular, and I expect that these plots for house building will be the first objects of registered, individual ownership.

## Part II

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Different ways to obtain money



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## Poverty and social security: the indigenous assessment of cash-earning activities

Sumba belongs to one of the poorest areas of Indonesia (Corner, 1989; Booth, 1993). The Gross Domestic Product per capita in the province of East Nusa Tenggara, of which Sumba is part, is very low compared to international standards. Policy makers in the national government and in national non-governmental development organizations (NGO's) use estimates of poverty level and incidence to target their development programs toward regions and social groups where poverty incidence is known to be high (Booth, 1993:79). Therefore, there is good reason to direct development activities to Sumba. Poverty alleviation is one of the goals of such development programs, and these programs always include activities to raise the participants' financial income.

The Lawondanese -whether they consider themselves poor or not- put shortage of money at the top of the list of problems that they face in daily life. There are different options to obtain money, but not everyone has access to all the options. Some cash earning activities are part of development programs, others are the initiative of the local population itself. The second part of this book addresses the question of how the Lawondanese deal with the increasing need for money. This question is taken as an entry point into the dynamics of the present day Uma-economy.

The importance of social relations became clear in the first part of this book where the analysis of the Uma-economy was the central issue. The terms of exchange in transactions depend largely on the quality of social relations between the exchange partners. The Lawondanese seem to prefer a mode of exchange in which transactions serve long-term relations. If participation in a development activity hurts social relations, the benefit of the activity must be weighed against the costs involved in the loss of these relations. In other words, the expected effects on social security are very important in the assessment of economic options in Lawonda.

In the different methods that people in Lawonda use to obtain money, we can see how they adapt elements of their traditional in kind economy to changing circumstances. In chapters 8 and 9, I describe two different ways to obtain money used by the people in Lawonda, without the support of a development agency. The connection or tension between social security arrangements and individual efforts to obtain money is particularly clear in these two chapters. In chapters 10 and 11, activities are discussed that were stimulated by

either the government or Propelmas to raise the farmers' monetary income. These chapters show how programs that, according to the designers, entail only relatively simple innovations, yet can have rather complicated effects in the Uma-economy. This first chapter of the second part of the book discusses the issue of poverty in Lawonda, while it elaborates on the question of how activities to earn money are assessed by the Lawondanese themselves.

It is important to have a clear method to distinguish the poor from the wealthy when designing development activities for poverty alleviation. This was one of the problems Propelmas faced in Lawonda, because its explicit aim was to work for the poor. At the local level within areas like Sumba, the incidence of poverty is not always as clear and wide spread as the figures in the national statistics suggest. A low value of a variable in these statistics indicates a low average, but does not say anything about the variations surrounding this average. The first section below gives an overview of different methods of poverty assessment, and discusses the problems of applicability in the Uma-economy. It appears that objective criteria to differentiate the poor from the wealthy -or less poor- are hard to find in Lawonda. If development programs are aimed at improving the standard of living of poor people, and not at increasing the statistical performance of a region while disregarding to whom the benefits accrue, a more detailed and sophisticated answer has to be found on the questions "what is poverty?" and "who are the poor?".

For people in villages like Lawonda, comparison with levels of subsistence on other islands is not very relevant. They have their own framework of reference when they assess the quality of their own lives. A good life in Lawonda implies enough food during the entire year to feed their own family, sufficient rice to treat guests properly, living in peace with neighbors, relatives and forebears, good health, sufficient means to meet one's ceremonial obligations, a house that provides shelter, and a good future perspective for the children. The local perceptions on the quality of life include a range of variables that cannot be aggregated in one single indicator. The local meaning of poverty can be regarded as the other side of the coin from "a good life". The second section of this chapter describes indigenous perceptions on poverty that are subjective criteria of economic differentiation in Lawonda at present.

Social welfare programs of the government or NGO's can fit in well with Lawondanese ideas concerning how to improve the quality of life in Lawonda. The local health clinic and the primary schools are the clearest and most appreciated examples of public social security in the village. Yet, there are many other social welfare or development programs to which the local population of Lawonda does not respond in the way the planners had expected or hoped. For example, new technologies in rice cultivation are promoted by the government, because they can lead to an increase of the yields. Yet, these technologies have not been widely adopted, and the officials are left behind with the question of why their program failed.

To understand the local assessment of development activities, these activities have to be put in the framework of the Uma-economy. If the Lawondanese consider their participation

in development programs, they make their own list of costs and benefits. The costs comprise more than the financial expenditures for the inputs that are required in such an activity, and the benefits are not simply measured in terms of extra income.

### Poverty assessment

Compared to the other areas of Indonesia, the province of East Nusa Tenggara is regarded as a poor, isolated and backward area (Corner, 1989; Booth, 1993). Economic indicators, like the Gross Domestic product per capita that are used to make this inter-regional comparison, show such a low value for Sumba that they evoke the impression the population of this island must be starving.

The staff of Propelmas conducted a survey in 1988 among households that were involved in the cultivation of a new crop, *kacang ijo* (mung bean). One of the conclusions of this survey was similar to the one of inter-regional economic comparison: the people involved in the survey must be starving. Propelmas aimed to reach the poorer part of the population with this activity, assuming that they would be most interested in a new dry land crop that yields a product which can be readily consumed and is also suitable as cash crop. Therefore, part of the survey was designed to assess the participants' economic position. We included questions about the average farmers' household food production to be used as the main indicator of this economic position. Much to our surprise the results of the survey showed that the average food production of these households was very low. According to the staff members' estimation the level of food production that resulted from this survey was about half of the real consumption requirements of the households concerned. How could these people still be alive, and apparently healthy, in spite of such a low level of food production?

The answer to this question is found in the method of poverty assessment. The level of household agricultural production was taken as an indicator of material welfare in Propelmas' survey. The survey questions concerned production on the farmer's own fields. In chapter six, it appeared that people in Lawonda who do not have sufficient land may borrow land from others in exchange for their labor service. Therefore, the amount of produce that is available for household consumption does not solely depend on the size of its land holdings, but also on the number of members in the household and the way they use their labor.

The macro-economic indicators are not very suitable to make statements about poverty in Lawonda either, because they do not include all the items that are used to make a living in this rural economy. A household in Lawonda with a per capita cash income of 50 USD per year would be considered "rich" instead of poor. Most of the household requirements are met without using cash, either through direct household production, or through exchange in kind. Cash is only used to pay for commodities or services that cannot be paid for in kind. Examples are the expenditures on industrial products (sugar, cigarettes, kerosene, batteries, etc.), tax payment and school fees. A macro-economic indicator of

poverty such as the GDP per capita also does not show the differences between regions within the area and between groups of people.

Defining poverty is a matter of choosing standard values for specific indicators, or in other words, the construction of a poverty line.

The kind of indicator and poverty line that one chooses should be in accordance with aim of assessment. "General anti-poverty measures that attempt to raise incomes, or more broadly, the overall command over resources by the poor, should employ general definitions of poverty such as per capita consumption levels" (Glewwe and Van der Gaag, 1990:812).

A variety of poverty lines are used in Indonesia, of which the main ones are: (a) the milled rice equivalent approach, (b) the nutritional approach, (c) the basic needs approach and (d) the income or expenditure approach (Firdausy and Tisdell, 1992:77). The milled rice equivalent is based on a standard of rice consumption in kilograms per capita per year. With an annual consumption below 324 kilograms one falls in the category of "poor" (Poli, 1983, referred to in Firdausy and Tisdell, 1992). In Lawonda, rice is the most preferred, but certainly not the only staple food. Maize, cassava and other roots and tubers are more important food crops, especially in the research area in Maderi. Therefore, the milled rice equivalent approach would not be a distinguishing indicator in Lawonda.

The nutritional approach is based on data concerning calorie intake per person. These data are very hard to collect, because people in Lawonda do not usually measure what they eat, and they do not consider everything they eat as a meal. Apart from these practical problems, this indicator does not take the non-food aspects of welfare such as clothing or cash expenditures for education into account.

The basic needs approach covers a broader range of household needs. Yet it is very subjective to construct a poverty line based on this method: which needs are considered basic, and what extent of satisfaction is sufficient? The Lawondanese do not seem to care much about clothes, but to them it is very important to have a horse. Is a riding horse a basic need?

The most common indicator of welfare levels is the per capita income. Even on Sumba it is often applied, for example, in courses about "household-economics" (*ekonomi rumah tangga*). Part of the exercise in such courses is to calculate household budgets. The first way to do this is to make an annual record of all cash revenues and expenditures of a particular household. In table 7.1 the result is presented for the household of a rice farmer in my research area in Lawonda, Ama Yusuf.

Ama Yusuf's household consists of six persons, so dividing the total amount of revenues by six, the annual per capita expenditure in this case would be about Rp 20,000. The 1990 World Bank poverty-line for developing countries regarding annual per capita income was set at Rp 334,000. This earmarks Ama Yusuf's household as extremely poor. The indicator is irrelevant within the Lawondanese context.

Ama Yusuf's yearly cash revenues and expenditures are not equal to his household budget. They cover only the part of household revenues and expenditures in cash, and all transactions, yields and consumption in kind are excluded. Ama Yusuf and his wife were

still able to manage their household with this minimal amount of cash. A more realistic household budget includes revenues and expenditures in kind. Harvest from the fields and gifts and loans from other households have to be included in the list of revenues. Household consumption, gifts, loans and contributions to others (in kind) are added in the list of expenditures. The first problem with constructing such a budget is to get data about all the various transactions in kind. These transactions are often invisible to the outside observer, because they do not take place at the market. They are typically conducted in the fields, at home or at ceremonial gatherings. This problem is elaborated below, particularly in chapter 8, on networks for exchange of resources, and in chapter 10, where I describe the arrangements for distribution of the rice harvest.

Table 7.1 Cash revenues and expenditures of the household of Ama Yusuf in 1989.

Revenues	%	Expenditures	%
from:		coffee, sugar, kerosene, tobacco,	
sale of a goat	16	chalk, salt and soap	51
sale of chickens and eggs	18	costs of rice cultivation	8
sale of banana and areca nut	12	house repair	2
sale of gathered products (fish, candlenut)	5	health care	4
borrowed and repaid with paddy	22	school fees	4
gift of relatives	27	church contribution	6
		tax payment	9
		travel expenses	7
		stolen	9
Total	100	Total	100
Total cash revenues and expenditures of Ama Yusuf in 1989 were Rp 114,000, which corresponded with about 140 Dutch guilders. All items of revenue and expenditure are presented in percentages of the total.			

The second problem is to estimate annual production. People in Lawonda do not measure their total annual harvest. They harvest many times a year and take from the fields in quantities that make sense for their needs at that moment (see chapter 2, Box 2.1). "Annual production" is, in their perception, a long list of cups and baskets, bags and bundles, that cannot be added together. This leads to the third problem, the absence of a standard unit of value. Suppose one would be able to make a list of revenues and expenditures, both in

cash and in kind, measured in volumes. How can one attribute value to each item? There are no fixed prices, no financial expressions for use-value, and the exchange value varies and "depends on the circumstances". Reports that do not pay attention to these methodological problems, and just use the current market price to value the total volume, a large part of which never entered the market, present purely fictional figures. The results reveal little about the standard of living or the level of poverty. My conclusion is that in non-monetary economies like the Uma-economy of Lawonda, it is impossible to measure the extent of poverty or to construct budgets for bounded periods of time in exact quantitative terms.

Yet, there is much to be said about poverty. People suffer from seasonal shortages of food, their health is threatened by continuous illnesses, and most older married women in the area have lost at least one child. Poverty is always a relative concept. It implies a comparison with a better or even an ideal situation. To be able to compare one must be aware of alternatives. To assess one's own position and compare the alternatives, there must be criteria for what is considered "better". These criteria vary culturally, and within cultures they vary according to the preferences and ideas of smaller groups.

A method of poverty assessment that reveals the differences in wealth as perceived by the local population is "subjective poverty ranking" (Firdausy and Tisdell, 1992:84) or "wealth ranking" (Grandin, 1988). It asks the respondents to rank their wealth position in relation to a specified group of households. One of the results of this subjective ranking is a list of "indigenous" indicators of poverty.<sup>1</sup>

A subjective method of assessing poverty implies that the local perception of poverty becomes the object of research, instead of using "objective" units of measurement, such as the poverty lines.

### **No horse to ride, no buffalo to pull**

It is certainly possible to lead a good life in Lawonda. In the introduction to this chapter, I described what a good life entails for the Lawondanese: enough food during the entire year to feed one's own family, sufficient rice to treat guests properly, living in peace with neighbors, relatives and forebears, good health, sufficient means to meet ceremonial obligations, a house that provides shelter and prestige, and a good future perspective for the children. This description includes many subjective and normative elements. This raises the methodological question of how to measure the extent to which one has reached such a good life. Although well-being is primarily a matter of subjective evaluation, I found some material indicators relevant in the local evaluation of the quality of life that can be measured

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<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, I had not heard about this method during my fieldwork. I learned about local perceptions on wealth and poverty less systematically. As a participant in the local economy for over five years, my Lawondanese neighbors gradually taught me about their perceptions at their own pace and in their own words.

and used to assess the well-being of households in Lawonda . These indicators of well-being often have consequences for more than one element of a "good life".

### *Horses and buffalo*

I described the traditional indigenous perceptions of wealth in chapter three. Wealth is most obviously indicated by large numbers of livestock, especially horses and buffaloes. To not have horses or buffaloes at all, is one sign of poverty in Lawonda. Yet, how many heads of livestock one should possess to be wealthy is not very clear. Miedema describes that people in Anakalang, the area south of Lawonda, consider a man who owns more than fifteen head of buffaloes as "not poor", the owner of about thirty head as "well-to-do", someone with a herd of over sixty buffaloes "wealthy", and the single owner of over a hundred head of buffaloes as "extremely wealthy" (1989:60). If these data, which were gathered in the 1970's, were still applicable, and for Lawonda as well, they would imply that there were no wealthy people left in Lawonda. In my two research areas, people regard a person with five or more buffaloes at least as "well-to-do". The level of the poverty line which Miedema indicates with regard to buffalo ownership is much higher than what I heard from people in Lawonda. The explanation of this difference is that constructing a poverty line is a matter of internal comparison. If the variety in livestock possession is only small, the internal difference between rich and poor will be smaller as well. There has always been a difference in the number and pattern of livestock possession between Lawonda and Anakalang (see Hoekstra, 1948), with a higher occurrence of large herds in Anakalang. This makes the range between poor and extremely wealthy much wider in Anakalang than in Lawonda. At this point, it is also important to remember that I recorded the ideas of poorer people in Lawonda, and most of them think of themselves as people without livestock, as a category distinct from those who own buffaloes, even if it is only one animal.

Four of the 16 households in the research area of Maderi own buffaloes and horses. The wealthiest family owns ten horses and one buffalo, whereas the other households have only one or two buffaloes, and one to three horses. The eight other households do not own horses or buffaloes.

There are four buffalo owners in Pangadu Jara, two of them have six buffalo, the others have only two and one animal. Two of these buffalo owners have a horse as well, whereas two other households have only a single horse and no buffalo.

There are four ways in which the possession of horses and buffaloes contributes to a relatively strong economic position. In the first place, continuous possession of livestock gives prestige, as I have described in chapter three. Second, buffalo ownership brings with it control over the *kelompok pakeri*. This implies control over the way human labor and buffalo are used in rice cultivation. Buffalo owners decide together on the sequence of trampling the rice fields, and so they can give priority to the cultivation of their own paddy fields. The buffalo owners' part in rice cultivation is their contribution of buffalo services; in return for these services they receive the human labor services of the buffalo-less. In this way, the possession of buffaloes yields human labor. Third, livestock is regarded as a

savings account. Horses and buffalo can be sold to cover large expenditures like hospital treatment or the costs of higher education. In this way, livestock is security for good health and a good future perspective for the children. The fourth contribution of livestock possession is ceremonial. Horses and buffaloes are the main constituents of the bride-price. If a family can raise the funds -in horses and buffalo- to pay a high bride-price, it is able to obtain a bride of high social status, who will then contribute to a good future perspective for her children. The possession of only a few animals seems to be rather insufficient in this respect. Bride-prices can easily mount up to thirty animals, even for men in Pangadu Jara and Yami Pahuruk. Here it is important to remember that the Uma-economy is a debt economy: every person is involved in chains of reciprocal obligations. The wealthier a person is, the larger the number of social relations on which he can depend in times of material requirements. The Sumbanese say it is best not to take a horse from your own stable, but ask for someone else's instead (Miedema, 1989:67). A large number of debts does not indicate misery; on the contrary, it shows that the person involved is considered credit worthy, and in its own way it is an indicator of wealth.

### *Land*

Land is also an important variable in the Lawondanese distinction between poor and not-poor. Yet, there is no sharp discrepancy between land-less and land owners. Everyone who wants to cultivate food crops can get access to dry land, and all inhabitants of Lawonda cultivate at least a garden with maize, cassava and vegetables. As an indicator of relative wealth, only the amount of cultivated paddy fields matters. This amount is indicated in Lawonda by the amount of rice seed that a household annually sows<sup>2</sup>. The ability to sow a large quantity of rice seed and cultivate an extensive area of paddy fields, reveals a strong economic position in various respects. In the first place, it indicates the ability to mobilize sufficient human and animal labor that are not hired, but obtained in reciprocal exchange relationships. Second, it shows that one is able to use the paddy fields for cultivation, which implies that the paddy field owner did not have to pledge his fields, because apparently other solutions to meet ceremonial (or other equally urgent) obligations are available (see Miedema, 1989:71). If a farmer sows a large quantity of rice seed, he will harvest a considerable amount of rice. The harvest is partly used for his own consumption and to treat his guests properly. Another part of the harvest is distributed to other people, and thus serves good relations. This can be interpreted as a contribution to the indigenous social security, which can be beneficial to the rice farmers' household if they require support.

The Lawondanese have two demarcation lines with regard to this indicator of relative wealth: (a) people who do not sow any rice are poor, and (b) people who sow more than one bag of rice seed are well-to-do. In Yami Pahuruk, there is only one well-to-do household that sows two bags of seed per year, whereas there are six who do not cultivate rice at all. The other nine households sow only very small amounts. In Pangadu Jara, there

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<sup>2</sup> In share-cropping arrangements usually both the owner of the field and the sharecropper contribute their own share of the seed.

are four households that sow more than one bag of rice seed annually, whereas only two households do not cultivate rice.

### Food

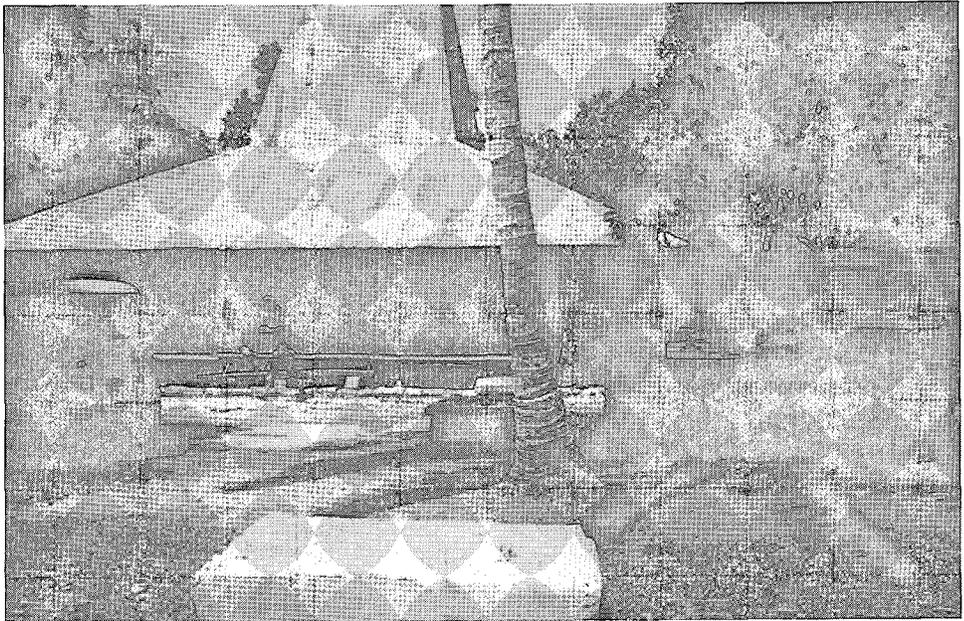
The food situation of a household in Lawonda is hard to assess. The best situation is that a sufficient quantity and quality of food is available all year round. A large rice harvest is not yet a guarantee of continuous food security. Only if one is able to manage such a harvest well, finding a good compromise between social and economizing behavior, can a sufficient part of the harvest can be used for personal consumption. A high food security can also be reached by people who cultivate only dry land. Their food security is then more in nutritional and quantitative (calorie) terms, because dry land farmers are always short of the food with the highest social value, rice.

I found that the presence in a house of permanent inhabitants who do not belong to the nuclear family, and the continuous presence of a cat, are good indicators of food security in Lawonda. Let me explain this. Every member of a household needs sufficient food for subsistence and to be able to work. If a family in Lawonda finds it hard to feed all its children, they are boarded out to other households. The oldest generation moves to the houses of the children who provide them with the best food security. Thus, there is a high correlation between the number of permanent inhabitants of a house and its food situation. If the food situation is good, other people will board in. There are four households in Pangadu Jara with "permanent guests". In one household, the wife of a former slave and her daughter boarded in after her husband passed away. In three separate cases, a child of relatives was boarded in return for domestic services. In Yami Pahuruk there is only one case of boarding in. It involves a secondary school boy who helps his uncle and aunt in the house and on the fields after school hours. In return he receives food, shelter and assistance to pay his school fees.

The presence of a cat is the other indicator of food security. Cats are very special animals for the Lawondanese. A house without cats is soon taken over by rats. Cats are referred to as *ana maramba*, children of nobility, and treated with great care. It takes effort to convince a cat that the human dwelling is the best place to stay. Cats are able to survive in the fields without human care, feeding themselves with mice, rats and other small animals. Cats will only stay permanently in relatively prosperous households, where regular meals are served along with additional dishes. Therefore, the continuous presence of a cat is a clear indicator of food security, a combination of good care and food availability in regular and nutritious meals. In Yami Pahuruk, there is only one household with a permanent cat, whereas in Pangadu Jara, five houses are inhabited by a cat.

### Houses

A nice house is very clear indicator of prosperity in Lawonda. There is a difference between houses: some are mere dwellings, whereas others are built to enhance the prestige of its owner and be the basis for the *Uma*. I found that the Lawondanese have four general



A peak roofed thatched house with a tomb of the best type in front is a traditional expression of prosperity (above). A modern version (below) shows a huge house with a tin, peaked roof, a very large tomb made of concrete in front

categories of houses: (a) temporary huts, (b) simple permanent grass-thatched houses, (c) peak roofed thatched houses (*uma adat*), and (d) permanent houses with a corrugated iron roof. The "good life" in Lawonda should be led in either a peak roofed thatched house, or in a house with a tin roof. The latter two types of houses indicate relative prosperity not only because they are usually built more solidly, but also because they reveal the ability of the inhabitants to mobilize the support of many other people, or access to money, or both.

In chapter 6, I described how an *uma adat* was built with the various contributions of many relatives, neighbors and allies. A house with a tin roof is the modern style. One needs money to buy the metal plates and nails, but relatively little human labor is required. The tin roofs last much longer than the thatched roofs. A special category of tin roofed houses have a peaked roof. Such a roof expresses a compromise between traditional and modern, and it can imply that the inhabitants are active *marapu* adherents (the peak is the *marapu*'s residence), or that they are sensitive to the traditional expression of prestige. This shape of roof requires many more metal plates than a simple roof, and so the owner of such a house should have good access to monetary funds.

All types of houses can be found in the two research areas: in Pangadu Jara there are four temporary huts, nine simple grass-thatched houses, and two thatched *adat*-houses. In Yami Pahuruk, there are four temporary huts, eight simple, thatched houses, two thatched *adat*-houses, and two houses with tin, peaked roofs.

### Graves

The last indicator of the well-being of households in Lawonda concerns the aspect of "a good life", which says that the living should live in peace with their ancestors. It is the obligation of the living to bury their deceased relatives with due respect. That involves a proper type of grave, and a funeral which includes all ceremonies and rituals prescribed by customary law<sup>3</sup>. Building a good grave is not just a matter of decent behavior toward the deceased, nor only an expression of local culture. It is also a prerequisite for the undisturbed and prosperous life of the living. If a deceased relative is not buried in the proper *adat*-way, his or her soul hovers about and causes ill fate or disease for the living (Kapita, 1976:163). Good graves are therefore a priority for the Sumbanese. Thus, spending a considerable amount of human labor and material resources on graves and funerals is an investment in the quality of life.

I asked the inhabitants of the two research areas about the status of the graves of their parents and parents-in-law, because these are their prime responsibility in this respect. The type of grave reveals the social status of the deceased, and consequently of the living

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<sup>3</sup> The content of customary law is subject to interpretation and negotiation. The prescribed rituals are relatively fixed and clear for adherents of the *marapu* religion, but for Sumbanese Christians, it is much less obvious how they should honor their deceased relatives. Yet, I noticed that even Christians in Lawonda still attach great importance to a grave of the traditional type, and a traditional funeral ceremony.

descendants as well. A grave is called official if the type of tomb is in accordance with the social status and all funeral ceremonies are carried out to full extent.

In Yami Pahuruk, five households have not completely fulfilled their obligations toward the deceased parents, whereas in Pangadu Jara there are four households with this type of debt. This is not yet an urgent issue in both areas for four households where the parents are still alive. Seven households in Yami Pahuruk and eight in Pangadu Jara replied that their parents' graves are already official.

The question that remains is whether the indicators described above can lead to a conclusion about poverty and wealth in Lawonda. Who are the poor, and who are the relatively well-off? Theoretically it would be possible to calculate such a relative socio-economic position. Then, a household should be attributed with a score for each indicator, and the total calculated well-being would be the sum of the scores. The method could be further refined by multiplying the score with a coefficient which corresponds with the importance that the Lawondanese attach to the indicator at hand. Attributing such weights is a very subjective endeavor. I object to quantitative statements about welfare, because their apparent precision conceals the subjective evaluations of the people involved.

Yet, the combination of indicators can be used to draw a picture of extreme cases. In the category of households with a low score on most or every indicator, we find the households of women who still live on the land of their birth *kabihu*. They do not possess the land they live on, and the land they cultivate is borrowed either from the women's father or brothers. They still live on this land, either because their husbands are too poor to pay a bride-price or to make a living on their own land, or because they are divorced or widowed, and are no longer taken care of by their ex- or late husband's family. Socially, they are subordinate to their male relatives. One of the consequences of this is that if they were to ever obtain livestock, they would not be able to withstand the requests of the male relatives who will eagerly take the horse from their sister's stable instead of from their own. Their house is by definition temporary, because of the local rule of patrilocality. Additionally, whether or not these households are able to send their children to the secondary school is completely dependent on the ability and willingness of their network partners to pay school fees.

We find the house of the chairwoman of the female farmers' organization in Maderi at the other end of the range of households. The social status of this family is high, and it shows in their house: a large *adat*-house with a painted tin roof. Two of their children work as school teachers, and the third son is studying at the university on Java. The head of the household receives a modest, but regular pension in cash. Their daughter is married to an influential government official in the district capital. This household sows two bags of rice seed per year, and manages to get from other households all the human labor required to cultivate the paddy fields. They used to own a considerable herd of livestock, but since the youngest son pursued his education on Java, many heads have been sold to cover his expenses. In spite of all these signs of prosperity, the number of permanent inhabitants of the house is very small: only the old husband, his younger wife, and in the years of my surveys, a teenage nephew. There is no cat living permanently in this house, and this

indicates that cooking is not very regular. There are two major "postponed investments": the grave of the old husband's father is not yet official, and the oldest son is not yet married, because in spending the family's livestock resources his brother's university expenses receive priority over the bride-price for his wife.

### **Consequences for the assessment of cash earning activities**

Statistical indicators of poverty incidence can be useful to direct development activities to larger regions within a nation. Yet, for the exact targeting of beneficiaries of poverty alleviation activities, the internal distinctions between "poor" and "less poor" at the local level are more relevant. Even in areas that are known in the region as "poor", such as my two research areas, the internal difference can be considerable. The local criteria for the well-being of a household are not always easily recognized. If poverty assessment is the aim of a brief visit by people from outside the area, it is questionable whether their methods of research will be able to decipher these criteria, unless they use a method of indigenous wealth ranking.

There is one lesson from the analysis of the Uma-economy that I suggest be considered in poverty assessment for "gift economies" in other areas of the world. If reciprocity is the dominant mode of exchange in the economy, every household is involved in chains of debts: gifts of the past will be balanced by reciprocal gifts in the future. A method of assessment of the material situation of a household in such an economy should include questions about the household debts and claims. Such a balance sheet in Lawonda includes debts and claims in money, and more importantly, in livestock, land and people. The strongest economic position in Lawonda is characterized by the ability to mobilize a large quantity of resources from other households when necessary. The weakest economic position shows in the absence of credit relations.

I presented the list of variables used locally to indicate the relative welfare of a household to give an overview of issues that matter in the quality of life. Economic activities, including those aimed at earning money, are assessed according to their impact on this quality of life. Poverty alleviation is then only one aspect that addresses one or several material aspects of the quality of life. Development activities can have repercussions on other aspects, for example, on the quality of social relations of the households that participate in the activities. If the Lawondanese consider a new activity, they will not only assess its impact on their economic situation, but also on their social security. A good activity contributes to the quality of life in its various aspects.

It will become apparent in the following chapters that the Lawondanese population is not homogeneous in this respect: the assessment of specific activities to earn money varies with the socio-economic position of categories within the local population. It is only possible to obtain money from partners in a network for exchange of resources if such a network is available. The options to earn money by selling paddy is only open to those who have sufficient access to paddy fields and buffalo services. The option to earn money discussed

in chapter 9, gathering birds' nests, is the major source of living only for a very few young men in Lawonda. The majority of the local population strongly disapproves of this activity. Yet, if alternatives to make a living are very bad, or even absent, it can be worth while to take this disapproval for granted and engage oneself in this activity anyway.

At the end of this chapter, perhaps the impression remains that I take the local assessment of development activities as static and exclusively legitimate. This is not my intention. Even in Lawonda, the ideas on what constitutes a good quality of life, and about the most suitable ways to reach this desired situation are subject to change. Incorporation into the larger economy and acquaintance with new modes of thinking have their repercussion on these ideas. More and more it is regarded as old fashioned to only show one's wealth in livestock possession. Twenty years ago, selling horses to pay for university fees would have been considered a very foolish thing to do. Yet today, it is seen as a good investment in the future well-being of the whole family. This future graduate will be in the position to return support to many relatives. Another example of outside influence on the priorities of the Lawondanese concerning the way they spend their available resources can be observed at funerals. Conversion to Christianity invokes a different attitude toward the deceased. The dead still have to be buried with due respect, but both the Church and the government exert themselves to convince the people that it is not necessary to slaughter many heads of livestock. Those who prefer to save some buffalo for use in paddy cultivation, can now legitimize the smaller gift to the deceased by referring to Church or government policy.

Development activities in Lawonda always contain a confrontation between traditional, indigenous perceptions and new ideas. The challenge for all parties involved in the Uma-economy is to make the best choice from the repertoire of options.

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## Kita punya rumah sendiri: about networks for exchange of resources

The puzzling preference to be vague about terms of exchange seems to be a characteristic of economic behavior in Lawonda. In chapter 6, I described how Lawondanese farmers prefer an unspecified lending arrangement over a share cropping or leasing contract when they lend some of their fields to villagers with a paid job. A long term relationship with a paid official is regarded in Lawonda as a very good achievement, and it is worth while to offer the use rights of a field in exchange for such a relationship. Subsequently, the land owner expects to receive gifts of money from the official.

While I was wondering how people in Lawonda try to get hold of money, there was another feature that amazed me. I noticed that some people just ask for money from others. Not in the sense of begging, but as if they are entitled to receive a financial gift. Much to my surprise these requests were often awarded, not only by close relatives, but also by people who, at first glance, did not seem on such close terms. For example, a third of the money for tax payment in 1989 in the two areas of in-depth study was obtained from other people, without any clear and direct reciprocal gift. Our neighbors in Lawonda seemed to expect that we would behave similarly, and very often they came to us, asking for a loan or a gift to mitigate their severe financial problems. Why would our help be obvious?

What these two features have in common, is that they draw attention to exchange relations in which monetary transactions can be regarded as gifts. In this first chapter on ways to obtain money, I concentrate on this monetary "gift giving".

### **Reciprocity and networks**

I described in the first part of this book that reciprocity is the dominant mode of exchange in the Uma-economy. If daily needs cannot be met by own production, the Lawondanese will try to obtain the required goods from neighbors or relatives. What they have to give in return is not specified in time nor quantity; the debt confirms the quality of the relationship between the exchange partners. Reciprocal transactions involve the exchange of material goods or services, and serve the creation or maintenance of social relations. The short term goal of providing the necessities of daily life is combined in reciprocal

transactions with the long term goal of making provisions to cope with contingencies. Good exchange relations are the best guarantee in Lawonda for social security.

If we take the Lawondanese distinction between "us", "no others" and "others" as the indicator of social distance, the closest relations are found among kinsmen within the *Uma*. The resources of all people who compose the group of "us" are regarded as *kita punya bersama*, our collective property. This holds true at least in the sense that one member of this group can feel free to ask fellow members for (the use of) part of their resources, and that within such a group there is a moral obligation to give. If one of the Uma-members earns a salary in money, his or her relatives within the Uma regard the salary as a kind of common resource.

All Sumbanese men and women with a paid job have to negotiate with their relatives on the meaning of *kita punya bersama*; they face the problem of defining the group of "us" and how to reach terms of exchange that are acceptable to both exchange partners.

Not every household in Lawonda has an Uma-member with a money salary. Then, relations with people outside the Uma must be established, in order to obtain money in reciprocal exchange relationships.

This chapter focuses on networks for exchange of resources as the reciprocal arrangements that are used by the Lawondanese to establish long term exchange relations with people who have a monetary income. Lawondanese farmers offer their labor, land or buffalo in return for assistance in paying school fees, taxes and other financial expenditures. Yet, is this option to create such reciprocal relations open to every household in Lawonda? Furthermore, how important is the assistance of network partners in solving the financial problems of the Lawondanese?

### **Networks for exchange of resources**

The metaphor "network" is used to indicate the linkages between a specified set of individuals (Milardo, 1988:14). The actors, whether households or individuals, are the nodes of the network, and the relations between them are the ties. I use the concept of network to refer to a set of ego-centered social relations aimed at the exchange of resources on terms that are not specified with regard to time and quantity.

The concept of network has its own history in the social sciences. In the 1960's social network analysis emerged as a new branch in sociology. It was used as a unit of social structure that reveals the connectedness of individuals in a community.

"Network analysts start with the notion that the primary business of sociologists is to study social structure. The most direct way to study social structure is to analyze the patterns of ties linking its members. Network analysts search for the deep structures -regular network patterns beneath the often complex surface of social systems. They try to describe these patterns and use their descriptions to learn how network structures constrain social behavior and social change."  
(Wellman, 1983:157)

"Further refinements were subsequently developed, providing a means by which several features of social networks could be specified with the intention of quantifying the social structure of a community" (Milardo, 1988:14). A glimpse at the content of the journal "Social networks" shows that "networks" are now a main concept in sociometry. By no means it is my intention to build a mathematical model of exchange relations in Lawonda. My own concept of network is more in accordance with the way it is used in actor-oriented approaches. Social networks are not used as analytical building bricks of social structure, but in a more general way to refer to the interactional links between actors. An example of this approach is found in the article "Multiple enterprise in the central highlands of Peru" (Long, 1979):

"New economic investments emerge out of a whole set of social investments in personal relations and themselves generate new or modified sets. A person's ability to combine different branches of economic activity and to develop certain types of entrepreneurial careers is, I maintain, crucially affected by the content of his existing personal network. This network of relationships is significant not only because it might provide access to essential resources like capital or labor, but also for the flow of information and for the support its participants can offer for various courses of action. Although certain aspects of a person's network may be preselected by family and community background, other aspects must be developed from scratch, like those based on friendship or on occupational criteria. The ways a person, in a given socio-cultural setting, attempts to evolve and maintain a dependable network of social ties which can be activated for specific purposes is, then, a matter of considerable analytic interest for the understanding of economic careers." (Long, 1979:125)

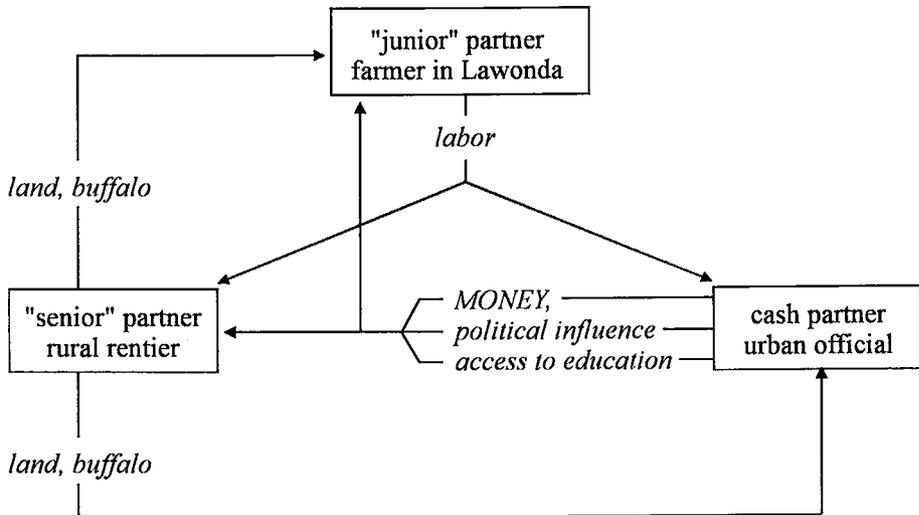
The fact that people intentionally create networks as a strategy for economic activities is exactly why the analysis of networks in Lawonda is important. People in Lawonda seek partners for their network who can provide them with the resources they lack. This strategy seems to be very suitable to get access to money. Networks for exchange of resources in Lawonda provide a solution to the problem how to get money for people who can only offer their labor where there is no wage labor. Similarly it provides a way out for land and buffalo owners who would like to exchange the use of their resources for cash where there is no market for the use of these resources. Exchange within social networks is different from market exchange, even when money is involved, because in networks the quality of personal relations matters. Decisions in networks are made by actors in response to or anticipation of the decision of another party. Whereas in the market, according to neo-classical economic theory, individual units act anonymously in response to environmental parameters such as market price. "Although it is obvious to economic theorists that exchange involves a decision by each party with respect to a specific other party, the "market" as a theoretical concept aggregates across the set of all possible other partners" (Emerson, 1987:11).

Networking as a strategy is also used in the discourse of development policy, especially in the circuit of non-governmental development organizations. The participants in this

discourse "expand the approach of network analysis to non-hierarchical, non-group structures into a network ideology, that advocates egalitarian, open communities. Some even use it as a verb, *networking*, to mean the deliberate creation of networks for instrumental ends" (Wellman, 1983:156). People in Lawonda are active *networkers*, but there is no egalitarian ideology involved. Networks for exchange of resources in Lawonda are per definition non-egalitarian, since the partners seek each other as complementary matches. How the resources are distributed among the members of a network is subject to negotiation, but because of the existing power relations, decisions are not made democratically.

In chapter 5 I already described the pattern of the networks for exchange of resources, and gave the example of Boku Dena's network. As a summary of this description we can recall the diagram (figure 5.1). In the context of ways to obtain money we can pay special attention to the flow of money and the reciprocal prestations of the "senior" and "junior" partners.

Figure 8.1 Pattern of exchange networks in Lawonda



This diagram shows the type of goods and services that are exchanged between exchange partners. The exchange partners are characterized by their specific role in the network for

exchange of resources. This pattern of relations, roles and flow of goods and services can be recognized in each actual example of such a network in Lawonda.

In using the concept of network for exchange of resources, I try to identify specific kinds of exchange relations. The networks I describe are, in this sense, part of a much larger set of social relations that can be addressed with the general concept of social networks (cf, Boissevain, 1974). I locate the reciprocal exchange relations within an individual's totality of social relations, which are intentionally created and maintained to give the "rural partners" access to money.<sup>1</sup> The crucial aspect of this way of obtaining money, compared to the ways which will be discussed in the next chapters, is that it concerns reciprocal exchange, and that is the mode of exchange which is traditionally preferred by the Lawondanese. Reciprocity is the suitable mode of exchange only if relations are very close. The effort for rural partners to create a network for exchange of resources comprises both the effort to come on good social terms with potential money partners, and the effort to reach good material terms of exchange.

### **Rambu Doce's network**

The following case study from Maderi depicts the exchange activities of a 55 year old woman and her household. It presents a colorful collection of exchanges in products and resources, in people and services, in money and in kind. It provides the information from which her network for exchange of resources can be deduced.

Rambu Doce lives in a simple thatched house in Maderi. Although she is married, she lives in the area of her own parents. Her first husband was not wealthy enough to pay the bride-price and therefore he had to agree to live temporarily on the land of his father-in-law and work for him. Temporarily meant for the rest of his life. Eight years ago he died in an accident. He was buried in the *paraingu* of Rambu Doce in a temporary grave, and in the future -if ever the bride-price is paid off by his children- his corpse will be reburied in his own *paraingu*. Rambu Doce remarried with her late husband's brother, and he moved in with her, too. They live and work closely together with the household of the uncle (father's brother) and two brothers of Rambu Doce. The first brother is a teacher at the local primary school; he is married and has six children. The second brother is married and has eight children, the oldest child is only fourteen years old. The uncle is old. He used to be the teacher of religion, and for years he was the reverend in the area east of Lawonda. Now he is retired. He is not able to do physical work any more because he is blind. The uncle's wife is much younger, and she is very active. They have three children and two of them are primary school teachers. The youngest son studies at a university on Java. Women on

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<sup>1</sup> In the terminology of Boissevain (1974:43), a network for exchange of resources is a cluster, that is, a segment of a social network which has a relatively high density in the sense that the persons involved are more closely linked to each other than they are with the rest of the network.

Sumba don't have their own land rights, so Rambu Doce and her husband do not have any land of their own in Maderi. They can, however, use some of the land of the uncle and of the first brother. It is dry land, suitable for maize and cassava cultivation and every year Rambu Doce and her husband have a sizable garden where they grow a large variety of crops.

The brothers and the uncle regularly receive products from her garden. Every year the youngest brother asks for a bag of cassava from Rambu Doce's garden, and takes it with him on a trip to the coastal area, where he barter the roots for salt. After his arrival back home, Rambu Doce always receives a small basket of salt.

Rambu Doce does not have a paddy field, but every year she assists her brothers and uncle with transplanting paddy. At harvest time she gets a bag (about 70 kilograms) of paddy from each of them. Her house does not have a real yard with fruit trees. Whenever she needs coconuts or fruit she just asks some of her youngest brother.

Rambu Doce had three daughters and three sons. The oldest daughter is married and lives with her husband elsewhere. The second daughter lives in town where she works in a shop. Rambu Doce regularly visits her and then gets some sugar, coffee and small money, and sometimes even a new sarong. The oldest son is a bright boy who studies at the agricultural school in Lewa. Rambu Doce's teacher brother pays his regular school fee, and sometimes the uncle's son contributes, too. The second son is still in secondary school in Lawonda. He is boarded out to Rambu Doce's uncle. He helps with domestic work and takes care of the livestock after school. His grand-uncle and -aunt are not able to do all the work themselves, because they are quite old and their own children have moved away. Rambu Doce's smallest children attend primary school and live at home with their mother. Their grandmother -Rambu Doce's mother-in-law- moved in with them several years ago. She cares for the smallest children, feeds the chickens and does all the other light domestic work in and around the house. The youngest child in the house is the two year old daughter of Rambu Doce's second brother. She lives with Rambu Doce temporarily to be weaned and to give her own mother more opportunity to go out and work on the land.

Rambu Doce and her husband do not have horses or buffalo. Rambu Doce is not able to keep a horse to herself if ever she, her husband or son receives one in *adat*-ceremonies, because her husband still owes her brothers and uncle the rest of the bride-price. The goat they had entrusted to the care of the younger brother, was slaughtered by the teacher brother and nothing could be done about it. Recently Rambu Doce received a bull. She does not own the animal, but she received it as part of the cattle fattening program of Ankara in cooperation with Propelmas. The fact that she was chosen as one of the first recipients in the credit program was due to her reputation as a good and industrious farmer. Her healthy relationship with the chairwomen of Ankara, the wife of her blind uncle, influenced the decision as well. She received credit in a poultry project in a similar way. She did not use the money to buy chickens or building materials for a good stable, because she was able to get chickens and build a stable through exchanges in kind. Instead, she used the small fund to buy a stock of sugar, and sold it to her fellow villagers in small quantities.

*Kita punya rumah sendiri*

The revenues of selling eggs and the profit of her small sugar enterprise were sufficient to pay back the debt to the credit program, and to cover part of her daily expenditures.

Rambu Doce often goes out to help in her brothers' or uncle's houses. Whenever they have guests and a lot of cooking has to be done, she assists in the kitchen. Whenever there are ceremonial obligations for the *Uma*-members elsewhere, she joins them and contributes her company and assistance.

Table 8.1 Profile of households involved in Rambu Doce's network for exchange of resources.

Household no:	1	2	3	4	5
head of household	Rambu Doce's husband	retired religious teacher	farmer Ama Dorkas	teacher Ama Mimi	teacher Yusuf
relationship with Rambu Doce	<i>ego</i> and husband	father's brother	brother	brother	father's brother's son
main occupation	dry land agriculture, chicken husbandry, cattle fattening	management of land, livestock, family, and women's organization; garden/yard cattle fattening	herding buffalo, dry and wet agriculture, yard	teaching, church work, garden, rice cultivation	teaching, arrange father's affairs
constant inhabitants of the house	6	2	7	8	1
temporary inhabitants (boarded in children:)	1	1	-	-	2
boarded out children	3	1	3	-	-
property and resources:					
land	no	yes	yes	yes	not yet
horses and buffalo (heads)	-	11	3	5	1
cash income per month (Rp)	-	30,000	-	120,000	75,000

When identifying Rambu Doce's network for exchange of resources, I look at the pattern of exchange relations in which her household, *rumah tangga*, takes the central position. The members of the other households involved have multi-stranded relationships with Rambu Doce, because they are close relatives, neighbors, fellow members of the farmers' organization and partners in exchange of resources at the same time. A profile of these households is depicted in table 8.1.

From this profile, we can see which role each household has in the network for exchange of resources of Rambu Doce. Rambu Doce and her younger brother Ama Dorkas are the "junior" partners in the network. They supply labor (services and children) and occasionally some agricultural products to their network partners. The religious teacher and his wife are the senior network partners. They supply land. As chairwoman of the Women's organization, Rambu Doce's aunt is the broker to local politics. Furthermore, because her daughter is married to a high government official in town, she is also broker to the urban resources of education and district politics. The two teachers are the money suppliers of the network.

Rambu Doce's network consists of members of her original *Uma*. Rambu Doce personally takes the position of a junior *Uma*-member as if she were a younger brother, but since she is a woman she does not have the rights of a brother. A network of *Uma*-members that interacts as a "modern-style" network for exchange of resources, including the "urban resources", is regarded as the best type of network in Lawonda. Such a network shows that the *Uma*-group has the strength and ability to cope with changing circumstances and needs, without having to turn to strangers. The relations between the network partners are then stable, because they are not only based on exchange of resources for mutual benefit, but also on kinship and marriage relations. Yet, a network that consists only of *Uma*-members can also be a sign of entrepreneurial failure. This is true if there are no urban officials or other people with a paid job amongst the *Uma*-members.

The network of Rambu Doce includes the household of her uncle, the retired religious teacher. His household is described in chapter 7 as the most prosperous one in Yami Pahuruk. His son is studying at a university on Java. The expenses of his education exceed all local proportions. Millions of rupiahs are spent each year, and the family sold many heads of livestock to raise the funds. The financial burden of university education is carried by Rambu Doce's uncle's network. It is a collective investment, and all contributing partners expect future benefit for themselves or their children. Once the son graduates from university and obtains a good assignment, he will have the (moral) obligation to support all of the people who financed his education. For urban officials who originate from rural areas like Lawonda this obligation puts a heavy burden on their household. Their houses seem to be never large enough to accept every relative who wants to board in with them. Their salary, however high it may be, is never enough to cover all demands from their network partners. Consequently, urban officials (including those with a paid job who do not live in town) spend much of their time negotiating with network partners and people who would

like to become their network partners, about whether or not they can expect a financial contribution and, if so, how much.

Although the university fees are primarily the responsibility of Rambu Doce's uncle, the presence of this huge item of expenditure has its repercussions on the way resources in Rambu Doce's network are used.

A large part of the financial resources and livestock are spent on the university fees. Meanwhile, the network partners in Lawonda eat dried cassava and taro, because they do not have the money to buy rice.<sup>2</sup> Yusuf, the teacher, has to postpone his wedding plans, because his father and uncles have put a bride-price for Yusuf's bride at a lower priority, and prefer to sell their livestock to pay for his brother's education. Rambu Doce anticipated the decisions of her network partners when she got hold of a horse. Instead of keeping the horse in their stable and risking the irrefusable claim of Rambu Doce's brothers and uncle, her husband sold it and used the money to pay the initial education costs of Rambu Doce's eldest son.

On the basis of my data, I cannot state in general how decisions are made in these networks, nor about which kind of partner has the largest say in these decisions. Yet even without these precise statements, the description of networks for exchange of resources shows that a considerable part of the resources in Lawonda are not allocated according to the short term priorities of individual households. There are continuous negotiations within these networks in which the partners claim each others' resources for their own priorities. The eventual use reflects the power in these negotiations, which can either be based on social position or on economic strength.

Table 8.2 presents a summary of the exchanges in which Rambu Doce was directly involved as mentioned in the case study. This table reveals that money is just one of the items that Rambu Doce seeks to obtain through her network. It also illustrates that it takes many types of goods and services to establish a network for exchange of resources that can be used as a way to obtain money.

I added Rambu Doce's daughter as a network partner in table 8.2. She is a partner in the sense that she does not live in the same house as her mother, and she specifically takes the role of urban partner in the network. In another way, she still belongs to Rambu Doce's household, because she is not yet married, and lives in town only temporarily to earn money. Again, this draws the attention to the problems of defining the boundaries of a household in Lawonda. The same problem holds true for Yusuf the teacher, Rambu Doce's cousin. The table gives the impression that the balance of reciprocity is rather in favor of Rambu Doce; but in this case Yusuf is also the son of Rambu Doce's uncle, and Yusuf's

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<sup>2</sup> From October until the harvest of the first maize crop in December or January, dried roots and tubers are the main staple food in this part off the area of Lawonda (Maderi). People prefer to eat rice. That people do not buy rice, except for special occasions, is not only due to a shortage of cash, but is also caused by the reluctance to spend money on food just to have nicer meals. This feature is described in chapter 3 as "the spheres of allocation of money".

gifts of money are reciprocated by Rambu Doce's son, who takes on Yusuf's domestic work in Yusuf's parents' house.

Table 8.2 What Rambu Doce gives to and receives from the partners in her network:

network partner:	uncle	Ama Dorkas farmer	Ama Mimi teacher	Yusuf teacher	daughter in town
What Rambu Doce gives:	assistance in: rice cultivation domestic work care of horses work at feasts	child care, assistance at feasts cassava	assistance in rice cultivation and work at feasts a goat		food and shelter in the village
What Rambu Doce receives:	use rights of dry land, paddy, access to credit, board and lodging for her son	salt, fruits, assistance in herding her goat	use rights of dry land, paddy, and money	money	sugar, coffee, money

How important is the network for Rambu Doce with regard to her financial needs? The answer depends on which unit of measurement is used to quantify the importance. In general, the network offers her security: whenever she faces severe problems, including financial problems, she can rely on the support of her network partners. Yet, this does not mean the network partners are willing to pay for every expense she provokes herself. Rambu Doce and I reconstructed her yearly financial budget, composed of the actual revenues and expenses in cash she had for the year 1989.

We can see from the data in Table 8.3 that Rambu Doce obtained 16 percent of her financial revenues from "friends and relatives". Two thirds of this amount were contributions from her network partners, and the other third was given by her daughter, who works at a shop in town. In fact, if the financial needs of Rambu Doce's children are considered to belong to her household, the network partners contributed more than what shows up in this annual budget. Rambu Doce's son, who boards with her uncle, received his school fee from his uncle (who in turn asked money from his son the teacher). Yet, this money does not enter Rambu Doce's house, nor does it show up on her budget. If the household is defined as the unit of people who share a house, then the boy's school fees are part of the financial needs (and expenditures) of the uncle's household.

Table 8.3 Annual financial budget of Rambu Doce in Maderi in 1989

Revenues	%	Expenditures	%
Sold for money:		Household consumption: food, tobacco,	
*horse	34	kerosene, soap, etc.	25
*parang	4	clothing	6
*agricultural products:		travel expenses	5
mung bean, eggs, chickens, plantains	29	agricultural inputs	2
		health care	0
credit for chicken husbandry	14	church contributions	1
		school fee and uniform	33
from friends and relatives	16	house construction	8
		gifts and contributions	2
profit sugar trade	3	debt repayment	18
		tax payment	0
Total revenues	100		100
<p>The total cash revenues and expenditures of Rambu Doce in 1989 were Rp 277,700, which correspond with about 340 Dutch guilders. All items of revenue and expenditure are presented in percentages of the total.</p>			

### In search of networks

The case study of Rambu Doce presents an example of the way the Lawondanese speak about their exchange relations, and implicitly about their network for exchange of resources. Yet, this network is not an indigenous concept. It is not easy to find a method to identify the members of a network for exchange of resources; networks are not registered by the village administration in the same way as households.

Initially in my research, I was not looking for these networks, but for the wider range of arrangements of mutual help. There are many types of mutual help in Lawonda: for example, the buffalo herding groups, *kelompok pakeri*, groups of women who transplant paddy together, distribution of the rice harvest from the paddy field, cooperation within a farmers' organization and collective house construction. Within each of these examples, mutual help has a different meaning. The type of goods or services that are exchanged, the relations between the exchange partners and the purpose of exchange all vary.

In this chapter, I concentrate on a specific segment of "mutual help": the network for exchange of resources as a set of reciprocal arrangements used by the Lawondanese to establish long term exchange relations with people who have a monetary income. This means that I focus on networking as a strategy to obtain money. In this section, I describe

whether or not the population of the two research areas succeeds in creating and maintaining such networks, and how important the monetary gifts within these networks are in mitigating the financial problems of the Lawondanese.

The inhabitants of the two research areas belong to the relatively poor part of the population of Lawonda. This means that in terms of networks most of them are the "junior partners", the suppliers of labor, who own few other resources themselves. Some of them are senior partners, mainly because of their age. What they all seek through the ties of a network are the urban resources of money and access to education. Translated into daily life, they seek relations with people who can help them pay their taxes, who can offer board and lodging to their school children, and if possible, assist in paying the school fees. One of the common ways to create a reciprocal relationship with paid officials in the village is to lend land to them. I asked the people from Pangadu Jara and Yami Pahuruk about these three issues: (a) where did you get the money to pay your taxes?, (b) where do your children stay, with whom are they boarded?, and (c) to whom did you lend land? I discovered a fourth way of identifying network relations during the course of my research by asking (d) whose house can you refer to as "*kita punya rumah sendiri*", our own house?

How do the people of Pangadu Jara and Yami Pahuruk get money to pay their taxes? Tax payment is an expenditure that cannot be postponed. In the month of May, nearly every household in Lawonda has to find a way to get hold of money. If there are good relations with a person who has a paid job, then it is a very obvious option to ask him or her for the money to pay the tax. In 1989, I gathered data about the sources of tax payment. The results are summarized in table 8.4.

Table 8.4 Sources of tax payment in Pangadu Jara and Yami Pahuruk in 1989.

area	Yami Pahuruk	Pangadu Jara
Total number of households	16	16
Households free from tax payment	2	3
Number of households that get money to pay taxes from:		
(a) sale of own products	12	8.5
(b) "gift" from network partners	2	3.5
(c) wage (own monetary income)	-	1

The table shows that network relations in these two areas were not very important in getting money for taxes, that is, if importance is concluded from the number of households

that used the network channel to get money for taxes. If the amount of money obtained through networks is considered, then the importance of network relations as source of tax payment increases: about a third of the total amount of tax payments in the two research areas was obtained this way. The two households in Yami Pahuruk that succeeded in getting money through their networks were mentioned in the case study, and belong to the relatively prosperous. More people in Pangadu Jara could rely on their network partners to pay tax for them than in Yami Pahuruk. The results are influenced by the fact that in Maderi May is not only the month for paying tax, but also the month of the harvest of *kacang ijo*. Since it is a good cash crop, *kacang ijo* has become a very suitable "tax crop" in Maderi as well as in other parts of west Sumba. Farmers who have just harvested *kacang ijo* do not have to turn to their network partners to ask for money. Or, they are not able at that season to convince their network partners of their shortage of money. In Pangadu Jara, people do not grow this crop, and May is for most people a month of shortage, because the rice harvest is still due.

"Where do your children stay?" is the next question that reveals relations with other households. Children are boarded out for various reasons. Children of eight years and older compose the most mobile part of the labor force. School children are boarded out to households that are close to school and who can use their help in domestic work. Boys and girls who no longer attend school work for their parents at home and in the field. If one of them is boarded out to relatives, this is a large investment in good relations, and considerable benefit -in access to land, livestock, money or influence- is expected in return.<sup>3</sup> The third category of children who are boarded out is composed of small children. Their parents hand them over to the care of relatives, to be free to work on the land and engage in other activities that are not easily combined with child care. This type of boarding out means asking a favor from relatives and is not a supply of labor to other households. In Table 8.5, data about children in the two research areas are listed.

The table shows that in the area in Pangadu Jara more children are boarded out than in the area in Yami Pahuruk. One explanation for this is that the inhabitants of the former have more relatives with paid jobs than those of the latter. This means that for Pangadu Jara there are more opportunities to board out school children. It appears that relations with female members of households are important. Women in Lawonda generally prefer to leave their children to the care of their own relatives "of the same blood", rather than bringing them to their husband's relatives. This holds true especially for small children. This means that children are preferably brought to their grandmother (mother's mother) or mother's sisters' houses. In the table, the category of female relatives also comprises the married sisters of the children's father. Because girls move to their husband's house after marriage, married sisters often live at a distance from their home *paraingu*. The reasons to board children with these married sisters are that their new house can be closer to school, or that

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<sup>3</sup> This is what I experienced myself as well in our own household, when it became apparent what the relatives of the boys and girls who were boarded in with us expected from us (see Vel, 1992).

they are able to assist in feeding the children and paying their school fee. For the sisters' husbands it is hard to refuse these children, since they are anxious not to hurt the relationship with their in-laws, *yera*.

Table 8.5 "Where do your children stay?", data from Yami Pahuruk and Pangadu Jara in 1989.

area	Yami Pahuruk	Pangadu Jara
Total number of children	45	54
Children who stay at home: total number divided in categories:	35	35
(a) small children	17	14
(b) school children	12	12
(c) working children :boys	6	6
girls	0	3
Children who are boarded out: total number divided in categories:	10	19
(a) small children, boarded out:		
to Uma-members	0	1
to female relatives	1	3
(b) school children, boarded out:		
to Uma-members	2	3
to female relatives	1	8
to other people	2	1
(c) working children, boarded out:		
to Uma-members	0	1
to female relatives	1	0
to others	3	2

Relatively few children in Maderi are boarded out. Although people generally prefer to keep all children at home, in Yami Pahuruk this is also a sign of shortage of good relations

with "complementary partners". It is hard for the parents in Maderi to find a boarding place for their children, since they have little to offer in return. For potential foster parents, accepting the child and the child accompanying relationship with the parents involves the risk of accepting many demands for money and other "urban services".

Boarding out children is not only an exchange of labor against access to education and board and lodging for the children, but often involves a solution to part of the financial problems of the parents as well. Whether or not the foster parents pay the school fees for their foster children depends on their relative ability (and willingness) to do so. Table 8.6 shows who paid school fee for the boarded out school children mentioned in table 8.5. Apparently, network partners with kinship relations more often pay school fees for their foster children than "other" partners.

Table 8.6 Division of education costs between parents and foster parents of boarded out children in Pangadu Jara and Yami Pahuruk in 1989.

Concerning school children who are boarded out to:	fellow Uma-members	female relatives	other people	Total
For how many children school fee is paid by:				
their own parents	0	1	3	4
their foster parents	5	8	0	13
total number of boarded out school children:	5	9	9	17

The third question concerns exchange of land-use rights. People who do not have access to land may borrow from their network partners, if possible. People who own land but are not able to cultivate all of it themselves lend land to network partners. I asked about the lending and borrowing of land in the two research areas. In Yami Pahuruk, six of the 16 households borrowed land from others, and six other households lent land to others. In Pangadu Jara, five households lent out land, and six households borrowed land from others. Borrowing and lending as it is used here is different from pledging. Either there are no fixed arrangements about what is expected in return, or the parties agree to share the harvest. Most of the borrowing is done by people who do not have land themselves: sons borrow from their father, men who live in the area of their wives borrow from their fathers-in-law, and divorced daughters who returned to the land of their own lineage borrow from their fathers or brothers. It is difficult to distinguish between sharing and borrowing in these arrangements, because most of the people involved speak about the land as if it were their

collective property, except when specifically asked who owns the land they work and live on. In one case in Pangadu Jara, a man lent a small paddy field to his neighbor in hopes that he would produce his own food and would not rely so much upon his willingness as a good neighbor to help his family in times of food shortage. Two men in Pangadu Jara borrowed a paddy field as part of the deal between buffalo owner and herdsman in the herding group. In all of these exchanges of land-use rights, there was no instance of lending to money partners in the network. Land-use rights are not directly exchanged for money in Yami Pahuruk and Pangadu Jara.

The fourth question that leads to the identification of networks is: "whose house do you refer to as *kita punya rumah sendiri*"? This indication of houses sounds very ambiguous for outsiders, but for people in Lawonda it is a clear concept. *Kita punya rumah sendiri* applies to a house where one is always free to enter, sit down and stay, with or without any special reason. One can rely on it inhabitants' support and hospitality. One is free to ask for favors or material help. "Our house is your home" indicates the meaning of the local concept. People in Lawonda use it selectively, and it should therefore not be confused with a general cultural feature of "hospitality" or "solidarity".

People in Lawonda do not like to include households, that cannot offer them anything in their category of *kita punya rumah sendiri*. By rejecting the very poor from their networks, people refuse to take permanent responsibility for this group's everlasting shortages. However, this does not mean the poor are left to starve. It only indicates that acknowledged network partners are (morally) entitled to support, but others are not. Manu Wolu, whose case is discussed in chapter ten, is an example of a person who is not regarded as a network partner by any other man except his father. Yet even he complains about Manu Wolu's reluctance to fulfill his obligations as a son. Manu Wolu mentioned three houses to me that he calls *kita punya rumah sendiri*, but the members of those households at their turn did not want to be associated with him.

It is difficult to summarize data about *kita punya rumah sendiri*, because there are no single denominators that allow for the adding up of different kinds of network partners. I present instead some common characteristics.

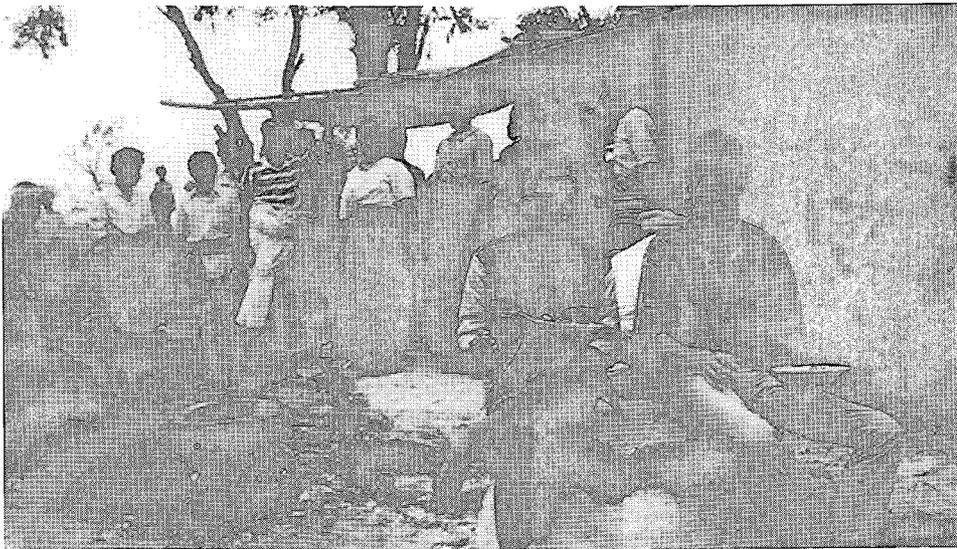
In Yami Pahuruk, *kita punya rumah sendiri* leads to groups of houses that resemble the *Uma*-units: in the center the house of the parents, surrounded by the houses of their children. The networks of households in this area can be indicated on the map as if they were geographical units. Compared to Pangadu Jara, the networks in Maderi are closed units. Within such a group, parents and children cooperate and have only a few links with households outside their own *paraingu*. It is much more complicated to draw a similar map of the network pattern of Pangadu Jara. There, each household is the center of its own network, and each partly coincides with the networks of other households. This leads to a multi-dimensional chain of networks. In Pangadu Jara, little remains of the *Uma*-units. The *Uma*-units are fragmented into parts of one or two houses, where father and son or two brothers cooperate closely with each other. This fragmentation can also be interpreted as the founding of new *Uma*. Yet, only in one case, that of a father cooperating with three

*Kita punya rumah sendiri*

grown-up sons, is this interpretation justified. In the other cases, people assess that cooperation with those other than their own *Uma*-members is more beneficial to them.

The fragments have their own links with households outside the former *Uma*-unit. The networks in Pangadu Jara are relatively open, connecting the local population with people outside their own compound. This difference between the two areas also appeared in the organization of development activities. In Maderi, it was no problem to compose working groups. Women of the local female farmers organization composed three geographical groups. The existing hierarchy between the members was accepted and cooperation could just be continued. In Pangadu Jara, the development organization was never successful. One of the problems was the composition of the working groups. There remained no clear, internal hierarchy between the inhabitants of Pangadu Jara, and in this the determination of leadership within a working group was not obvious. Some people of Pangadu Jara were more involved in cooperation with households outside of their own small area, and they could not afford to break these ties just to be able to cooperate with their fellow *Uma*-members in a development activity.

The categories of households included in *kita punya rumah sendiri* show two kinds of ties that connect the households in the research areas to households elsewhere. The first kind of tie is based upon kinship relations with female relatives: ties with the household of the wife's parents, or with the households of married sisters. Relatives along the female line are dispersed all over the island, because women move to the house of their husband after marriage.



One of the reasons why farmers in Lawonda are are anxious to keep up good relations with paid officials, is that these officials are the potential cash partners in their networks for exchange of resources

The second tie with network partners in other areas is the link between the households in Lawonda and households of people with a paid job in other areas. Only six of the 16 households in Yami Pahuruk have access to a person with a paid job, whereas 12 of the 16 households of Pangadu Jara have a paid official that they can call their network partner. There are large differences between these "cash partners". The network of Rambu Doce's uncle includes ties with a high official in the district capital. When walking down the hill from this uncle's house, another group of houses sits at the halfway point.

Umbu Labi lives in his own grass-thatched house, with his wife and two of his youngest children. He is member of a *kabihu* that originates from the coastal area. They have very little land themselves, because this *kabihu* settled in Maderi later than the others. Umbu Labi was a bright boy, and a Dutch missionary in Anakalang invited him to board with him and teach him the local language. He sent Umbu Labi to school, up to the teacher's college in the capital of the island. Yet, the lineage elders called him back, because they wanted him to become *ratu*, priest of the traditional Sumbanese religion. Being one of the few educated men from Maderi, he was selected to be village secretary. Umbu Labi held the office for nearly twenty years, and during this period he obtained a paddy field. The field was the object of a dispute and the village government decided to distrain the field. Only his eldest son, who was very often ill, attended school. Now this son is assistant of a primary school and earns a very modest salary. Umbu Labi's other children were not very successful. The oldest daughter is divorced and lives with her two children in a small cottage close to her father's house. She works on her brother's land. The second son cultivates his father's paddy field, but he is not a very industrious farmer. He gathers birds' nests in the dry season. His second sister married a man from Prai Madeta who was not able to pay a decent bride-price. Therefore, they live in their own house at the compound of Umbu Labi. The third sister was married off when she was only fifteen years old. The fourth sister, who is disabled, works for a Chinese shop owner in town. Umbu Labi is the head of the family. He considers his children's houses as his own, and he lives where he feels is the most appropriate for the time being.

There are three sources of cash in this network: the modest salary of the oldest son, the pocket money of the daughter in town, and the second son's irregular revenues from selling birds' nests. This means that the networks financial potential is very small, for example, even the burden of school fees for the secondary school would be too high.

Networks for exchange of resources in Lawonda can be regarded as arrangements for social security. The members can rely on each other's support in times of trouble, and they complement each other's needs. There is a limitation however. Not everyone is able to become a network partner. For the well endowed, the choice of network partners is open. For the poorest few, there is no choice: they can only be accepted -or not accepted- as a network partner. The empirical data on networks in Pangadu Jara and Yami Pahuruk reveal that in these two areas many people have not succeeded in establishing network relationships with people who can provide them with money. This leads to the conclusion that networking as a strategy to obtain money is not a good option for poorer people.

## **Networks and analysis of the local economy**

Analysis in terms of networks puts the Uma-economy in a perspective that is very different from main stream micro-economic analysis. I was used to thinking about the economy in terms of market conditions, being trained as an agricultural economist in the neo-classical tradition of the science. In that perspective, it is useful to take the household as the unit of analysis, and consequently explain economic behavior as the result of rational consideration within households. Yet, if market exchange is not the dominant mode of exchange in the economy, this approach is unsatisfactory. The networks for exchange of resources are more suitable units of analysis for an economy in which reciprocity is the dominant mode of exchange. The terms of exchange in such networks are not determined by a market-price mechanism, but by negotiations between people who have a long term personal relationship with each other. There *are* no prices for goods or services in these reciprocal arrangements, only reciprocal prestations, which are not fixed in type, quantity nor time. Because I know from my own experience how hard it is to imagine the consequences of thinking and acting in terms of reciprocity, I elaborate on four issues characteristic of this type of analysis of the Uma-economy in this final section.

Analysis in terms of networks can clarify why conclusions based upon individual household data do not correspond with the actual division of access to resources and of the agricultural products. Categories of people who are very poor according to individual household data can in practice be relatively well off, as the next example illustrates:

Meha is about thirty years old. He lives with his wife and two small children in a cottage close to the paddy fields. Although he lives in the area of his forefathers, he does not own paddy fields himself. His father had a paddy field but pledged it seven years ago and has never been able to get it back. Meha has only a dry land garden close to his house. It seems Meha's household is very poor.

Meha cultivates the paddy fields of his father-in-law, who is too old to do any hard physical labor himself. When Meha's wife goes out to transplant rice, he takes care of his grandchildren. They share the rice harvest: each gets half. Meha is member of a buffalo herding group. In this group, he represents his father-in-law's first wife's brother. Meha borrowed another small paddy field from this man, and the harvest from that field is for his own household. He can easily control irrigation water and guard the fields against birds, horses and wild animals, because he lives at the edge of these paddy fields. He also offers his control-and-guarding services to his wife's cousin, who found paid employment elsewhere. When Meha's wife passes her cousin's house as she goes to the market, she often gets some small money to buy sugar and coffee.

Secondly, analysis in terms of networks instead of households is more suitable to understanding how decisions about allocation of resources are made. How the resources within a network are used is, at least partly, the result of agreements and negotiations between the network partners. In the story above for example, Meha is not free to use his labor for new activities, because he has committed himself to his network partners.

Withdrawal from these types of commitments is only feasible if the alternative entails the same quality of social security for the long term.

A third issue concerns the distinction between members of a household. In this chapter, I gave attention to the specific role of children. The children within each household could well be called the *networkers*, because those who are boarded out make up the ties of the network. They still belong to their household as under aged children of their parents, but they actually live, eat and work in their foster-parents' house. This, by most definitions of the concept, makes them part of their foster parents' household. Their role can *only* be properly assessed in terms of networks.

The fourth characteristic result of the analysis of the Uma-economy in terms of networks is the link between the local economy and the "urban sector". The urban sector is a shorthand for the domain of money, education and political influence. Networks are used by people in Lawonda in several ways to get access to these "urban resources". The best way, according to local preference, is by creating urban partners within the own *Uma*. Many people in Lawonda are willing to accept the high expenses of school fees, because they assess education of their children as the best strategy for long term access to money. Not all of them are able to raise enough funds among their fellow Uma-members for school fees though. Then, the second best option is to incorporate non-related paid officials into one's network. If these money partners in the network of Lawondanese live in town, the reciprocal prestations of the network partners in the village are brought to town. The rural economy is connected with the urban economy in this way, and as a consequence, the geographical boundaries of the Uma-economy become unclear. People with a paid job, who work in the rural area, are subject to the permanent pressure of demand for money. They are not able to evade network ties with the landlord, who gave them land to build a house and make a yard, or even a paddy field to grow their own food. They must accept that the parents of school children, who board with them to provide domestic help, will call the official's house *kita punya rumah sendiri*.

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## Manu Wolu and the birds' nests

### Coping with insecurity

Every person has to keep up a large number of social relations in order to survive in the "non-monetary" economy of rural Sumba. Access to land and labor depends on relations within the kin group and neighborhood. Distribution of food, exchange of services and use of resources and goods are organized along the lines of specific sets of social relations. Only if one has a steady network of social relations can one be sure of a basic level of subsistence. Only if one has a network for exchange of resources can one use this arrangement as a way to obtain money. For the poorest people in Lawonda, the Uma-economy represents a repertoire of constraints rather than a repertoire of options. What in the case of multiple choice could be regarded as a strategy to reach well established and continuous social security is, in as far as it concerns the poorest people, more adequately addressed as "coping with insecurity". In practice, the latter implies coping with relatives and neighbors, or with anyone who is potentially an important partner in exchange.

The various sets of social relations that are relevant for exchange represent the framework for indigenous social security. Within this framework, exchanges range from sharing and mutual aid, to the asymmetrical exchange between patrons and clients. Coping with insecurity involves creating and maintaining as many relations as are required to be sure of support should one of the many instances of shortage or trouble occur. Yet in the end, although the relations serve the purpose of social security, they do not constitute arrangements to help the needy, nor to assure a basic level of subsistence for *all* members of society. Who has access to "social security" depends on the rules set by the local community. Only those who have something to offer will be accepted as a partner in exchange, and can then create exchange relations. Furthermore, only those who comply with the rules of proper behavior, and live up to the expectations of what is considered appropriate conduct within specific exchange relations will be able to maintain these relations and consequently rely on assistance in times of crisis. What the rules are and how they should be applied is open for negotiation.

Manu Wolu is a man who does not comply with the rules of the local community. He makes a living by gathering edible birds' nests and selling them to traders in town. Gathering birds' nests is strongly disapproved of in Lawonda, because it implies contact with the evil spirits that reside in the sites where the nests are situated. Men who are

engaged in gathering birds' nests refrain from their duties within the common agricultural activities, and consequently isolate themselves from the local community. Manu Wolu's case is presented in this chapter to illustrate a dilemma of the poorest people within villages such as Lawonda<sup>1</sup>. The very poor must either submit to the rules of the local community and live a life of hard work to be sure of a basic level of subsistence, or they may engage in cash earning activities that are beyond the limits of approval as defined by the local community. Such activities may subsequently help them to accumulate wealth but at the same time keeps them excluded from the community. This chapter focuses on the meaning of security or insecurity for the poorest people, the various circuits of support that one can rely on, and the conditions that make young men like Manu Wolu choose a deviant way to earn money, excluding them from the social security arrangements that are considered common in Lawonda.

### **Poor future prospects**

Manu Wolu belongs to the poorest part of the village population. The options of the poor to earn a living for their families are limited. They do not have the means to provide their households' food requirements, let alone cash crops, because their access to land, cattle and even labor is too limited. The most common option for them is to work for a patron. This means hard work and very little say in decisions concerning the allocation of resources. There are possibilities of working for buffalo owners, not only as a herdsman, but as a kind of share cropper as well. The client has to provide every service he can to his patron in exchange for land, seed, and buffalo services.

Young people in Lawonda do not like the prospect of near slavery, and try hard to find alternatives. They set their hopes on earning cash. With cash they can buy what they need, and cash is a good means to create worthy social relations, since most people in Lawonda are short of cash and eager to be on good terms with someone who has cash salary. Unmarried boys and girls seek employment in town. They work for Chinese shop owners and business people, or they work as casual laborers in road construction for a time. This is not a good alternative for the poor who are already married. The casual jobs are rewarded with board and lodging and small wages. The wage is not sufficient to provide a living for a family, and no employer in town will agree to board in the laborer's wife and children as well. Married men prefer to engage in activities in or close to Lawonda. Gathering products from the fields and forest is just such an activity. For example, candle nuts and wild mushrooms from the forest, and fish and crabs from the rivers can be sold for money at the regional markets or in town. Yet, one cannot make a living of gathering and selling these products alone. The step to more rewarding, but illegal, gathering is only

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<sup>1</sup> Manu Wolu died in 1990, several months after I returned to Holland. Although Manu Wolu is deceased, his story is written in the present tense. I have chosen to use the present tense as a style of writing, which stimulates the reader to feel involved.

small. Illegal can refer to the place where the products are found: if they are gathered from someone's garden, it can be argued that they are stolen. Theft is clear when it concerns livestock or chickens, as these animals always have a clear owner. Illegal can also refer to what is gathered: some species of birds, for example, are protected by the government, and catching and selling them is prohibited. Illegal can also refer to the perceptions of the local community: disapproval of activities that violate the rules of proper behavior. To distinguish the judgment that is based on the local perceptions of what is right and wrong from what is considered illegal within the framework of state law, I call the activities that people in Lawonda disapprove of "forbidden". Young men with poor future prospects are tempted to engage in these activities. The most common illegal activity is stealing. Of old, stealing is regarded as part of a boy's education: it is a training in courage, and if he succeeds in stealing the enemies' livestock, it is proof of his manliness. Although this is not an open contemporary perception of the "decent Lawondanese middle class", it still explains why so many boys occasionally join the gangs of livestock thieves. Of the 16 young men in my research areas at least eight participated in stealing livestock. Most of them are occasional thieves. Five of the 16 young men have been imprisoned. There were two severe crimes involving young men from this area. A notorious horse thief was murdered by men from a neighboring *paraingu*, because he had repeatedly stolen horses from them. The worst crime was conducted by two young men, close relatives of Manu Wolu: they entered the deserted *paraingu* of one of the richer *kabihu* in Lawonda, opened up the old graves, and plundered the treasures that were buried along with the dead in order to sell them in town.

In Lawonda, there is a forbidden activity which I found particularly remarkable: gathering edible birds' nests. The nests of one type of swiftlet are gathered from caves and sold to Chinese traders. The nests are a rare delicacy in Chinese and Japanese cuisine. This activity is known in other parts of Indonesia, and there are tribes like the Punan in Kalimantan for which gathering birds' nests is a major economic activity (Hoffman, 1988). Gathering birds' nests is the main occupation of only a few young men in Lawonda. They obtain a considerable amount of money from the sale of birds' nests. When I heard of the revenues I was impressed, and from my own background I assessed the activity as a promising possibility to provide cash. Yet to my amazement, these young men are still poor, and they are treated by their relatives and neighbors as maladjusted. They belong to the category of people who are excluded from networks of social relations that provide social security. What is wrong with gathering birds' nests?

### **Gathering birds' nests**

The hills on Sumba consist of limestone, and all over the island flows of water have shaped a variety of caves. In some of these caves, a type of swiftlet makes its nest. The local name for this bird is *kalewaru* (*Collocalia esculenta*) (Dammerman, 1926). The nests are edible, but the Lawondanese who gather the nests do not eat them, but only sell them to the Chinese traders. Manu Wolu, the main character in the case study below, told me that his

father-in-law was the first man in the area of Lawonda who gathered birds' nests, which means that the activity is about forty years old in this area.



Manu Wolu showed me some of the birds' nests he had found

The precious and delicious nests are made of the birds' saliva and situated at the roof and walls of deep and dark caves. With their characteristic way of flying, the *kalewaru* indicate where a cave containing their nests can be found. A swiftlet needs about one and a half months to complete a nest about 8 centimeters wide. The highest quality nests are wide and clean with a transparent color, and are found at the end of the dry season (August and September). The nests gathered before this season are not wide enough, and the ones collected later are mostly polluted with soil. A nest gathering trip is considered successful if it yields several bundles of nests<sup>2</sup>. Prices vary considerably, with a maximum that I heard of in Lawonda of Rp 100,000 per 100 grams for the highest quality. A more common price, mentioned in 1989, was about Rp 30,000 per bundle in town, and about Rp 20,000 per bundle paid by traders in or close to Lawonda.

The inside of the caves is very hard to reach by people who do not have sophisticated speleologists' equipment. The equipment in Lawonda consists of a rope, a torch with spare batteries and bulbs, a box of matches and a long stick of *tamiang* (a type of bamboo). The rope is tied to a tree or a rock outside the cave and used as a stairway to descend into the cave and to find the exit again. The torch and matches are required because of the darkness inside the cave, and also the sulfur of the matches serves as a medicine to ward off the evil spirits. The stick is used to cut off the nests from the walls. Gathering birds' nests is difficult and dangerous. The passages to the caves are slippery and dark, and often there are underground rivers that are hard to pass. The climate inside the caves is excellent for snakes. For people from Lawonda though, the most dangerous thing about caves is that evil spirits live there. The spirit that resides in the cave has the shape of a snake or a large eel and is always evil.

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<sup>2</sup> A bundle is the measure used in the field where there is no balance or other weighing device. One bundle of birds' nests is about the same as a hundred grams.

Ama Yana told us about the cave close to the house of his parents. It was a huge cave with a very wide entrance where buffaloes often entered in search of shade. Strange things happened there. About fifty years ago, when Ama Yana was a boy, it often occurred that herdsmen who were looking after the buffaloes in the area disappeared for a few days. Their fellows searched but could never find them. They always showed up again after a few days, telling of the beautiful, rich house they had been in, and about the luxurious and delicious meals they had had there.

One day Ama Yana's father dreamed that the spirit of the cave -who was believed to be the one that made the herdsmen disappear- asked for a sacrifice. A human sacrifice. Ama Yana's father decided to sacrifice one of his slaves. He murdered the man and his body was thrown into the cave. Afterward, no one disappeared close to the cave again. Ama Yana's father later closed the cave with a big rock because he was afraid he would be arrested for murder if the body were found.<sup>3</sup>

It is not surprising that the dark and chilly caves are a source of many stories. Most of the stories are frightening and they discourage people from entering the caves. The stories are an extra challenge for bragging youngsters, and they are eager to show they have the nerve to enter. Their relatives always object strongly if they seriously intend to enter a cave. It is not the activity of gathering birds' nests by itself that people disapprove of: there is nothing wrong with the birds or the nests. What is feared are the consequences. First of all, contact with the malevolent evil spirits, the *maramba tana*, the lords of the earth, and the *patau tana* the inhabitants of the earth, (Forth, 1981: 106) should be avoided. Second, people who often enter caves will suffer bad health. The climate inside is bad for the bronchial tubes and the lungs. Leprosy and rheumatism are said to be diseases that can be caught as a consequence of entering caves (but it is not clear whether they are caused by the internal climate of the caves or by the evil spirits). If a person dies in a cave his death is "hot", *meti mbana* (Kapita, 1976:164), which means that his body cannot be buried properly. The body will be buried outside the *paraingu*, and only after the relatives have completed all the ceremonies required to "cool" the corpse may it be buried in the *paraingu*. The material requirements to complete the cooling ceremony are large, because it is like a penalty. Poor families will not be able to collect enough horses, buffaloes, food and clothes for the ceremony and will be troubled ever after by the floating spirit of their relative who died a "hot" death. Though presently most people in Lawonda are Christians, the conversion to this religion seems to have had very few consequences with regard to the local perceptions of death and evil spirits.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Disappearances lasting for several days in caves on Sumba are also reported by Forth (1981: 107).

<sup>4</sup> In Christianity the image of the devil is strong too, as illustrated by M. Taussig (1980) with a quotation from the Bible: "And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And the Satan answered the Lord, and said, from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Job 2:2).

### Manu Wolu: a case

This is the story of Manu Wolu, one of the few young men in Lawonda whose main source of living is the revenues from birds' nests<sup>5</sup>:

There is a small house close to the first short cut from the main road to *paraingu* Pangadu Jara. Cottage would be a better word, because the house is very small and does not even have a proper veranda where guests can sit down. Approaching the house is not dangerous because the dog that guards the place is but a tiny puppy. This is the house of Manu Wolu and his family, the residence of six people: Manu Wolu, his wife Ina Rinci, two daughters (six years and three months old), and one three year old son. Ina Rinci's nine year old brother also stays with them. He should go to school in the morning but more often he stays home to help his big sister with all sorts of work in and around the house. The small skin and bone pig that scratches its itchy back on one of the pillars of the house stresses the shabby and dirty appearance of the place. Four years ago Manu Wolu and Ina Rinci decided to move out of the house of Manu Wolu's parents in the *paraingu*. They had always said they wanted to live closer to the main road, but everyone knew there were other, even better reasons for them to move: Ina Rinci always quarreled with her mother-in-law, and she could get along too well with Manu Wolu's cousin and brother who often stayed in the main house as well.

They borrowed a patch of land close to the main road from a neighbor. Just like all people in Lawonda Manu Wolu and his wife wanted to make a garden around their house, but somehow they never managed to do so. Manu Wolu is not ashamed to admit he is lazy: he does not like to work on the land. His wife is more industrious, but she has been pregnant or nursing most of the time during the last seven years. Manu Wolu owns a paddy field, and he pays tax for it every year. A few years ago he pledged it because he needed a pig and a cloth for *adat* arrangements and food. It is easier this way, because if he does not work on his own paddy field he is free to do other things, and also where to get buffaloes to prepare the soil would be a problem, because Manu Wolu does not participate in a *pakeri* group. People in Lawonda do not respect Manu Wolu, because he does not even try to get his paddy field back. People who do not produce their own food are to be pitied at best, and this is if their situation is because they are unable to do so. People who do not even try are despised. Only occasionally will he help his father, who was a respected man as head of *paraingu* Pangadu Jara, and appointed by the government as *kepala rukun kampung*, though he is now a very old man, half deaf and in bad health. The oldest son should take care of his father, but Manu Wolu does not, leaving him to grow his own food on a patch of *ladang*, where he lives most of the year in a small hut with his ten year old granddaughter.

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<sup>5</sup> Stories, gossip, fears, and events are very hard to separate when people are talking about caves, birds' nests and about people they do not like. The story in this chapter is my reconstruction of all these different kinds of information.

Most of the time I did not find Manu Wolu at home. His wife was usually there, feeding her small baby or preparing the available food for the other three children. Manu Wolu was said to be *kuat jalan*, a kind way to indicate his vagabond inclinations. His main occupation was gathering birds' nests during the dry season. For a week he would leave home to search for the nests. Sometimes he would go with his brother, but in 1989 this was impossible as his brother was in prison serving a sentence for robbery. After the week, he usually returns home to rest and eat, and afterward he departs for town to sell the nests and return home with the revenues. Food is then in plenty for a few days, and they can drink coffee with sugar three times a day. In 1988, Manu Wolu received about five hundred thousand rupiah revenue for the birds' nests. The year 1989 was not as good, and did not yield more than three hundred thousand.<sup>6</sup>

It sounds like a lot of money but the revenues never last very long. Manu Wolu and his family can cover their household needs with the revenues from selling birds' nests for about four to six months. Part of the money is used specifically to buy food: paddy or rice or corn flour; part is given to relatives or lent to friends and will later on be replaced by food. Manu Wolu usually consumes his revenues in advance, by borrowing money from traders and paying them back with birds' nests (*ijon*)<sup>7</sup>. In the rainy season Manu Wolu has troubles. Then it is impossible to gather birds' nests, and often there is no money or food stocks left. Manu Wolu will then enter the forest, or areas with abandoned gardens, and gather *sirih* (betel fruits) and young *pinang* (areca nut) to sell them in the market, receiving enough money to buy food for about a week. Because it is not always very clear whether a garden is really abandoned or not, this activity is often not appreciated by other people in Lawonda.

If Manu Wolu's family runs out of food and he is not at home, the neighbors reluctantly give a plate full of rice to make sure his wife and children will not starve. Their willingness to help is stimulated by Ina Rinci's behavior. She does not evade her duties amongst relatives and neighbors: whenever someone is ill, she will come to visit him or her, and whenever a relative or neighbor dies, Ina Rinci is present to cry or assist with all the work. Ina Rinci is an active member of the Catholic church.

Manu Wolu's brothers and cousins (father's brothers' sons) are not very keen on helping him. The brother who used to help Ina Rinci a little because he liked her, stopped doing so when Manu Wolu did not contribute the substantial part of his bride-price which he ought to have given as a brother. Yet, fortunately Ina Rinci still has a few relatives left

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<sup>6</sup> Three hundred thousand rupiah would be enough in 1989 to buy 1500 kilograms of paddy. If the total amount were spent on paddy, this would be enough to cover the need for food (calculating on the assumption that daily food requirement of Manu Wolu's household is about 3 kilograms of rice (beras)). This calculation is fictional because Manu Wolu and Ina Rinci would never be able to keep such a considerable stock of paddy in their house safe from relatives, neighbors and friends who would come and ask for a small share.

<sup>7</sup> Manu Wolu told me that he borrowed Rp 5000 from a trader and repaid his debt within two months with a small bundle of birds' nests. Although the figures are not very precise it could indicate that, if nests are used to pay back a debt, their revenue is only half of the price paid by the same trader for nests sold in the ordinary way.

who do not object when Manu Wolu or his wife ask for food. In 1989, they received one and a half bags of dry corn ears, and a large tin of corn grain. Twice a close relative of Manu Wolu's wife gave them a bag of taro tubers. In the season of working on the paddy fields, Manu Wolu or his wife will sometimes assist neighbors and relatives. In return, they receive a small part of the harvest, and in 1989 they received about thirty kilograms of paddy in February, and nearly sixty kilograms in August. However, no relative or neighbor wants to be labeled as a partner in Manu Wolu's network for exchange of resources.

No one is very fond of Manu Wolu, because he always seems short of food, and only rarely he can be of any help to other people. He is unreliable as a member of a working group: when he feels like wandering, he departs and leaves his share of the work to the others. Although he makes quite a lot of money, he has always remained poor. Other people in Lawonda are convinced that gathering birds' nests leads to no good, and Manu Wolu provides them with proof. His health has been declining, and people say they would not be surprised if something really bad happened to him. Perhaps his rope for entering the cave will break? Manu Wolu himself is not sensitive to his negative reputation. The more people scold him, warn him, try to change him, the more indifferent he becomes. Many people do not like to be near him. They are afraid of people who often enter caves and obviously communicate with the evil spirits. Evil spirits are a threat to the well-being of decent people, and someone who voluntarily enters the realm of the evil spirits must be evil himself.

Manu Wolu died in April 1990. He fell from the tree while picking betel fruits and did not survive his injuries.

### **Beyond the limit**

Fortunately, not every story in Lawonda about people who ever entered caves to gather birds' nests ends as fatally as the story of Manu Wolu. Yet, even in the relatively short period that I lived in Lawonda there was another young man who died while gathering birds' nests.

Manu Wolu is one of the men in Lawonda who has chosen to live mainly from the revenues generated from selling birds' nests. His story reveals the consequences of this choice.

Gathering birds' nests is an individual activity<sup>8</sup>, and people who earn money in this way gradually isolate themselves from their fellow man. This attitude is not appreciated by these fellow men. They will warn and scold, and if that does not help, in the end they will refrain from sharing food, houses, help and other things that are usually shared. Deprived

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<sup>8</sup> Individual is here used in contrast to communal. The common way of doing most of the work on the fields and in the *paraingu* is in small groups. Gathering birds' nests is usually done by a person on his own, or together with one fellow who acts as assistant. The main task of the assistant is to watch the rope while the nest gatherer is in the cave, so that people who try to steal the yield will not be able to cut the rope.

of access to local sharing arrangements, the bird nest gatherers develop an indifferent attitude toward life, *mati hidup, sama saja* (dead or alive, it's all the same). They treasure the benefits of living from birds' nests: easy money, leisure and adventure, but the costs are considerable.

The costs can be summarized as the exclusion from local social security arrangements. Manu Wolu forsakes his duties within the network of ceremonial relations and therefore he loses support (moral and material) from his brothers and cousins. As a good neighbor, Manu Wolu should participate in working groups and, at times, assist and support the people who live close to his house. Ina Rinci is a good neighbor, as far as she is able to be, but Manu Wolu is not. Manu Wolu does not have relations with complementary partners in a network for exchange of resources: he does not offer anything that would complement other people's resources. The three categories of relations -ceremonial, between neighbors and exchange relations- compose social networks<sup>9</sup> around the individual and his household. Manu Wolu gradually is excluded from all three kind of networks.

The first reason for exclusion is normative. "Local level, traditional forms of social security are embedded in complex webs of social relationships. Participation in such forms of social security requires a relatively high degree of conformity to the norms and values of the group that provides social security" (Von Benda-Beckmann et al., 1988:16). Access to sharing arrangements in Lawonda is restricted to the members of one's own group who comply with the norms imposed by the group. Examples of those norms are mentioned in the story of Manu Wolu: (a) one should cooperate in working groups, (b) every member of the *kabihu* has to fulfill his or her obligations within the *kabihu*, for example, contribute to the bride-price a brother or cousin has to pay for his bride; (c) every small family should grow its own food or at least do its very best to provide its own food requirements, (d) one should not cause trouble for the other members of the *kabihu*, and (e) young adults have to take care of their parents. In short, these are norms that reflect the traditional long term goal of the local economy, that is the survival and continuation of the lineage (Raatgever, 1988:100) and, if possible, its expansion. Gathering birds' nest does not support that goal. Therefore people who live from the revenues of selling birds' nests are considered maladjusted. Their behavior is deviant from what is considered normal by the mainstream of the local population, the "decent middle class".

The second reason for exclusion from networks that provide social security is a material one. The Lawondanese with more access to land and livestock than Manu Wolu assess his behavior in terms of loss of work force, because Manu Wolu does not participate in or is at least unreliable as a member of the working groups. This does not hold true for his wife, Ina Rinci, but she cannot replace her husband in men's workings groups that perform the typically male tasks in agriculture and house construction. The farmers with relatively large areas of land are dependent on the labor of the resource poor farmers, because in Lawonda agricultural practices are not yet mechanized. Manu Wolu not only represents the loss of

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<sup>9</sup> What I mean by social network is a set of ego-centered social relations. Social network is an analytical and not an empirical concept.

one man's work force, but he also sets a bad example to other young men by encouraging them to defy their parents or patrons. This means that the well endowed middle class has good material reason to try to convert Manu Wolu from his deviant behavior. These well endowed middle class members are the potential partners in Manu Wolu's network for exchange of resources, who could provide him with land, livestock services and perhaps even cash. Manu Wolu does not offer them his labor, and therefore he rejects incorporation into a network for exchange of resources.

Below the middle class there is a category of poor people, and most of them show deviant behavior, each in their own way. They have a less negative attitude than most other people with regard to gathering birds' nests. Ina Rinci and her relatives are from childhood familiar with gathering birds' nests as a source of making a living. Manu Wolu's brothers generally occupy themselves with activities that are more forbidden than gathering birds' nests, and often illegal. They do not disapprove, because the revenues from the birds' nests are so considerable. On the other hand, they will not easily choose to live on the revenues of birds' nests, because most of them are probably just as afraid of evil spirits as the other people in Lawonda. Manu Wolu is not rejected by other poor men because of moral arguments. Yet, they loathe his reluctance to give them support.

Surprisingly, the other group which does not disapprove of gathering birds' nests, but on the contrary supports it as a promising economic activity, is the higher level government<sup>10</sup>. The national government in Indonesia has little respect for the arguments derived from the traditional beliefs of the minority tribes of the outer islands. According to the national government, because the tribes do not adhere to one of "the world religions" (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism) they do not have a religion (Dove, 1988:3). Consequently, there is nothing bad about gathering birds' nests. "At a time when Indonesia is emphasizing the rapid development of non-petroleum exports, the traditional trading and collection activities of the Punan of Kalimantan", whose two main commodities are rattan and birds' nests, "clearly merit governmental attention and support" (Hoffman, 1988: 115). In this hidden conflict between poor and relatively richer farmers in Lawonda, the higher level government coincidentally takes the same stand as the poor Lawondanese.

The story of Manu Wolu relates that his brothers and cousins of the patrilineage have begun to refrain from helping Manu Wolu, but that his family still receives support from the relatives of his wife, Ina Rinci. It is important to note this difference when thinking about local social security arrangements. The observation that people on Sumba can always rely on relatives in the uterine line for material assistance is supported by Van Wouden (1977: 223), who states that the general norm follows the line "every fellow *wala* (matrilineage)-member, where ever he comes from, who is in difficulty or need, has to be supported". Uterine line relatives are referred to as *oli dadi*, birth companions, people who have the same blood<sup>11</sup>. "This expression often arises in attempts to gain support without

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<sup>10</sup> From the level of *kecamatan* (district) upwards the government is more occupied with macro-economic politics.

<sup>11</sup> On Sumba people say that blood is passed on to the child only from the mother (Keane, 1990: 66)

implied reciprocity or more solid grounds for a claim" (Keane, 1990: 67). Uterine line relatives can be scattered all over the island, because women move from their parents' to their husband's house. This becomes helpful when we remember that there are many regional differences in climate and season on the island of Sumba, and therefore the uterine line relatives constitute a variety of possibilities for asking for food<sup>12</sup>.

In this case study, both Ina Rinci and Manu Wolu are *oli dadi* of Ina Rinci's relatives: their marriage is the preferential one between cross-cousins (mother's brother's daughter), and so, to his father-in-law, Manu Wolu is both the child of his mother (his father-in-law's sister) and the son-in-law. Especially in the former identity, he can call upon his mother's relatives for help in times of trouble.

Members of the patrilineage apparently have another type of mutual assistance code, not in general, but depending on behavior according to the group norms. Bad behavior does not affect uterine line relatives, but it has negative consequences for the members of the *kabihu* who live in the same *paraingu* and share the responsibility for the daily welfare of the *Uma*-members. If one of them dies a "hot" death, his fellow lineage members are responsible for the cooling ceremony, and they must collect all of the material requirements. If they do not succeed in cooling the corpse, they are the ones who will be troubled by the deceased man's spirit. It seems that Manu Wolu's relatives-in-law only judge him on the basis of kinship relations, and since they have no moral objections to gathering birds' nests, nor direct economic interests that are offended by his activities, there is no reason why they should refrain from supporting him. Yet, these relatives are just as poor as Manu Wolu and cannot provide him with resources, let alone cash.

### **Forbidden roads to wealth**

Everywhere in the world cultural constraints limit the range of activities that are considered acceptable as ways to earn money. The content of these cultural constraints is flexible: it changes over time and it is not the same for every person or group in the same cultural context. It reflects the mixture of norms and values that have their own sources of legitimation. The attitude in Lawonda toward stealing is an example. Stealing from enemies was once considered as a clever action, stealing from relatives as a great sin; nowadays stealing is prohibited by the government and by the church and disapproved of by most people in general. Sometimes the traditional rule, *adat*, is in accordance with the rules of church or state law, but it also happens that the some rules are contradictory. Which rule applies in such a situation is then a matter of negotiation and contest<sup>13</sup>. Legal pluralism

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<sup>12</sup> Visiting relatives in other areas in order to ask them for food is called *mandara*. Traditionally, people in Lawonda would boast about their *mandara* trips. They were not ashamed to admit their shortage of food. On the contrary, they were proud of the fact that they had so many good relations to rely upon for assistance.

<sup>13</sup> For an elaborate example see "Umbu Hapi versus Umbu Vincent, legal pluralism as an arsenal in village combats" (Vel, 1991).

does not only exist in cases of conflict, although its presence is perhaps most visible in village dispute settlement. The attitude toward people who gather and sell birds' nests does not reflect an open dispute between members of the local community. Yet, it can be regarded as a hidden conflict between "the decent middle class" and people who are deviant<sup>14</sup> from what is considered normal by the mainstream of the local population.

According to the local perception, people who gather birds' nests associate themselves with the evil spirits in order to earn money. It is believed to be pointless to spend the revenue from birds' nests on capital goods such as land or livestock because this income is inherently barren: the land will become sterile and the animals will not thrive and die. The revenues are "hot", just as the money which is obtained from selling stolen horses. One of the explanations why particular economic activities are associated with evil spirits or the devil is that these beliefs and associations are a part of an egalitarian social ethic that delegitimizes those persons who gain more money and success than the rest of the social group (Taussig, 1980:15). Yet, in this highly stratified Sumbanese society there is no "egalitarian social ethic". People in Lawonda are used to differences in wealth and opportunities. If people who traditionally belong to the local upper class are now successful in obtaining good positions in town, or earning money in another way, they are not accused of conspiring with the evil spirits.

The fact that bird nest gatherers in Lawonda are accused of associating with the evil spirits is in the first place a matter of belief, in my opinion. Second, the accusation can be regarded as a sanction on deviant behavior, because it threatens the economic interests of the well endowed sector of the local population.

Changing from subsistence farming to making a living by selling products on the market is usually associated with modernization, or development or other words which indicate a shift to a more prosperous way of living. In this case of gathering birds' nests, however, participating in the commercial circuit is not a sign of progressive and innovative behavior. It is the option for people who are on the outer edge of the local economy, for whom there is hardly a viable alternative to make a living. Coping with insecurity is the permanent theme of their life. In their own assessment, a deviant way to earn cash can be preferable over access to local social security arrangements if that would imply permanent drudgery merely for the benefit of patrons.

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<sup>14</sup> Sally Falk Moore draws attention to the fact that a person cannot be deviant in general, but that "deviant" always "presupposes some conception of "the normal" to which the deviant person does not conform" (Moore, 1991:115).

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## Food, friends or money: the potentials of rice as a cash crop

Rice is the best food there is in the world. Growing rice is the best activity there is in Lawonda, according to the Lawondanese. The problems of rice cultivation are the hot issue in daily conversations: how to get buffalo to trample the fields, how the rats destroy the crop, what to do about the abundance or shortage of water and who will have the best harvest. Every man in Lawonda would like to cultivate paddy, but of course there are constraints: one has to have access to paddy fields, buffalo services and sufficient labor. For the relatively well endowed Lawondanese, paddy cultivation has priority over other kinds of agriculture. If labor is short, they will concentrate on the paddy fields and leave the dry land fallow. If there is any possibility to increase production, the paddy farmers are interested.

This chapter discusses the possibilities to earn money by selling paddy in Lawonda. Traditionally, paddy is grown as a food crop in this area. The harvest is used for personal consumption and for exchange in kind. If paddy were to be sold to earn money, a third use of the harvest would be added to the two traditional ones. In that case, the level production should be raised. The question of whether selling paddy is a good option to earn money or not, breaks down into two parts: whether it is possible to increase production, and whether paddy is a suitable commodity to earn cash.

Both questions are usually answered positively by officials engaged in agricultural development work. Comparing the agricultural practices with theory from the agronomists' books, or with practices in rice cultivation on Java and Bali, they assess the Lawondanese rice cultivation system as backward and extensive, or even irrational (Dove, 1986:222) given the fact that part of the year the paddy fields are left fallow, low yielding rice varieties and a low level of technology are used in local paddy cultivation. They are equally positive regarding the quality of paddy as a commodity. Paddy is easy to store and transport, and demand for paddy is constantly present, especially because the Sumbanese prefer the rice produced on their own island over the less flavorful white rice from Java.

The answers are much more complicated if the two questions are addressed from the farmers' point of view. When discussing the technical and organizational restrictions on changing the cultivation practices, it becomes clear that improvements are not as simple as they might seem at first glance. Analysis of the local system of agriculture should take

account of the indigenous rationale. This includes the Lawondanese "morality of exchange" and the priorities for allocation of resources that reflect differences in control over resources between members of the local society. Innovations are assessed within the framework of the Uma-economy. The Uma-economy is also the context in which the suitability as a cash commodity has to be assessed. Distribution of the harvest from the paddy fields is an example of the very sophisticated non-monetary arrangements, in which elements of a market economy are integrated. At present, farmers in Lawonda can sell paddy for cash. Yet, they only occasionally do so, because within the scope of the Uma-economy other ways of exchange are more rewarding.

I start by describing the existing practices of rice cultivation in Lawonda, and contrast the judgments of outside officials with the indigenous rationale of cultivation practices. The next section presents a list of five "reasons for change", which have made farmers in Lawonda susceptible for new ideas regarding paddy cultivation. Development intervention -both by government agencies and by the local development organization- is one of the "reasons for change" discussed here. In the subsequent section, two different efforts to raise paddy production in Lawonda are discussed. It appears that a clear and simple idea has complex consequences concerning the choice of technology and the organization of the work. The following subject is the distribution of the harvest. The information from five farmers in Lawonda who experimented with an extra crop of paddy, reveals that they can only benefit from their innovation if they are not only good farmers, but very capable credit managers as well. The last section gives an answer to the question whether or not paddy is a promising cash crop in Lawonda.

### **Seasonality of agricultural practices: a local calendar from Lawonda**

Paddy cultivation is a seasonal activity in Lawonda. The seasons vary with the rainfall making a long rainy season and a short dry season. The Sumbanese have a local calendar that indicates the traditional sequence of seasonal activities, including those in paddy cultivation. It exists in many versions. Each area in which climatic and ecological circumstances are the same has its own calendar. On Sumba, these areas can be very small due to the mountainous landscape and the variations in rainfall. The start of the different months corresponds with the phases of stars and constellations, and this is the same throughout Sumba. Yet, the names of the months and the environmental signs characteristic of each month vary. The names of the months given by Onvlee in his dictionary of the *Kambera* language of east Sumba are obviously from a coastal area (Onvlee, 1984:511). He mentions references to plants that only grow near the sea and to some peculiarities of fishing, both occurring in the world of people in the coastal area. The months in Lawonda are named after wild flowers in the fields, after festivals and after seasonal activities in the mountain areas. In Box 10.1, the local calendar of Lawonda is depicted. The calendar indicates the periods for all seasonal activities, not only for agriculture, but also for house

construction, weaving, and for ceremonies such as weddings and (re)-funerals. The calendar reflects the general idea of a "mode of livelihood" in which religious, agricultural, ceremonial and household activities constitute a totality. Traditionally, all operations in paddy cultivation fit in the local calendar. If new cultivation practices are introduced that ask for a higher input of labor, the new activities compete for labor with the traditional work of the season. The local calendar from Lawonda described here is based on information given by three older men in the area of Lawonda. I asked them to tell me the name of the month, the meaning of the name and what the most important activities for each month are. Their answers were not the same, some differences due to the ecological variations between their villages of origin, others due to the difference in dialect. "A local calendar from Lawonda" is a composition of the answers from the three informants.

The indigenous calendar is hardly used at present. Younger people often do not recall the names of the months nor do they even know of the existence of the local calendar. For the older people, there are other reasons why the calendar has lost most of its meaning. Due to the degradation of practices of the *marapu* religion some of the main points of reference in time are lost. The animistic festivals and rituals at the start of each season have not yet been replaced by Christian alternatives.

Box 10.1: A local calendar from Lawonda

1. *Pidu* (October-November)

*Pidu* is the name of the festival to welcome the rainy season. It used to be the hunger-season and people from Lawonda would make a journey to the southwest to visit try to get cassava (*mandara*).

2. *Hibu* (November-December)

This is the nest-month. In Lawonda people say it refers to the grass-nests in field made by wild boar. The start of the month is indicated by the disappearance of the Pleiades from the southern firmament. This constellation indicates the course of the year. In this month, planting and sowing have to be finished.

3. *Mangata rara* (December-January)

This month is named after a wild plant which flowers in this period. The first maize is harvested in this month. The members of a *kabihu* are allowed to eat the new maize only after they have had their ceremonial first maize meal at their Great Village (*paraingu bakul*). The *marapu* priest announces the auspicious day for this ceremony. In this month, rice seed for the paddy fields is sown.

4. *Mangata kaka* (January-February)

*Mangata kaka* is a plant with white flowers that grows in this month. It is the period for planting the second crop of cassava and taro, and for puddling the paddy fields and transplanting paddy.

5. *Nyali Lamboya* (February-March)

*Nyali* are sea-worms. In this period of the year, they swim to the coast near Lamboya (south

of Lawonda). There the people catch the worms and perform rituals. If there are many worms, the paddy harvest will be good. Many people from other areas go to Lamboya in this month to attend the worm ceremonies, and watch the *pasola*, the tournament between the courageous horse riders of several *kabihu*'s, the largest indigenous sporting event on the island. Human casualties are regarded as a good sign: then there will be no shortage of food during the year. People from Lawonda collect *nyali* because these edible worms are a local delicacy that can be conserved with salt. Activities in this month are harvesting dry rice and weeding the dry fields.

6. *Nyali Bakul* (March-April)

The *nyali bakul* are a larger species of sea worm that is caught on the coast of Wanokaka in the southwest of the island of Sumba. People from other areas make a journey to Wanokaka in this period to get some of the worms and watch the *pasola* of Wanokaka. It is the month to sow the second maize crop.

7. *Nyali Nibu* (April-May)

*Nibu* means spear. Pods of bean plants appear in this month, and they are sharp as a spear. All crops are now growing and weeding is the common activity.

8. *Ngura* (May-June)

*Ngura* means young: all the roots and tubers in the garden are still young. Although they can be quite large, it is not allowed to eat them during this month. Late dry rice is harvested now, and weeding continues. Beans can be harvested.

9. *Bada Rara* (June-July)

In this month, the leaves of a species of yam turn red (*rara*) and drop (*bada*) from the tree. This is the sign that roots and tubers are half mature and can be eaten if there is no other food left. It is the period of scaring birds from the paddy fields, the people start with the conservation of the roots of cassava and sweet potato.

10. *Cua* (July-August)

In the coastal areas, *tuwa* refers to a liana with poisonous roots, which are used by fishermen (Onvlee, 1984: 511). People in Lawonda say *cua*, which means old, indicates that all the crops are mature and ready to be harvested. Besides all of the harvesting and conservation activities, this is also the month to gather material for house construction. For women this is a special season of weaving.

11. *Da Padiha* (August-September)

The name of this month means "that cannot be counted", indicating the large number of activities included in this month. This is the special month for *adat*-ceremonies such as weddings and funerals (re-burying). Because this month is the core of the dry season, without heavy rain fall and floods and dangerous roads, this is the peak season of theft and robbery.

12. *Wadu* (September-October)

The month for hunting, especially for catching wild boar required for the rituals of the Pidu festival. There are small rituals in this month to prepare seeds and plant material for the next wet season. When the rains start to fall, maize and dry rice are sown and cassava and tubers are planted.

## **Paddy cultivation in Lawonda**

The thunder in the sky announces the start of the working season on the paddy fields. The *kelompok pakeri* turns itself from a group of herdsmen into a group buffalo service providers. The first operation is preparation of the nurseries. Part of the paddy fields are trampled by buffalo and paddy seed is sown in these nurseries.

Some people in areas close to Lawonda sow the seeds on dry land that is then tilled by hand, but in Lawonda itself this is exceptional.

Dry land nurseries are vulnerable to drought with the risk that the small paddy plants die. For farmers who have only a few paddy fields and do not own buffalo, a dry nursery is a good option. After about two months the seedlings are ready for transplanting. This means that after sowing the seeds in the nurseries there is a two month period for preparation of the paddy fields. This is done by buffalo trampling, *karekatu* (Miedema, 1989:56) in local or *rencah* in Indonesian language.



Buffalo trampling (*rencah*) is the common way of land preparation on the paddy fields

The herd of buffalo is driven around in the paddy field to trample the soil. Usually it takes two turns of trampling. The first round is called *popak*, which means "flat to the ground" or "half-half": the weeds are crushed and mixed with the water and mud, where they are left for a week or two to decay. The second round is called *pamijang*, which means "mashing" (Miedema, 1989: 56): the decayed weed and soil are mixed to get a smooth mud, that is suitable for transplanting. The preparations also involve construction or repair

of dikes around the paddy field to allow inundation. The seedlings are transplanted shortly after the second round of buffalo trampling. This is women's work, performed in rotating groups. Transplanting is done densely and at random. This implies that many seedlings are used, but the advantage of the dense pattern is that there is very little space left for weeds to grow. This fits with the habit of not to do any weeding in the paddy fields. In the traditional paddy cultivation of Lawonda no external inputs, such as fertilizer or pesticides, are used. The trampled weeds are natural fertilizers, sparsely supplemented by dung of buffalo and other livestock that are left to graze in the paddy fields in the dry season. It takes four months after transplanting for paddy to mature. In this period, little work is done in the field except guarding against wild animals, mainly birds and wild boar.

At first glance, paddy cultivation in Lawonda seems to be done in a very extensive way. During many months of the year, even in the rainy season, there are fallow paddy fields. The varieties of rice that are sown in Lawonda are local ones, with long growing periods, long stalks and low yields. Therefore, one is easily inclined to assess this farming system as backward and undeveloped, and convinced that there is potential for improvement.

The basis for this judgment lies in the association of wet rice cultivation with intensive irrigated cultivation systems, as are common in other parts of Indonesia, especially on Java and Bali. When compared to these systems, paddy cultivation in Lawonda can be called "extensive".

Extensive is primarily pointing at land-use: per unit of land the yield is not as high as it technically could be. Measured by this standard the irrigated systems are much better than the rain fed, low external input systems of rice cultivation. Fallow land is taken as proof of extensive, and thus low-yielding land-use. Yield per unit of land is a relevant indicator if land is the most limiting factor of production. Dove argued in his studies on swidden agriculture in Indonesia that more extensive agricultural systems have their own rationale, similar in a way to irrigated rice cultivation, but different due to other scarcity relations: "Extensive agriculturalists tend to evaluate alternative systems of cultivation in terms of the return on their labor, which is scarce, as opposed to the return on their land, which is not scarce" (Dove, 1986: 225). Paddy cultivation in Lawonda cannot be regarded as swidden agriculture. The paddy fields are cultivated every year and the fallow period is maximally half a year. Yet, the cultivation practices are comparable to swidden agriculture, with very low level technology and no external inputs. The kind of cultivation that is now common in Lawonda fits the local conditions. Under these circumstances it makes sense to look for the rationale of the Lawondanese way of paddy cultivation by focusing on the best use of human and animal labor, instead of assessing the system by the returns on units of land. Subsequently, "the most effective approach to agricultural change might be to recombine skills and methods already within the shifting cultivator's repertoire rather than design new "systems" from scratch" (Richards, 1985:55).

In Table 10.1, I have listed the operations involved in paddy cultivation in Lawonda. It shows the kind and sequence of activities that have to be performed on each field. The operations are presented as if paddy cultivation were an individual activity, by one farmer

on his own field, but the work is done collectively by working groups. The local system of paddy cultivation is therefore also characterized by organizational aspects.

Table 10.1 Farming operations in wet-rice culture in Lawonda

Seed selection	Local or semi-local varieties, with growing period of 6 to over 7 months. Mostly long-stalk.
Nursury	Part of a paddy field is selected as nursery; after buffalo trampling seeds are densely sown. Period: 1,5 to 3 months.
Land preparation	Two times of buffalo trampling ( <i>karekatu</i> ): a. <i>popak</i> : trampling weeds and opening up the soil, usually one, but if there are persisting weeds twice. b. <i>pamijang</i> : two or three weeks after <i>popak</i> , to mix decayed weeds with the soil to get smooth mud, suitable for transplanting. Making or repairing dikes around the field.
Planting	Shortly after <i>pamijang</i> . Seeds rate 60-80 kg per hectare. Planting pattern: random and dense planting.
Fertilizer	No application
Weeding and pest control	No weeding, no pesticide or insecticide applied. Guarding against wild boar, birds and monkeys. Occasionally rat traps around paddy field.
Harvest	Reaping by cutting stalks with sickle. Ear-plucking with reaping knife, only small quantities for direct consumption.
Threshing	Foot-treading on special threshing floor in the paddy field. Preferably at night men thresh the rice at the rhythm of threshing songs. After threshing paddy is winnowed at the threshing floor in the steady dry season east wind.
Storage	Paddy is dried at the threshing site, put in baskets and bags for transport, dried again in front of the house, and stored in strong, tightly woven paddy baskets.
Distribution	1. At the paddy field, directly after threshing by men. 2. At the house: harvest is divided over baskets for seed, special occasions, guests, for next year's working season, and for home consumption. 3. From the "home consumption" part paddy is given as contribution or assistance by women.

The relatively wealthy farmers in Lawonda have paddy fields in several areas of the village. They cultivate these fields according to a sequence that is imposed by the combination of characteristics of each paddy field area, and the variation in rainfall over the months, and is restricted by the fact that work is tied to the services of one herd of buffaloes and its working group, the *kelompok pakeri*.

The people of Pangadu Jara are involved in paddy cultivation in three distinct areas. The first area<sup>1</sup> contains rain fed fields. These have to be cultivated early in the rainy season in order to be sure that the crop will not suffer from drought by the end of its growing season. The second area is situated close to the spring from which a stream emerges and flows through the main paddy field area of Prai desa Madeta. Cultivation starts upstream. The third area is further down stream, in the valley at the foot of *paraingu* Pangadu Jara.

The work is organized per area. Two reasons why it is difficult to diverge from this pattern are, that a single paddy field that is planted ahead of the other fields has to be fenced to protect it against wandering buffaloes, which implies a lot of work and material, and that this field is said to be more vulnerable to rat pests. For an individual farmer, who only has a paddy field in the third area and does not own buffaloes, it would be technically better to start cultivating earlier in the season. Yet, since he is tied to the sequence of the *kelompok pakeri*, he has to wait. The buffalo owners decide on the sequence of the work, and these buffalo owners are well endowed with paddy fields, dispersed over all three areas. From their point of view, they do not cultivate one crop per year, but three crops.

The amount of time that is required for trampling the paddy fields depends on the ratio between the number of buffaloes and the size of the cultivated area. The buffalo herd of Pangadu Jara is small, 16 animals, which means that trampling takes a lot of time. Often *popak* is not done as thoroughly as it should be, so planting is difficult and weeds can grow easily. Many of the "followers" of the *kelompok pakeri* receive their turn for trampling very late. "Late" for the second area means that the seedlings are three months old, which is way beyond the optimal age for transplanting. Fortunately, the old rice varieties can stand some delay in transplanting. "Late" in the third area also means late in the season. Planted in April or even May, the crop does not get enough rain, and will have only a small yield unless the field is irrigated. Irrigation of the more elevated parts of the third area is complicated and involves extra labor for digging channels and controlling water.

The busy season for the *kelompok pakeri* runs from November to May. Harvesting is not always done collectively. Each paddy field owner is free to invite assistance for harvesting and threshing. Each assistant has to be rewarded with paddy, and many people offer their help.

The period from June to October is the leave-season for buffalo. This is also the dry season in which buffaloes are getting short of food. July and August are the usual months

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<sup>1</sup> The rain fed paddy fields are not situated in one geographical area, so "area" here means a category of paddy fields with the common characteristic that they are rain fed.

for buffaloes to calve. It is convenient that they do not have to work when the calves are very small, so that the female buffaloes can stay with the calve and let it drink all day. For the Lawondanese, the dry season is the period for other than agricultural activities, especially house construction, weddings and funerals, weaving and conservation of food.

### **Reasons for change**

The Lawondanese consider paddy cultivation, as described above, as the common, traditional way. Traditional, however, does not mean that everyone is satisfied with it, nor that problems are absent. There are five major issues in Lawonda that have changed the circumstances in the Uma-economy. Each of these issues brings along its own reasons for change in agriculture:

(1) Every year, from March to harvest time in May or June, many people in Lawonda have shortages of food. Last year's rice for personal consumption is already finished, and many households in Lawonda do not harvest much from the dry fields, which are neglected when all labor is required on the paddy fields. The crops in the dry land gardens are covered by weeds or eaten by wild boar. Therefore, the Lawondanese will applaud any change that leads to food in this period of the year.

(2) In the last decade there has been a dramatic shift in religious adherence. At present less than 10 percent of the population in Lawonda calls itself adherent of the traditional *Marapu* religion, whereas the other 90 percent have become members of the Protestant or Catholic church. This has affected the organization of activities. The local calendar was strongly connected with the *Marapu* religion. Especially in paddy cultivation, nearly every single activity had to be preceded by *Marapu* rituals (Nooteboom, 1939). Although one can not say that people have really abolished their old beliefs -syncretism is more rule than exception-practicing *Marapu* rituals is very rare nowadays. The larger of these rituals were important exact points of reference in time, guiding the farming activities in Lawonda. In fact, the local calendar would still be quite functional in agriculture. Yet, adhering to these old guidelines could be easily interpreted as sticking to the old religion, and that would be a sign of old-fashioned behavior, and a provocation of the government that promotes conversion to one of the world religions. Not bounded any longer to the local calendar, people are (morally) free to organize work on the land according to their own ideas. This creates a moral climate for change.

(3) The buffalo to land ratio has declined over the last two decades. According to the village secretary of Prai Madeta, there were about three hundred heads of buffalo in this *desa* in 1980, whereas by the end of 1989 there were only 182 left. The decline in the number of buffaloes imposes a severe problem on paddy cultivation (see Metzner, 1979:9). Either a reduction of paddy cultivation or a change in technology to reduce the input of buffalo services, is required to solve this problem. The latter is the best solution especially for the buffalo-less, because they are the ones who suffer first and most and from the shortage of buffalo.

(4) Government support is another reason for changing agricultural practices in Lawonda. Direct government influence in Lawonda started in 1960, when the government announced its "Komando Operasi Gerakan Makmur". This was a program to stimulate rice cultivation in order to achieve the macro-economic goal of the nation's self sufficiency in rice. Farmers in Lawonda were "strongly stimulated" to turn the land in the valleys into paddy fields. Swidden agriculture, the most extensive kind of agriculture, is spoken of by the government as "backward, technologically poor and intellectually unprepossessing" (Dove, 1986:222). The government ideology of agricultural development supports intensification, and farmers who do so are "modern and advanced".

However, no special programs for paddy cultivation reached Lawonda between 1984 and 1990. On the contrary, it seemed that other agricultural activities were stimulated even more. There was a credit program for cattle breeding, a special women's credit program for keeping poultry, collective gardens with onions and garlic, and extension and credit for soya cultivation. None of the programs lasted. It seemed that every year the local village agricultural extension worker (PPL) has a new program, with another crop and a new technology.

In 1989, the district government announced a district-wide program, "Heka Pata", which means "a new way". All farmers were divided into working groups. They were told through the village authorities to prepare the dry land and sow maize. The farmers did not support the idea, because the execution of this program was in May, a very unsuitable month for sowing, just before the start of the dry season. Yet, they were "convinced" by the army that came along to supervise the work. The second part of the program took place in October. Again, the period was not very suitable for the farmers, because they had decided to start early on the paddy fields in order to be able to grow an extra crop. Instead, they spent three weeks working on the dry land.

This shows the ambiguous influence of the government on agricultural practices in Lawonda: on the one hand general ideology supports intensification of paddy cultivation, on the other hand the more local levels of government disturb the local efforts to increase paddy production by imposing programs that claim the same labor. The only continuous message from the government is that one should look for new ways: change is progress.

(5) The fifth reason why the Lawondanese could be in favor of intensification of paddy cultivation is the increasing need for cash. Selling paddy could be one of the solutions to their financial problems.

The five different reasons for change do not point in the same direction. The change in religious adherence and government policy support change in general, but have no clear advice for paddy cultivation. The decline in the number of buffaloes could either be compensated by a decrease of cultivated paddy fields or a change in technology that would reduce the input of buffalo services. The increasing need for food in the hunger season supports an increase of rice production. The promising potential of rice as a cash crop points in the same direction. Farmers in Lawonda face this dilemma, and have to cope with

the ambiguity of the direction of changes. Some of them have chosen to engage in efforts to raise paddy production.

### **Innovation in paddy cultivation**

Increasing paddy production in Lawonda requires innovations<sup>2</sup>. The area suitable for wet rice cultivation is limited and cannot be extended. Therefore, the new idea in Lawonda is to increase paddy production by growing two crops per year on some of the existing paddy fields. The extra production would yield more paddy for food and could be used to earn money as well. The innovation concerns the technology of cultivation, the organization of the work and the distribution of the harvest.

The first option to accomplish intensification of paddy cultivation is to organize the work differently and still use the technology of buffalo trampling. This is what was done by some of the people of Pangadu Jara in 1989. Paddy fields at the foot of Pangadu Jara are cultivated twice each year. If one thinks about cultivation in terms of labor and time, rather than in terms of land use, the extra crop is the first one of the season in a series of four instead of three crops. Work on the paddy fields starts two months earlier than usual with preparing the nurseries in July and August and transplanting in October. The nurseries have to be situated on a field that can be easily flooded. The introduction of a "fourth" crop causes problems. If a paddy field is cultivated twice in the same year, there is no fallow period. Fertility of the soil will decline unless manure or fertilizer is applied, and farmers in Lawonda are not used to doing so yet. This problem is even more important when the paddy farmers select seed of (semi-)improved varieties. These varieties grow faster and yield more under favorable circumstances. Yet, under unfavorable conditions, of which low soil fertility is one, the yield will decline when compared with local varieties (Krul, 1985:8).

The major problems, however, concern organizational aspects. When the period of work on the paddy fields is extended with two months, there is a shortage of labor and time for the usual activities of that season. The months of August-September is called *da padiha*, "that cannot be counted", indicating the large number of activities in this period, many of which do not directly concern agriculture (See Box 10.1). Preparation of nurseries and paddy fields is the task of men. In August, they should be busy with house repair and construction and with all kinds of ceremonial activities. It is also the period to prepare the soil of the dry land, so that maize can be sown immediately after the first rains. Spending

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<sup>2</sup>"With the term innovation, we mean plants and animals, tools, techniques, practices or forms of organization, or to put it shortly, objects or actions which at a certain moment are classified and evaluated, while before they were either not, or differently classified or evaluated. We speak of innovations as soon as one looks upon an object or action differently than before or as soon as one starts thinking about that" (Van den Breemer, 1984:97).



The second option to raise paddy production is the adoption of a different technology. It is called *gogo-rencah*, -in short GORA-. This is a combination of techniques of growing paddy on dry land (*gogo*) and wet land cultivation (*rencah*). The land is prepared by labor using a hoe, at the very start of the wet season. Afterward, paddy is sown as if it were dry land paddy. When the rain starts falling heavily, the water is kept on the paddy field; then it turns into the sawah it has always been.

This implies that buffalo labor is replaced by labor. How this technology is assessed depends on the "costs" and "benefits" of this change. These are different for the buffalo owners and the buffalo-less.

For farmers who own a small paddy field only it is not very favorable to participate in a *pakeri* group. For them, the costs of buffalo services are high. They take an equal share in the work, because it is done collectively during the whole working season. However, they receive an unequal share in the benefits: each member of the group is rewarded with the harvest on his own paddy field, and if the size of that field is small the reward of one season's labor will be small too.

Another characteristic of the *pakeri* group is that the buffalo owners decide on the sequence in which the fields are prepared. Regularly, the poorer members of the group receive the last turn. This often implies that they have to work their own fields under unfavorable conditions, because by the time they are able to transplant the paddy plants it is more than two months beyond the best time to do so.

The GORA system has two major advantages for resource poor farmers. The first advantage is that no animal power is required, making it unnecessary to participate in a *kelompok pakeri*, and thus making his labor free for his own paddy fields. The second advantage is that being released of the rule of sequence imposed by the *pakeri* group, a farmer is able to start cultivating his own paddy field early in the season with more favorable growing conditions. Better growing conditions lead to higher yields, which means more paddy for consumption, barter-exchange or sale.

The *kelompok pakeri* mainly benefits the buffalo owners. They receive labor in return for buffalo services. Usually, buffalo owners are well endowed with paddy fields. A new technology that implies that more labor per unit of land is required is therefore problematic for the larger farmers, who are never able to cultivate their fields with only their own (household members' collective) labor. GORA turned out to be very unfavorable for buffalo owners. The demand of buffalo-less farmers for the services of the animals decreased, and the supply of labor to buffalo owners decreased correspondingly.

This change of technology affects the ratio between human and animal labor. If the followers in the *kelompok pakeri* do not need the buffalo anymore, they do not have to work on the buffalo owners' fields in exchange for buffalo services. However, the social relations between the members of the *pakeri* group and the buffalo owners are not based only on a single exchange of these services. They are in fact multi-stranded relationships in which the buffalo owners are the patrons that control the activities of their clients in many respects. It depends on the ratio between the acreage of the buffalo owners' paddy fields and the size of their herd, how eager they are to tie buffalo-less farmers to their *kelompok pakeri*. If this

ratio is low, which means that the same herd could trample more fields than just the buffalo owners', the owners will search for more members for their *kelompok pakeri*.

The result of the first GORA experiment in Maderi was quite satisfactory. The members of the farmers' organization had tried the technique on paddy fields of about half an acre. The yields were good. The staff of Propelmas who had actively promoted GORA was very surprised to notice that people did not want to continue with GORA next season. When asking about the reason why they stopped with GORA, people answered only vaguely, saying that they did not have time, or that GORA did not suit the type of soil in Lawonda. Casually, one of the real reasons became apparent.

The buffalo owners in Maderi did not want GORA. One of them found a successful strategy to prevent the adoption of this new technique. In the month of May following the first season of GORA, he executed his plan. May is the month for paying tax. The population is forced by the tax collectors to pay their tax in money; if they are not able to give money the tax collectors accept payment in kind, and they personally decide on the price of what is offered. The buffalo owner was very conscious of the financial difficulties of his former *pakeri* group friends. He decided to sell a horse, and spread the rumor of his temporary affluent financial situation. Consequently, he was willing to lend the money to his "friends". To the usual conditions he added one special condition: the promise to participate again in the *pakeri* group.

The experience with GORA shows how promising innovations can be frustrated by the local political-economic forces. Both Propelmas and the poorer rice farmers were in favor of the new technology, but the buffalo owners used their power as patrons of the buffalo-less to prohibit the change that would be harmful to their interests.

The government of the province, of which Sumba is a part, actively supported the GORA system, too. The government does not assess in terms of costs and benefits of buffalo services or labor. From the point of view of the government, GORA would be a useful tool in the struggle to increase agricultural production and to avoid seasonal famine. In east Sumba, the government promised agricultural tools (hoes and *linggis*) for farmers who adopted this system; in some cases the army joined in the campaign to stimulate the farmers in using the GORA method, and the threat of violence was very convincing.

I collected data about GORA activities in 1988 and 1989 in my research area in Maderi. Women of the 17 households in this area are members of the female farmers' organization *Anakara*. In 1988, they decided to experiment with GORA, and nine of the households participated. They sowed about eight kilograms on average (half a *blek*). Although the yield was not bad, the next year only one woman cultivated a GORA-field. The reason for the women to refrain from this activity was not that they were tied to a *kelompok pakeri*. For women, the GORA style cultivation was an extra activity, burdening them with extra work. The dry season in 1989 was short, and all the normal dry season activities were postponed until September and October, so that there was no time left to do extra work.

Changing the organization of cultivation and the introduction of GORA are the two innovations of paddy cultivation that have been tried out in Lawonda. There are other

possibilities for technological change: plowing with buffalo or even using a tractor to plow the fields.<sup>3</sup> There have been efforts by the government service to introduce buffalo plowing, but these were never successful due to similar reasons that caused the failure of GORA. Buffalo owners expected more benefit from the existing cultivation system, and did not like the prospect of losing clients.



Weeding the GORA fields means extra work for women

### **Distribution of the benefits of innovation**

Because rice is considered the best food in Lawonda, there is always a large demand for rice. Yet, high demand for paddy is not expressed primarily in increasing market prices<sup>4</sup> (although prices do rise in seasons of shortage), but shows in a large number of people who show up at a field where paddy is harvested.

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<sup>3</sup> Both technologies are applied in the mountain plain of Lewa in east Sumba. This is an area of resettlement, where the School for Agricultural Education (SPP) is the center for technological innovation. In Lewa, buffaloes are very scarce. Farmers in Lewa are much more market oriented than their colleagues in Lawonda. They buy external inputs, such as improved rice seed and fertilizer, pay for tillage services and sell the larger part of the harvest. A full comparison of paddy cultivation in Lawonda and Lewa would be a good issue for further research that exposes the restrictions on innovations of this kind of agriculture imposed by the organization of a more traditional local economy on Sumba.

<sup>4</sup> It is part of the Government's policy to keep rice prices low.

No farmer in Lawonda can take the full harvest of his paddy field home and keep it for his own household only. Part of the harvest has to be given as a reward for assistance in harvesting, threshing and for other assistance during cultivation. Part of the harvest is given to people in need, while part is given as credit to people who promise to pay back in paddy after their own harvest. The five farmers who engaged in cultivating the early "extra" crop of paddy gave me the data about distribution of the harvest from the field:

Table 10.3 Distribution of the harvest from the paddy fields in 1989 of five (March) and three (May-June) farmers in Pangadu Jara, Lawonda.<sup>5</sup>

Harvest season:	March	May-June
number of respondents	5	3
total amount of harvest (in bags)	65	26
distribution in percentage of total:		
(a) for assistance in harvesting	10	21
(b) credit (loans in paddy)	42	0
(c) assistance for the needy	7	21
(d) direct barter	8	11
(e) repayment of debt in paddy	3	8
(f) for household consumption	28	42

Table 10.3 indicates that less than half of the harvest is brought to the houses to be used for own consumption. The larger part of the harvest is given to be exchanged with other people. Assistance for the needy can be regarded as a category of gifts. Farmers who harvest earlier than the main harvest season give part of their harvest away "plate-by-plate". This refers to the crowd of people who receive a very small amount of the early harvest. Paddy given "by the plate" is regarded as a gift.

At harvest time, people who are short of food offer their help in harvesting. In March, most people in Lawonda are short of food -at least of rice- and supply of harvest assistance is abundant. Every participant in harvesting receives a reward in paddy of one or two *blek*. The paddy field owner will try to accept only the assistance he needs, though it is very hard to send the others away empty handed.

<sup>5</sup> The number of data on which this table is based is very small, so they can only be interpreted as an indication of the kind of distribution that takes place.

The category of "direct barter" ranges from transactions that come close to gifts through transactions in which paddy is bartered for other goods with the same or even higher market value. People who visit the harvesting farmer in order to get some paddy, but who do not expect him to be willing to give them paddy for free, present a small "gift" of sugar or coffee. If the paddy farmer accepts this "present", he will give them paddy in return, and often the market value of the paddy exceeds the price of the sugar and coffee present. Turning down the request can be more expensive for the farmer: in that case it is likely that the visitors will linger on, and be the farmer's guests until they decide to go home again.

In 1987, a school teacher and two officials of the development organization in Lawonda had experimented with an early paddy crop. They harvested in March. First they were quite pleased with the good harvest. Yet, after a few days they changed their opinion. Their houses were permanently crowded with visitors trying to get paddy, either promising to repay it later or presenting small gifts. It was impossible to accept all requests, but the process of turning the requests down appeared to put a heavy burden on their household's budget. In Lawonda, hospitality demands that one give visitors food, areca and betel and tobacco. In the end, the teacher and the two officials promised never to engage in a similar experiment because the costs of the consequences were much higher than the benefit of the extra paddy harvest.

There is also a more profitable type of barter in paddy. An example is found in what is called *mandara*, (see chapter 3). In times of shortage, people travel to their relatives in other areas to ask for food. *Mandara* implies long term exchange relationships between people in different regions. Lawonda receives many visitors in the season of the rice harvest.

What happens at the field seems to be direct barter: paddy for a pig or a dog, while in fact *mandara* is not barter, but a mutual credit arrangement. It is primarily a way to deal with seasonal shortages. Due to the variation in landscape within a fairly small area, regions with different harvest seasons are found within relatively short distances. Maize in the mountains is harvested two months earlier than in the coastal areas. People from the coast travel to Maderi in January to ask for maize, and in March people from Maderi travel to the coast to do the same. Normally it is not necessary to bring substantial gifts for the host. However, in a situation of real scarcity, the "price" of food rises. Then, only guests who honor the host with a welcoming gift of real value -a dog, or a pig or even a precious ornament- will return with a considerable amount of paddy. The debt remains the same in these cases: an amount of food equivalent to what was received. The gift can be regarded as the interest on the loan. A difference between a loan in paddy and paddy given in a *mandara* relationship is, that a return *mandara* visit is only paid when the creditor experiences a food shortage. It is considered embarrassing if a person with plenty of paddy at home asks for repayment of a debt in paddy. With this behavior he shows a kind of greed that people in Lawonda disapprove of.

Relatively wealthy farmers who want their paddy loans to be repaid prefer to issue loans instead of giving their harvest to *mandara* visitors. Loans imply that agreements are made about the period and amount of repayment, without regard to the question of whether the lender requires the repayment or not.

Loans in paddy are only given to people who are considered "no others", so that the transaction includes the maintenance of social relations. The terms of the loan vary: "no others" with a short social distance from the paddy farmer, such as neighbors, can borrow without interest: they have to pay back the same amount after their own harvest. People who are not so well acquainted with the farmer have to repay with 100 percent interest. Table 10.3 shows that a large part of the early harvest is distributed as loans. The kind of relationship between the lender and borrower affects not only the terms of credit, but also the chance of repayment. In patron-client relationships the chance of repayment of a paddy loan of the patron to the client is larger than for a loan from the client to the patron. People with a low position in the social hierarchy have limited means to enforce borrowers of higher status to repay their debts.

Ama Dorkas is one of the five farmers who harvested paddy in March. Among the crowd of people who asked for a share of the harvest or a loan in paddy was the former village head. He has a very bad reputation with regard to repaying debts, but because of his high social status it is very difficult to refuse his request for a loan. Ama Dorkas had to find a polite way to turn his request down.

Two years ago Ama Dorkas lent a buffalo to the former village head, who gave him a golden pendant as a pawn in return. This pendant was later stolen from Ama Dorkas' house. As soon as the rumor of theft reached the former village head, he went to Ama Dorkas and asked for his pawn back. After Ama Dorkas confessed the pendant was missing, the former village head insisted that he get a paddy field from Ama Dorkas and the right to cultivate it until the missing pendant was back. Remembering this settlement, Ama Dorkas had a clever suggestion when the former village head asked for two bags of paddy.

He proposed to give the two bags along with an additional two bags if the former village head would give him back the paddy field. The proposal was rejected, and Ama Dorkas had an acceptable excuse for not lending the paddy.

The reason for elaborating on these ways of distribution of the harvest is that they restrict the possibilities for earning cash with paddy. The demand exerted by the local community itself for paddy loans and gifts in kind is already so high that there is little room for selling paddy on the market. Exchange in kind is also more profitable, because the terms of exchange in in kind transactions are more in accordance with seasonal scarcity than with market prices of paddy.

### **Selling paddy**

One of the reasons for the minor importance of paddy as a cash crop is the reluctance of the people in Lawonda to sell paddy for money. Rice is valued higher than other food

crops, resulting in a higher ranking in the "spheres of exchange" (see chapter 3). It can be sold to pay for items in the higher "spheres of allocation of money", as, for example, school fees for the secondary school. Paddy is a suitable item of exchange in transactions in kind, serving long term social relations. The data of table 10.3 indicate that more than half of the harvest of paddy enters the exchange circuits, but all the transactions mentioned in this table are in kind. Lawondanese feel better when giving their precious paddy to people they know, than when selling it to anonymous strangers.

Table 10.4 Data about paddy as a cash crop in Pangadu Jara in 1989.

	number of households	bags of paddy
Total in survey	16	
Estimate of total harvest in 1989		280
Paddy sold for money in 1989		20
Households that sold paddy	8	
Households that bought paddy	2	

The table above shows that less than 10 percent of the harvest is sold. The figures concerning sales include repayment in paddy for loans in cash. Selling paddy is generally done only in the peak of the harvest season in July and August. In Pangadu Jara, one bag of early paddy was sold to a fellow member of this *paraingu*, a close neighbor, who paid with money from the revenues of birds' nests. How the eight households that sold paddy spent the revenues can be read in table 10.5. All items of expenditure mentioned in Table 10.5 are considered worth while to be paid for with paddy, except for the last item: household consumption expenditures. No person in Lawonda sells paddy with the intention of exchanging it for sugar, coffee and tobacco for private consumption. Yet, if a bag of paddy is sold anyway and some money is left after paying the expenditure it was sold for, the residual is spent on these consumption goods.

Table 10.5 is in units of quantity, and not in units of value. The reason is that prices of paddy vary. The variation is due to differences in relations between the buyer and seller, and to differences in season; in town the prices for paddy are higher than at the paddy fields, reflecting transport costs and the fact that in town demand to buy paddy is higher than in the rural area.

Table 10.5 How the cash revenues of paddy were spent in Pangadu Jara in 1989.

Item of expenditure	in bags of paddy	percentage of volume
Food, tobacco and coffee to serve helpers on the paddy field	3	15
School fee and uniforms	2.5	12.5
House construction	2	10
Tax payment	4.5	22.5
Clothing	4	20
A large canvas <sup>6</sup>	3	15
Household consumption: sugar, coffee and tobacco	1	5

The lowest price for a bag of paddy sold by the people of Pangadu Jara in 1989 was Rp 10,000: at the time of trampling the paddy fields a farmer borrowed Rp 20,000 and repaid it in July with two bags of paddy. In July, a fair price for a bag was at least Rp 15,000, which means that the interest on the loan was fifty percent over four months. In March, the one bag of early paddy was sold for Rp 20,000, reflecting the scarcity in that month.

There are two institutional buyers in the local market for paddy: the government, through the KUD (*Koperasi Unit Desa*, the Village Cooperative), and the local development organization, Propelmas.

The cooperatives are required to implement a floor-price system (subsidized by the government) in order to maintain stable prices (see Kern, 1986: 110). In *desa* Prai Madeta, the KUD was merely a building where none of the Cooperation's official tasks were performed, and which served as the village head's residence. The nearest functioning KUD was found in Anakalang, nine kilometers south of Lawonda, along the main road to the capital. People from Lawonda were reluctant to sell paddy at the KUD there, because it was out of cash most of the time, and people had to wait for weeks and return several times to get their money. Selling at the Propelmas center was a good alternative: paddy was paid for without delay and there were little or no transportation costs, but the price per kilogram was lower than in town. In the district capital of Waikabubak, Chinese traders paid Rp 230 per

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<sup>6</sup> The large canvas is used for many purposes, for example as a temporary roof during times of feasts when there are many guests, and also as a floor on which to dry paddy in the sun. The owner of such a canvas lends it to others, who give him a small reward (in kind) for the use of the canvas.

kilogram of paddy in August 1989, whereas Propelmas paid Rp 220.<sup>7</sup> People who have to go to Waikabubak anyway, or found a cheap method of transport to town, prefer to sell paddy in Waikabubak.

### **The potentials of paddy as a cash crop in Lawonda**

The general conclusion is that, until now, paddy cultivation in Lawonda has been of minor importance as a way to earn money. An increase in rice production would yield more product and open the possibilities for selling part of the paddy harvest. Yet, it is very uncertain whether this will really happen.

Although paddy cultivation in Lawonda is land-extensive, it does not mean that intensification can be brought about easily. Human and animal labor are scarce, and decisions about allocation of labor resources are made by the relatively well endowed farmers. They benefit from the present system of land preparation, because it ties labor to the herd of buffalo. The working group connected to the herd of buffalo performs the tasks at the fields for the paddy owners, and people with a large area of paddy field benefit more than people with only a small field, who relatively work more for the benefit of others. The buffalo owners have good reason to resist innovations which decrease the dependence on buffalo services.

The government is ambiguous with regard to intensification of paddy cultivation. The local village government consists of relatively rich paddy farmers who are very much engaged in paddy cultivation, and are delighted to receive beneficial programs of the higher government. The programs that threaten their power position as buffalo owner and patron are not welcomed. The district government was, at least in 1989, not actively stimulating paddy cultivation in Lawonda, but instead stressed the importance of dry land cultivation for the mitigation of the food problems of the Sumbanese population. GORA was a program that received special support of the government on provincial level (*Tingkat I*), in the hope of raising the Province's rice production. At the national level, ideology supports intensification of rice cultivation in order to contribute to the nation's self-sufficiency in rice. All of these programs are aimed at affecting paddy production, but do not have any direct influence on the allocation of the harvest. The local cooperative, KUD, meant by the government to facilitate marketing of agricultural crops, does not function in Lawonda.

In spite of all these impediments, changing the traditional way of paddy cultivation in the sense of growing an early crop of paddy that can be harvested in March gains popularity among the farmers of Pangadu Jara. The early crop benefits from better growing conditions and allows the farmers to make more profitable exchange arrangements. Paddy is a very suitable exchange crop in Lawonda. Compared to the distribution arrangements in the peak

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<sup>7</sup> When prices are compared, other differences between buyers have to be taken into account as well: the accuracy of the balance used to weigh the paddy, and the moisture content (not very well dried paddy is heavier) that is accepted by the buyer.

of the harvest season, transactions of paddy in the early harvest season are more business-like, with a smaller share of gifts and a higher share of loans with specified terms of repayment and interest. This indicates that at a very modest scale there is change in "morality of exchange".

Yet, because rice is such a special product, highly valued as food and associated with guests, close relatives and other good social relations, it is not very suitable for exchange with money. The story of intensification of paddy cultivation in Lawonda supports the argument that: "contrary to popular opinion among government officials, who tend to think of intensive agriculture as market-oriented and extensive agriculture as not, it is typically the former that fulfills subsistence needs in Indonesia's mixed systems, while the latter fulfills market needs. For example, a household's irrigated land will provide rice for household consumption, while dry land swiddens might provide fruits, timber, bamboo and grass for sale in the market, in addition to maize, tubers and so on for household consumption" (Dove, 1986:227). This leads to the final conclusion that, in Lawonda, one can expect dry land crops to be better cash crops than paddy for both the poor and wealthier farmers. For the poor, because of the simple fact that they do not have access to the resources required to produce a large quantity of paddy, and for the wealthier, because of the reasons mentioned above. The introduction of such a dry land cash crop is discussed in chapter 11.

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## Beans for cash

Every Wednesday, early in the morning, a stream of people passes our house in Lawonda. They are on their way to the market in Anakalang. The men bring one or two chickens and some carry bags with areca nut or betel fruits. Women carry baskets with vegetables, fruits or eggs. A few women from Lawonda pass by carrying bundles of their famous clay pots. The stream of people conveys the same message as the final conclusion of chapter 10: to earn cash, especially for regular household expenditures, it seems better to set one's hopes on dry land crops and products of animal husbandry than on rice.

Marketing of dry land products in the region of Lawonda is not always easy and profitable. Most people produce their own food, which makes marketing conditions unfavorable. Supply is abundant in the harvest season, transport facilities are few, most products cannot be stored for long, and consequently prices drop. Moreover, local demand for dry land products is always limited. Purchasing power, comprising ability and willingness to buy the products for money, is very small. The question remains: which crops are suitable to earn money?

This chapter discusses the cultivation and performance as a cash crop of a new crop in Lawonda, *kacang ijo* or mung bean (*Signa radiata*, L. Wilczek). It was introduced by the government in the late 1970's. The village head of desa Pondok, northwest in the area of Lawonda, cultivated several pulse-crops in the gardens around the primary school. After two years, farmers started experimenting themselves, and mung bean and soya bean cultivation spread to neighboring villages. Cultivation of *kacang ijo* was taken up by Propelmas as one of the main activities in its program of cooperation with farmers in the area.

All three parties involved assess the new crop in terms of their own criteria. For the farmers, *kacang ijo* is a good crop because it yields what they need most: money and food. The government supports cultivation because it increases food production and contributes to self-sufficiency in food on a national scale; district and provincial level government applauds increased production of agricultural crops for export to other islands, because it helps to improve the image of Sumba, which is now regarded as a poor, non-productive and backward island. For Propelmas, cultivation of *kacang ijo* turned out to be a good entry point activity, suitable to get in touch with the poorer segment of the population, providing

a basis for lasting cooperation. The three parties involved agree that cultivation of *kacang ijo* is a successful activity.

Selling *kacang ijo* is the fourth alternative in the series of different ways to obtain money discussed in this book. It is a dry land crop, and since the poorer segment of the population in Lawonda relies on dry land agriculture, this way to earn money seemed to be especially suitable for the poor. Cultivation and marketing of *kacang ijo* is discussed in this chapter as a development program that fits well in the Uma-economy.

The first part of this chapter contains a description on how the new crop was introduced in the area, and describes how cultivation practices were gradually adapted to local circumstances. The resulting technology presently applied in Lawonda is simple, and reflects how farmers deal with the shortage of labor -the scarcest resource- and seasonal variations in rainfall.

The second part of the chapter discusses *kacang ijo* cultivation as a development program aimed at poverty alleviation. The first question to be answered in this part of the chapter is whether it is true that *kacang ijo* cultivation is a suitable way to earn cash for the poor segment of the population. The scale of *kacang ijo* cultivation is discussed to give an impression of the contribution this crop makes in meeting the cultivators' needs of food and money. Whether *kacang ijo* can really be called a cash crop appears from the figures on the allocation of the harvest. Marketing of this crop is the next issue which appears to be very complicated for the Lawondanese, because in the marketing process the traditional rules of proper behavior do not always apply.

In the last section, cultivation practices and selling *kacang ijo* are assessed within the wider context of the Uma-economy. The argument in this final section is, that this crop is suitable for exchange with cash for minor expenditures, because of its position in the "spheres of exchange". There is no tradition on exchange or distribution as in the case of rice. Yet, if sold in large quantities, as in the case of collective sales to traders in town, involvement in the market economy increases, and calls for a change in "morality of exchange".

### **The introduction of *kacang ijo***

Self-sufficiency in rice is one of the major objectives of the Indonesian government policy. Rice is the main and most preferred staple food all over the country. Java is the center of rice cultivation in Indonesia. It also is the island which suffers most from over-population. Therefore, agricultural policy is mainly designed for and primarily directed to the Javanese situation. Increasing rice production could not be established through extension of the cultivated area on Java. The only way was to intensify rice cultivation using high yielding varieties of grain and external inputs, such as fertilizer and insecticide. The BIMAS (*Bimbingan Masal*, mass guidance) program was designed to support the transition to high external input agriculture and it was started in 1963. "The difficulties faced over the years

in increasing rice production rapidly enough to reach self-sufficiency influenced the Government to change the objective of rice to food self-sufficiency in REPELITA III<sup>1</sup>. The new objective also included an equity aspect considering that non-rice staple food farmers generally worked land that was inferior to wet rice land, and they tended to be poorer than rice farmers. This changed objective also gave support to the rather neglected *BIMAS palawija* program to stimulate intensification of production of maize, tubers and beans which was started by the Department of Agriculture in 1972/73" (Mears, 1981:418).

*Palawija* is the Javanese word which means non-rice crops. Sometimes the word is translated with "second crops, grown on the land after the rice harvest" (Hüsken, 1988:277), referring to a common cropping pattern on Java. On paddy fields that receive sufficient water for only one flooded paddy crop per year, *palawija*, with lower water requirements are planted after the rice harvest, to grow on late-season rains, residual soil moisture and irrigation water. More than half of the total land area on Java classified as paddy fields are of this type (Roche, 1984:14).

In the Government program, *BIMAS palawija*, beans are cultivated as a cash crop. With credit for seeds, fertilizer and crop protecting chemicals, cultivation of beans became a relatively capital intensive business.

People in the area of Lawonda are used to growing and eating beans. Some varieties are intentionally sown like the *kabiya raja watar*, the "maize-beans", whose seeds are mixed with maize seed and sown together. Several varieties grow wild. The wild beans are gathered by the end of the rainy season and stored as emergency food for times of food shortage. Cultivating and gathering beans is considered old-fashioned in Lawonda, with the positive meaning of industriously caring for diversity of crops, and the negative meaning of indicating dependence on poor man's crops. Beans always used to be a subsidiary crop, harvested in small quantities and used only for food.

Soya beans and *kacang ijo* were new crops in Lawonda in 1978. In that year, the village head of *desa* Pondok in the western part of the area of Lawonda experimented with soya beans and mung bean around the primary school of Kapalas. By the end of 1978, he invited an extension worker of the Agricultural Service to come to this part of his *desa* and give guidance to the farmers who wanted to join in the experiment. The "guidance" included seed, but no other material external inputs. Many farmers who had watched the experiment around the school were motivated for the new crop. Soya beans are hard to prepare, but after Propelmas' staff explained how to make soya drinks, soya beans gained popularity as a food crop. *Kacang ijo* can be prepared easily, mixed with rice, or boiled separately as a side dish. Both kind of beans can be sold to traders for a good price (compared to the market price of maize beans), because the product is exported from Sumba to Java.

The idea from Java to grow the beans on the paddy fields after the rice harvest, was not well accepted in Lawonda. The most suitable paddy fields are those that can be irrigated.

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<sup>1</sup> The Government's five year plan for the period of 1978 to 1983.

If the Javanese way were applied, the fields would have to be tilled after the rice harvest, and irrigated in cases of drought. Moreover, the paddy fields would have to be fenced, because in the dry season buffaloes and horses are released to graze on the stubbles in the fields. Bean cultivation on the paddy fields therefore requires too much extra work in a season that is scheduled for mostly non-agricultural tasks. Another problem is that these most suitable fields are usually cultivated last in the sequential pattern of rice cultivation (see chapter 10), and harvested in August. This month is the heart of the dry season and not a very good month for sowing beans. Yet another possible way to cultivate *kacang ijo* as a second crop on the paddy fields is described by Abels (1965: 123): the beans are sown in the paddy field a few weeks before the harvest of paddy, so that the seeds germinate in the moist soil. Afterward the paddy must be harvested carefully and the stalks slashed to the ground. The *kacang ijo* plants can grow in the dry season. This way of cultivating can only be successful if there are little or no weeds in the paddy field. Weeding paddy fields requires too much labor, and so there is little hope for the viability of this alternative in Lawonda.

To fit the circumstances on Sumba, an extra agricultural activity cannot be successful if it imposes heavy demands on labor. So an alternative way of cultivating beans had to be found, using less labor and not interfering with other work. In 1982, soya beans were grown in Pondok during the dry season on the irrigated river bank fields, called *mondu*. Part of the harvest was distributed amongst the farmers in the drier part of the *desa*, Kapalas.



Farmers in Kapalas are harvesting *kacang ijo*

### *Beans for cash*

These farmers in Kapalas were members of the farmers' organization *Ndewa Tana*. Decisions in this farmers' organization were dominated by the voice of the village head, the leader of Kapalas in every domain: senior member of the church council, head of the primary school, head of the local government, and local land and buffalo owner. Fortunately, the village head did not use his leadership for private benefit, but he dedicated his efforts to the development of "his" village. Thus, the farmers' organization *Ndewa Tana* took up the cultivation of soya beans. Cultivation is primarily an individual activity, but some of the work is done collectively, as is usual in dry land farming. The farmers decided to collect the harvest and barter it with Propelmas for agricultural tools (forks and crowbars (*linggis*)). The harvest in 1983 was about 1000 kg of soya beans, but only half of this amount was indeed exchanged for tools. The other part was consumed as *sari kedele*, a soya drink for children, or mixed with coffee. Farmers in other parts of the area of Lawonda were not very motivated to cultivate soya beans. If cultivated as a dry land crop on the fields where people also grow maize, cassava, fruits and vegetables, the crop competed with these food crops. The acreage of soya beans remained small, because the food crops were given priority since they are necessary to secure the household's food supply.

*Kacang ijo* was tried out in the dry land gardens, too, but it did not do well: if sown simultaneously with the other dry land crops, *kacang ijo* receives too much rain, which results in abundant growth of leaves, a poor seed set, and increased vulnerability to fungus. Also, as a second dry land garden crop, *kacang ijo* did not do well. In *desa* Prai Madeta, farmers experimented over several seasons, but their conclusion was that rainfall in this village is more than what is suitable for the crop. In *desa* Maderi and Pondok, rainfall is less. In these areas, cultivation of *kacang ijo* is a success. The beans are sown in February on a freshly cleared grass *ladang*.

### ***Kacang ijo* cultivation Lawonda**

*Karabuk* is the local name for a patch of grassland that is partially cleared for cultivation. Literally the word means "to pull out", and refers to the *imperata* grass that is pulled out and spread over the field to decay. After a week or two the land is burned. Of old, the *karabuk* was situated adjacent to the dry land fields; this was an addition to the field where crops were grown that could resist the grass roots. A *karabuk* requires very little labor, and still it yields some additional crops. Making a *karabuk* is also the first step to opening up a new dry land field. After the harvest, the farmer tills the soil of the *karabuk*, and in the next season he grows maize, cassava and other food crops on this land.

Table 11.1 Farming operations in *kacang ijo* (mung bean) cultivation in *desa Maderi* and *desa Pondok*.

Preparation for sowing	First time seed obtained from Agricultural Service of the Government, after 1980 from Propelmas. Seed credit, repayment in kind after the harvest. Afterward seed from own stock. Variety "no. 129", height 50 cm, flowering after 40 days, harvest after 80 days.
Land preparation	In December a field in the grassland is cleared, the <i>karabuk</i> . Imperata grass is pulled out by hand, left on the field to decay. Burning after two weeks to clear the land and destroy harmful insects, especially ants.
Sowing	Shortly after burning, in the second part of the rainy season (end of January, February). Seed rate 10-15 kg per hectare.
Fertilizer application	No application.
Weeding	Twice: (1) after 10 to 15 days, and (2) just before flowering starts.
Pest and disease control	Main pest in <i>walang sangit</i> , ( <i>Leptocorisa acuta</i> Thunb.), an insect plague which occurs usually in paddy. Second pest is <i>ulat akar</i> , nematodes and root rot caused by <i>Sclerotium rolfsii</i> Sacc. Generally no insecticide or pesticide is used.
Harvesting	At about 80 days after sowing. Harvest in two or three times. The pods are picked from the plants by hand. Yield: maximal about 40 kg per kg seed (about 600 kg per ha.).
Threshing	Foot-treading.
Storage	The seeds are sundried. As they are very sensitive to bugs ( <i>Bruchus rubens</i> ), they are mixed with ash or coconut oil and stored in closed tins, pots or bamboo.
Sources: <i>Mari bercocok tanam kacang ijo</i> , Propelmas brochure by I.G.M. Raspita, Lawonda, 1987; and Pursglove, 1968:290-293.	

Farmers in Kapalas discovered that *kacang ijo* grows well in the *karabuk*. Table 11.1 presents an overview of all farming operations in *kacang ijo* cultivation in this area.

Preparation of the fields for *kacang ijo* takes place in December and January. This period is the peak of the rainy season and is accordingly a very busy season in paddy cultivation. Only those farmers who are not fully engaged in paddy cultivation can spare the time to

prepare a *karabuk* for *kacang ijo*. In Kapalas and Maderi, the area of wet rice fields is small, and farmers there are directed toward dry land cultivation.

The practices were compared with cultivation of the familiar beans crops in discussions about how to grow *kacang ijo*. *Kacang ijo* resemble *kacang jagung*, and they can be prepared for consumption in the same way. The differences in cultivation are listed in Table 11.2 to show which technical innovations are implied.

The list of characteristics in this table reveals that farmers who start growing *kacang ijo* have to take account of the specific requirements of this bean crop. The most difficult changes compared to the operations in cultivation of *kacang jagung* appeared to be that *kacang ijo* demands careful planning of all farming operations to make sure that this crop can be sown in the best month. Farmers must also be aware that the crop needs special care to prevent or treat pests and diseases. In Propelmas' evaluation survey both issues were mentioned most frequently as reasons why the harvest had (partially) failed.

Table 11.2: Characteristics of *kacang ijo* (mung bean) compared with *kacang jagung*, as they are cultivated in Kapalas and Maderi.

<i>kacang jagung</i>	<i>kacang ijo</i>
seeds sown together with maize seed	seeds sown apart from other crops
cultivated in tilled fields	cultivated in the <i>karabuk</i>
sown in small quantities between other crops, or at the fringes of a field	cultivated as mono-culture
can be sown throughout the rainy season	best result if sown in February
not very sensitive to pests or diseases	sensitive to pests and diseases
not very sensitive to variations in rainfall	sensitive to excessive rainfall, and sensitive to drought as well
harvested little by little, usually for direct consumption	harvested in two or three times

In considering the adoption of new technologies or new crops the farmers in the area of Lawonda assess the potentials of the innovation at the basis of their experience and "indigenous knowledge". Many farmers in the area are now involved in wet land cultivation, and combine shifting cultivation in fields further away from the *paraingu* with

a permanently cultivated plot close to their house. Still, "ecological knowledge associated with shifting cultivation continues to provide an important part of the conceptual framework within which the farmers approach their problems" (Richards, 1985: 50)<sup>2</sup>. More generally, as in shifting cultivation, the most problematic part of *kacang ijo* cultivation in the area of Lawonda is timing: cultivation has to fit into the cropping pattern which is determined by seasonal variations in rainfall, and it has to be fitted into the work schedule. The seasonal variations demand the crop to be sown before the second part of February in order to get enough rain. Too much rain causes abundant growth of leaves, only a few flowers and a bad seed set, so that the crop should not be sown before the end of January.

Farmers prepare the *karabuk* in working groups. Cooperation in the preparation of dry fields is a custom. In the case of a *karabuk*, it makes sense to clear a field in one day and to burn it all at once as well. Timing of farming operations therefore also requires good organization of the working groups. If one or more of the members of the groups have other obligations in *karabuk* season, for example because they are involved in paddy cultivation as member of a *kelompok pakeri*, the cultivation schedule of the group can be delayed, consequently increasing the risk of a bad harvest due to drought.

### ***Kacang ijo* cultivation and poverty alleviation**

Cultivation of *kacang ijo* was promoted in Lawonda by Propelmas as an activity for the poorer part of the population. The harvest can be used both for consumption and for sale, and therefore provides relief in two major needs: food and money. Ten years after the introduction of this crop in Lawonda, Propelmas' staff conducted an evaluation study of *kacang ijo* cultivation. Major questions in this survey were: are *kacang ijo* farmers indeed the poorer people, or are relatively wealthy farmers involved in this cultivation as well? Is the harvest used for consumption or for sale? Does this crop contribute substantially to the farmers' households budgets, or is it of minor importance as a way to obtain money? Do possibilities to expand the scale of *kacang ijo* cultivation exist, or what are the restrictions on expansion?

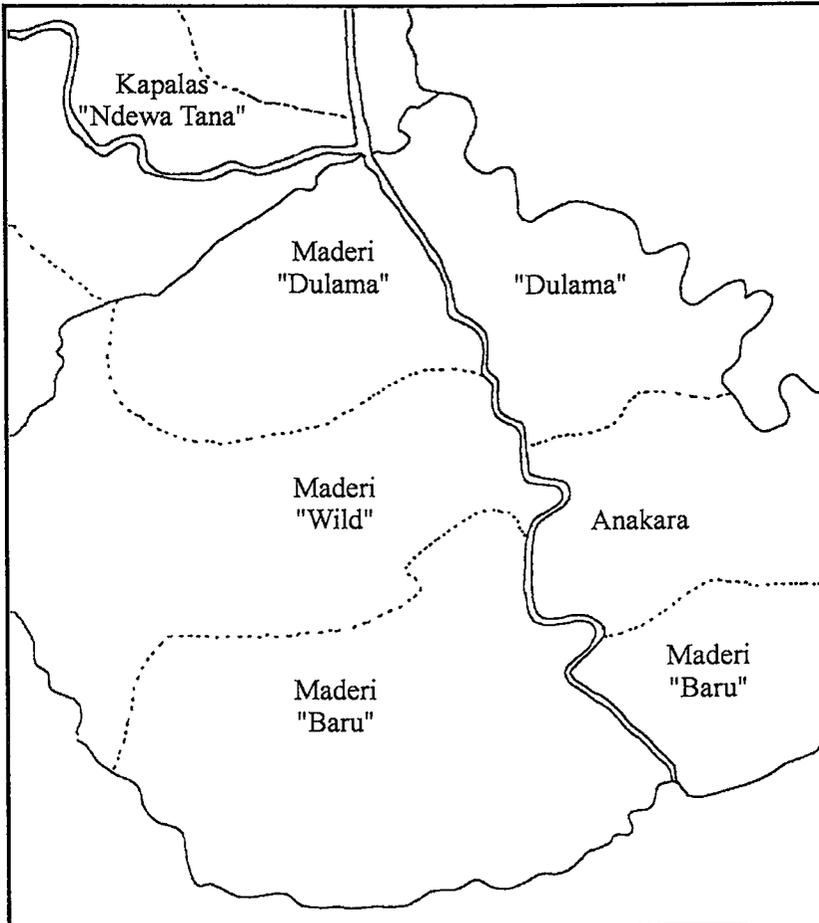
Data were gathered in two surveys, one in February 1988, at the start of the growing season, and one in June 1988, shortly after the harvest. Members of seven different groups of farmers were comprised in the survey. In this chapter the results concerning the five farmers' groups in Maderi and Kapalas are presented. Four of these five groups were farmers organizations who cooperate with Propelmas, one female (Anakara) and three male farmers' organizations. The fifth group (Maderi "wild") was composed of people who are not members of an organization, but cultivate *kacang ijo* on their own initiative. The sample

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<sup>2</sup> This line was written about West African farmers, but it applies to the Sumbanese farmers as well, who have in common with their west African colleagues that they live in sparsely populated areas where they used to live mainly on shifting cultivation.

of the survey covers about 20 percent of the total population of these groups, and the total number of respondents (of five groups) was 61.

Figure 11.1 The areas of the five farmers' groups involved in cultivation of *kacang ijo* in Maderi and Kapalas.



*An activity for the poor*

What are the characteristics of the people who try to earn cash through cultivation of *kacang ijo*? As was described in chapter seven, the local way of distinguishing between poorer and richer people is to consider how many heads of buffalo they own, and how

much seed they sow annually on the wet rice fields. "Rich", or at least not poor, are those who own more than one buffalo (and consequently have a voice in the organization of agricultural work), and those who sow one bag of paddy seed or more each year. "Rich" are also the people who have a cash salary, no matter how low it is, because their salary "is not eaten by mice, and does not suffer pests (*wereng*)". People who do not own a buffalo, and annually sow less than one bag of paddy seed depend for their livelihood, at least partly, on dry land cultivation.

Table 11.3 Characteristics of *kacang ijo* farmers.

Farmers' groups: Characteristics:	Maderi Baru	Maderi "wild"	Maderi Dulama	Maderi Anakara	Kapalas
number of respondents	8	5	8	9	20
with regular cash income (%)	11	20	25	11	5
who sow more than one bag of rice seed (%)	25	0	12	0	0
who own more than one buffalo (%)	37	0	12	22	10
gender of group members	male	male	male	female	male

The figures in the table show that the majority of the participants in *kacang ijo* cultivation are "not rich" according to local standards. Yet, they also show that the rich participate as well. The group members with a regular cash income are school teachers and village government officials. For them, participating in the cultivation of *kacang ijo* is a way to add something to their usually very modest income. Most of them play an important role in the farmers' organizations as well as in other village organizations. They are the local (informal) leaders, and to stimulate their group's members they join in this activity themselves.

Growing *kacang ijo* is a good option to earn cash for all people in the drier parts of the area if they want to engage in this type of dry land cultivation and if they can spare the time to do so. The latter precondition means that all people can grow *kacang ijo* except the more specialized rice farmers, who are too busy on the paddy fields. Yet, not all people want to participate. The birds' nest gatherers, like Manu Wolu, whose case is described in chapter 9, prefer their own activity over the drudgery in the *karabuk*. Any work on the dry land is considered as a poor man's job, and so people in Lawonda will prefer to engage in wet rice cultivation if they have access to the necessary resources.

In Kapalas, the preference for rice cultivation showed after a few years of successful *kacang ijo* harvests. The farmers sold the *kacang ijo* and obtained a considerable amount

of money, exactly in the season for paying tax. Their colleagues in Pondok, the other part of the *desa*, were short of money. They wanted to borrow money from the *kacang ijo* farmers. The latter agreed, but only if the Pondok farmers would pledge paddy fields to them. The next season the *kacang ijo* farmers were rice farmers, and the former rice farmers had to resort to the dry land.

The table includes one group of female *kacang ijo* farmers. Division of tasks in dry land cultivation are not as strict as in paddy cultivation. However, clearing the land, pulling out the grasses and burning are considered male tasks. Moreover, the women of Anakara did not like preparing the *karabuk*, and they also did not like the burden of extra work. In the first years of *kacang ijo*, they performed all tasks by themselves, but as the years went on they called more and more on their sons and husbands for help. Finally the men took over most of the *kacang ijo* cultivation. Yet, for the members of Anakara it was a positive development that the men took over: they were relieved of the extra work and the revenues of the harvest were still mostly spent on common household expenditures.<sup>3</sup>

#### *The scale of kacang ijo cultivation*

With "the scale of cultivation", I refer to the size of fields and harvest. Data about the scale reveal the relative importance of *kacang ijo* compared to other crops and other cash earning activities. The farmers in Lawonda indicate the size of the cultivation of a crop by the amount of seed they have sown. Taking the average ratio of 12 kilograms of *kacang ijo* per hectare, the farmers' own indicator of size can be converted into surface units. This latter estimation is presented in table 11.4. The average yield per farmer indicates the size of the harvest. This figure can subsequently be used to calculate potential revenues in cash, which signify the importance of this crop as a source of money for the farmers' households. The largest fields were found in 1988 in the north of Maderi, with the members of Dulama averaging about half a hectare. Dulama adopted *kacang ijo* cultivation as one of the main activities of the organization. Due to the discipline within the organization the members were able to give priority to the *kacang ijo* fields in the allocation of their labor. The women of Anakara sowed a relatively small amount, primarily due to their lack of time to cultivate more.

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<sup>3</sup> I do not intend to say that *in general* it is a positive development if men take over women's activities as soon as they start to be financially rewarding. In this case, the women were relieved when their husbands took over, but in the future, especially if money will be necessary for more household needs than at present, I expect that there will be difference in opinion between husbands and wives about how the priorities are set in spending the available money. For example, men incline to give priority to livestock, whereas women in Lawonda prefer to spend their revenues (in kind and cash) on food and clothing.

Table 11.4 Size and result of cultivation of *kacang ijo* in Maderi and Kapalas in 1988.

Farmers' groups:	Maderi Baru	Maderi "wild"	Maderi Dulama	Maderi Anakara	Kapalas
number of respondents	8	5	8	9	16
size of <i>kacang ijo</i> field, average per farmer, in are	30	25	50	16	11
average total yield per farmer, in kilograms	80	93	240	65	40
ratio between average yield and amount of seed sown	22	31	39	34	41

The yield varies considerably too. The best yields, measured in kilograms of harvest per kilogram of seed, are found with the groups, who had already cultivated this crop for a number of years. The group "Maderi wild" consists of neighbors of Dulama, Maderi Baru and Kapalas, and they share the knowledge about growing *kacang ijo* with the members of these "old groups".

Would it be possible to expand the area of *kacang ijo*? In the evaluation survey we asked "Why don't you grow more *kacang ijo*?". The answers revealed that access to land was not prohibiting expansion of cultivation. Dry land is still fairly abundant in the area of Lawonda, and growing an annual crop like *kacang ijo* does not involve a permanent claim on the land.

The groups of farmers who have recently started to grow *kacang ijo* mention shortage the of seed as an initial impediment to expansion of cultivation. The farmers have their own seeds after one or two years of growing mung bean.

The main reason why *kacang ijo* cultivators do not grow more than they already do is that they do not have enough labor to expand the activities. Exactly because they belong to the poorer part of the population, labor is their main productive resource: it has to be used in direct agricultural production, but also indirectly, as "item of exchange" within networks for exchange of resources, in order to get access to land, buffalo, cash, education and support. Therefore I do not expect that the area of *kacang ijo* will increase per cultivator in the near future. However, the total area can still expand as long as there are more farmers who want to start growing *kacang ijo*.

*Kacang ijo: a cash crop, a food crop, or both?*

The farmers groups in Maderi and Kapalas sold about two thirds of their harvest in 1988. The data about the allocation of the harvest are shown in the next table. In the survey, I

*Beans for cash*

gathered exact figures about sales, "gifts", repayment of seed-credit, and about the stock of seed for next season. The last category, for home consumption, is the calculated residual that remains when the amounts of the former categories are deducted from the total volume of the harvest. The figures of the female farmers group Anakara are quite different compared to the other groups' figures. It seems that the women have sold a considerably smaller part of the harvest; but here I have to add that at the time of the survey they had not yet sold what they intended to sell.

Table 11.5: Allocation of the harvest of *kacang ijo* by the members of five farmers' groups in Maderi and Kapalas in 1988.

Farmers' groups:	Maderi Baru	Maderi "wild"	Maderi Dulama	Maderi Anakara	Kapalas
number of respondents	8	5	8	9	16
Total harvest (kilogram)	645	466	1907	588	845
Allocation of the harvest (percentage of total):					
(a) sold for money	63	73	71	27	52
(b) given away	9	10	14	13	0
(c) repayment seed credit	3	0	0	1	12
(d) stored as seed	13	6	7	9	12
(e) for home consumption: the rest	12	11	8	50	24

The revenues of *kacang ijo* varied between 100,000 and 10,000 *Rupiah* per farmer at the scale of cultivation and level of market prices of 1988. The size of these revenues can be indicated by comparison with the level of some major expenditures. For example, tax payments range from Rp 3000 to Rp 15.000 per year for the farmers in this area, with a single exception above this amount. A new piece of clothing, a *sarong* or *kain toko*, costs between Rp 10.000 and Rp 20.000 depending on the quality. The price of rice (*beras*) in 1988 was about Rp 500 per kilogram. For the larger expenditures, such as secondary school fees, *kacang ijo* revenues are not sufficient.

The amount of *kacang ijo* stored as seed for the next season is very high, two or three times as much as the amount that was sown in 1988. There are two explanations. The first is that

conservation of the seeds is hard. Women in this area know that there is no use in storing large quantities of these or similar beans. A large quantity for home consumption would last for several months, and that is too long. Their experience shows that without special preservation measures the beans get infested with bugs after about a month. The Lawondanese are inclined to store a large amount of seed to cover for the contingencies of decay and pests. The problem of storage is also a good reason to sell a large part of the harvest.

The second explanation for the storage of high quantities of seed is that people in Lawonda are inclined to call a large part of their home stock of food "seed". It is a well accepted rule that "seed" cannot be bothered for other purposes than sowing. If a bag or tin of rice is earmarked as seed, it is safe from the demand of hungry neighbors, relatives and friends.

In Kapalas, no beans are given away according to the figure in the table above. In this part of *desa* Pondok, the responses to the survey are strongly influenced by the fact that the village head instituted two prohibitions with regard to exchange of food: no staple food may be sold, and no food may be given away to people from other villages. Actual practices were not as strict as these rules, but the "illegality" of exchange explains why a considerable part of the harvest in Kapalas is comprised in the residual category: for home consumption.

The conclusion is that *kacang ijo* is both a cash crop and a food crop in Lawonda. Whether it actually makes a good cash crop or not depends first of all on the marketing possibilities in the area.

### *Marketing of kacang ijo*

*Kacang ijo* is generally a good market commodity on Sumba. In town, traders are always willing to buy beans, because they can easily sell them to the wealthier townsmen or export them to Java. Initially, Propelmas assisted the farmers in selling their *kacang ijo*. For the farmers' groups included in the survey, 1984 was the first year of selling *kacang ijo*. In 1988, Propelmas did not actively participate in marketing any longer. After four years of experience in selling *kacang ijo*, the farmers in Maderi and Kapalas had established enough contacts with traders and had acquired sufficient knowledge of the market to do the marketing by themselves, individually or collectively. Between 1984 and 1988, the prices of *kacang ijo* rose, but price variations increased as well.

The lowest price is paid at the local market in Maderi. There people sell only small amounts, and they sell because they desperately need money. Therefore, they cannot wait for the opportunity to sell collectively at a better price. The lowest price has remained fairly constant over this period.

The table shows that the highest price rose in this period. This can be explained as a sign of increasing bargaining skills of the farmers' organizations. They are collectively able to bargain higher prices with traders who are interested in large quantities of *kacang ijo*.

Table 11.6: Selling prices of *kacang ijo* in Lawonda, from 1984 to 1988 (in Rupiah per kilogram), corrected for inflation<sup>4</sup>.

Selling price in Rupiah/kg	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
The highest selling price	295	285	340	390	440
The lowest selling price	275	253	289	313	289

In the February survey of Propelmas, I asked on which items the revenues of *kacang ijo* from the year before were spent. This resulted in a list of items of which tax was mentioned most frequently (23 percent of the total number of respondents), clothing and rice (*beras*) second (21 percent each), household consumption expenditures -mainly sugar, coffee and tobacco-third (19 percent), school fees and materials fourth (13 percent), and last household utensils (4 percent). Women spent more on clothing and rice, school fee was an item of expenditure for both men and women. Recalling the "spheres of exchange" of chapter 3, we see that beans -including *kacang ijo*- are part of the lowest category of goods. These can readily be exchanged for any other item. An exchange for cash that is later used to buy e.g. sugar or coffee, or to pay school fees is regarded as "converting up". This helps explain why people who sell their *kacang ijo* at the local market can be very pleased with the revenues, even if the price at the local market is much lower than the best selling price for *kacang ijo* in the whole area.

The differences in marketing performance between the farmers' groups is considerable. The next table gives information about marketing of *kacang ijo* in 1988 by the farmers' groups in Maderi.

The sequence in selling alternatives for *kacang ijo* reflects the extent to which selling is done individually: the first three are individual sales, whereas the last two alternatives involve cooperation between the members of the organizations. The data reveal that collective selling leads to a higher price. Yet, not all variations in selling price can be explained by this single variable. Other explanatory factors are found in the story the staff of Propelmas told me about marketing *kacang ijo* in Maderi in 1988.

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<sup>4</sup> The prices are corrected for inflation by using the average rate of inflation on consumer prices in this period (8.8 percent annually) from the World Development report 1990 (World Bank, 1990). In the table they are expressed in 1984 prices.

Table 11.7 Marketing of *kacang ijo* in Maderi in June 1988: the volume of sales and the prices paid to the farmers.

farmers' groups	Baru	"wild"	Dula- ma	Ana- kara	Baru	"wild"	Dula- ma	Ana- kara
	Volume of sales in kilograms:				Selling price in Rupiah:			
number of respondents involved	8	5	8	9	8	5	8	9
(a) at the local market	0	8	50	31	-	400	440	500
(b) in shops in town	0	0	0	82	-	-	-	427
(c) to Propelmas	0	0	0	26	-	-	-	606
(d) to visiting traders in Maderi	0	331	307	10	-	575	564	600
(e) collective sale by farmers' organization	406	0	992	11	610	-	600	570
Total sales	406	1349	159	443				
Average selling price of farmers' group					610	571	589	491

The chairman of the organization "Maderi Baru" went to town to find a trader willing to buy the organization's *kacang ijo* for a good price. When he returned to the village he called a meeting of the organization together with Propelmas to inform the farmers about the results of his trip. He announced that the best selling price was Rp 610 per kilogram, offered by a trader who was anxious to find a load for his ship on the return journey to Java. The members agreed to sell collectively. The trader came to Maderi with his truck. The farmers gathered at the house of the chairman. The trader weighed the beans, and paid the farmers directly, each for their own produce.

The female farmers organization Anakara had not taken any initiative to find a buyer and a good price in town. They were invited to attend the meeting of "Maderi Baru" and join in selling to the buyer they had found. On the day the trader came to Maderi, Propelmas sent a message to the chairwoman of Anakara, but no member of the female farmers organization showed up. The chairwoman explained that she never received the message. Afterwards, it appeared that there were two other reasons why the women did not join. The first was that the chairwoman was not content with the price of Rp 610 per kg and she hoped to get a price nearer to Rp 1000, the detail price in Waikabubak. The second reason was that the chairwoman was offended by the procedure: she was not approached with

proper respect for the independence of the women's group; instead the women were "told to follow "Maderi baru", and this was an offense against the honor of the chairwoman as the autonomous leader, like the traditional *maramba*, of her own territory. Consequently, the women sold a part of the harvest individually, and the larger part of the harvest was still stored at home at the end of June.

The chairman of Dulama, the third farmers' organization in Maderi, found another trader in town. He negotiated Rp 610 too, but as a selling price in town and not in Maderi. Dulama's chairman organized collective marketing: he accepted and weighed each members' contribution, and hired a truck for transport. He promised to pay the farmers Rp 600 per kilogram. The chairman did all this work for free, but nevertheless he was suspected to gain private benefit from the enterprise. When yet another trader entered Maderi to approach the village head with a proposal to buy *kacang ijo* at Rp 575 in Maderi, a third of the members of Dulama, who were all closely related to the village head, decided to sell to this trader. It turned out to be a bad decision, because the trader cheated on the balance.

The farmers of the category "Maderi wild" live in the northern part of the village. They are on good terms with the village head, either as neighbors or as relatives. They decided individually to join the group of the village head in selling *kacang ijo*.



Marketing *kacang ijo* requires many new skills: reading the balance, how to notice whether a trader is cheating or not and counting and calculating in *Rupiahs*

Marketing *kacang ijo* in the area of Lawonda is not merely the last part of *kacang ijo* cultivation. It appears to be a separate and complicated activity that requires a new way of practicing old skills with regard to organization, cooperation and negotiation.

Both the table and the story show that the best price for *kacang ijo* is obtained through collective sale to traders in or from town. Dealing with traders is the first skill. There is no tradition to do this on behalf of a group of people "at home". The closest similar skill is found in the sphere of ceremonial communication. Of old, the higher status senior members of the *kabihu* are accustomed to travel to other clan's territories and negotiate with their leaders, usually about exchanges in livestock and women. Although the (Chinese) traders in town are never considered as bride-givers or -takers, their attitude and bargaining position is comparable to that of the leaders of the latter groups, and therefore call for a similar approach. Consequently, the farmers' organizations delegate their leaders to go to town, find a buyer, and negotiate a good price. The best representatives are the ones who are familiar with urban behavior, and therefore the farmers prefer to delegate a school teacher or a staff member from Propelmas.

The next problem is then that a good representative in town is not always accepted as the internal leader of the farmers organization. Traditionally, a characteristic of internal leaders of a *kabihu* is that they have control over the members of their group. The basis of this power is control over the basic resources in agriculture, land and livestock, and control over livestock as the means to acquire wives. Farmers organizations now are composed of members who belong to different *kabihu* that have their own land and their own livestock. The main precondition to act and be respected as internal leader of a composite farmers organization is trust. It appears to be difficult to trust a leader who does not belong to the kin group. In the first part of this book, I described how people in Lawonda distinguish between "us", "no others" and "others". In these terms, marketing of *kacang ijo* implies that the leader of "no others" makes a deal with "others" (or "enemies") on behalf of "us". The shift of part of the members of Dulama from their own organization to the group of the village head can be understood in terms of social distance. Collective selling to traders therefore involves a difficult exercise in adopting a new "morality of exchange". Reversely, marketing of *kacang ijo* is a complicated activity that can easily cause conflicts within the farmers organizations.

Sales at the local market and to shop owners in town are individual sales, with the lowest net prices per kilogram. High occurrence of these kind of sales indicate that the farmers organization involved is not very strong. This holds true for the female farmers organization Anakara. Apart from the problems mentioned in the story concerning marketing in 1988, there is another explanation why female farmers, more so than men, sell at the local market, and why their average selling price for *kacang ijo* in 1988 was lower than the price received by their male colleagues the same year. It is common practice at the market to sell small quantities and immediately afterwards to use the revenues to buy other products like rice (*beras*), sugar or coffee. Women in Maderi are accustomed to going to the weekly market in their village to sell dry land products, eggs and chickens. Selling *kacang ijo* at the local market is therefore the easiest way of marketing for them. Traveling to town and

bargaining with traders are men's jobs, and women have to conquer many more impediments than men if they want to get involved in large(r) scale collective marketing.

### ***Kacang ijo* and the Uma-economy**

With the analysis of the problems that occurred in Maderi in marketing *kacang ijo*, I already started to put this option to earn money in the framework of the Uma-economy. Let me summarize the major characteristics of the cultivation of *kacang ijo*, and show that, in spite of the problems, this activity fits well into the Uma-economy.

To be able to grow *kacang ijo*, a farmer needs access to dry land and sufficient labor. Access to resources for *kacang ijo* does not cause problems, except for farmers who are fully engaged in wet rice cultivation. The technology of cultivation in the area of Lawonda makes the crop dependent on rainfall. Farmers are well aware of the importance of scheduling operations in *kacang ijo* cultivation according to the characteristics of the season. Too much rainfall is bad for *kacang ijo*. Differences in rainfall occur on Sumba at very short distances within regions. In *desa* Prai Madeta, for example, average rainfall is more than in the neighboring village Maderi; *kacang ijo* does not grow well in Prai Madeta, but it flourishes in Maderi.

The other constraint on matching cultivation operations with the most suitable season is the organization of labor. The custom to work on the dry fields collectively supports formation of working groups for *kacang ijo*. At their turn, these working groups support the individual members to give priority to operations in the *kacang ijo* field over other allocations of their labor. This is an important function of farmers organizations, especially when facing the demands of "patrons".

The cooperative character of this activity is a reason why *kacang ijo* cultivation is successful in another respect: it unites the different parties involved in "rural development" in the area of Lawonda, because it corresponds with their respective ideologies of cooperation. This implies that the government and Propelmas both support the *kacang ijo* farmers, be it in different ways and with different arguments. Building upon the existing custom of working groups, there is no violation of tradition or obvious threat of existing power positions within the local community, as is true in the case of gathering birds' nests. Growing *kacang ijo* is considered by people in Lawonda as a decent, legal, poor man's way to earn cash.

Selling *kacang ijo* is something different. Above, I described the difficulties that emerge in marketing. The highest revenues are obtained when the harvest is sold collectively to traders in town. Yet, this can only be accomplished in the area of Lawonda when the farmers' organizations are able to elect a representative and entrust him or her with the accepted mandate to bargain with traders and organize the sale, without relapsing into suspicion. This requires a change in "morality of exchange".

*The Uma-economy*

Such a change is not necessary if the harvest is sold at the local market in small quantities.

If the harvest is sold in larger quantities, and the revenues are correspondingly larger amounts of money, discussions arise about how the money is spent, and what would be a better way. "There is no trace left", and *dapat hari ini, habis hari ini* "obtained today, spent today" are complaints heard amongst the members of the older farmers organizations. The organization Dulama, in Maderi decided to pool part of their revenues to create a collective fund. The discussions about what should be done with the fund resulted in the foundation of the "complicated cooperative" that is described at the very start of this book. It showed that the next step toward integration in the market economy is a hard one, and illustrates that neither the introduction of money by itself, nor the expansion of cash crop cultivation, leads to eradication of traditional features of the *Uma-economy*.

## Part III

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### Conclusions and application in development work



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## The Uma-economy: a repertoire of options

In the preface of this book I indicated that the motivation to study the economy of the Lawondanese was based in my conviction that development activities aimed at improving the material situation of the poorer segment of the local population can only be effective if their design is based on thorough knowledge of the existing indigenous economy. In this third and final part of the book, I elaborate on the connection between analysis of the Uma-economy and development activities.

Chapter 12 contains reflections on three issues concerning the analysis of the Uma-economy. In the first part, I make a stand against mono-disciplinary micro-economic analysis that explains farmers' economic behavior in terms of optimizing resource use in farm production under given market conditions. Micro-economies are part of life within a specific social space. Within this space, men and women, rich and poor, old aged and young lead their daily life, think about the past and the future and try to find ways to improve what they consider unsatisfactory. Their economy, their politics, their social and religious life are intertwined. Studying the micro-economy, I tried to grasp this colorful complexity. A first exercise in this effort for agricultural economists, trained in the neo-classical school of their profession like me, is to question the implicit assumptions of neo-classical economics, and critically assess the applicability of its methods.

The second part of chapter 12 presents concluding reflections on the Uma-economy of Lawonda. Essential here is its characterization as a repertoire of options. The options refer to different domains of choice, that is, alternative lines of social organization, alternative modes of exchange and alternative "modes of thinking" which can be used to legitimize economic behavior. It is in this arena of choice that the Lawondanese make their decisions and design their economic strategies, each according to his or her own ability and preference. The individual men and women are strategic actors in their own social context. Yet, the options are not equally accessible for all, and the current morality of exchange also restricts freedom of individuals to act according to their own preferences. This part gives an overview of the strategies of the Lawondanese to make use of the repertoire of options, or to cope with the constraints.

The third issue in chapter 12 concerns the future perspectives of the Uma-economy. Will the traditional characteristics of the Uma-economy gradually vanish if the use of money increases further? How does conversion to Christianity affect the way of thinking and

economic practices of the Lawondanese? In this part, several issues for further research are recommended.

Chapter 13 takes up the question about the scope of development intervention within the Uma-economy. It addresses the problem of tension between accepting indigenous economic morality and practices as the existing reality and basis for every new activity on the one hand, and on the other hand the intention to bring about change that will improve the relative position of the poorer part of the population, and consequently colliding with institutions and practices that support existing inequality. This chapter does not provide general recipes for "appropriate development intervention", but describes how Propelmas dealt with this issue.

### **Lawondanese questions of economic theory**

The economy of the people in Lawonda is the central subject of this book. By choosing the concept of Uma-economy to refer to the economy of the Lawondanese, I indicate a specific type of economy, based on distinctive types of social relations, and characterized by a specific combination of modes of exchange. The concept is part of the approach in which the economy is analyzed within the historical, cultural and political-economic context of the society involved.

This approach to the economy is very different from the type of analysis in main-stream economic science. Being educated as an agricultural economist in the neo-classical tradition of economics, I initially tended to approach the economic activities of the Lawondanese from this theoretical point of view. Its central issue is the optimum resource use in farm production (see Ritson (1977), Varian (1990) and Ellis (1988: 16-45)). My first questions about the local economy emphasized the productive activities, and, implicitly, I was looking for the evidence that the features of cooperation and distribution were aimed at "efficient" use of material resources. Discussion on four characteristic issues from this "mainstream" approach in economics<sup>1</sup> reveals its limited value in understanding the economy of the Lawondanese.

The first issue is the unit of micro-economic analysis. The basic unit of analysis in neo-classical micro-economics is the farmers' household (or "the farmer" or "the farm"). The farmer's household is taken as an entity, and intra-household relations, or individuals within

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<sup>1</sup> Neo-classical economics has been subject to change. In the 1980's and early 1990's, there emerged a renewed interest in institutional analyses, which can partly be explained as the result of criticism concerning the shortcomings of mainstream neo-classical theory. The issues I discuss here to illustrate the limited value of neo-classical theory in explaining the Uma-economy, are at the core of the debates in these new institutional approaches. Yet, it is beyond the scope of this present study to discuss the development of theory of "new institutional economics" or "institutionalism". Instead I refer to the excellent overviews of Eggertson (1990), Swedberg (1987), and Sjöstrand (1992).

a household, are not considered in the analysis. This point is especially criticized in gender studies which emphasize that household strategies may not benefit household members equally and cannot really constitute joint decisions (Rodenburg, 1993:7; Wolf, 1990). In neo-classical economics, the farmers' household is regarded as an independent unit that is free to take its own economic decisions. Both the assumption about the unity of the household and about its independence are highly questionable for the Uma-economy. In Lawonda, it even appears to be hard to distinguish "households": on the one hand households there are dependent parts within larger units of people who belong to the same kin group; on the other hand household consist of different members with different tasks and interests. Often the boundaries of a household are not clear at all, for example, if some of the children are boarded out to relatives elsewhere. In Lawonda, the *Uma* is the traditional unit of social organization, and decisions concerning production, consumption and distribution are primarily taken within the *Uma*. Within the *Uma* each individual member's tasks and say in decision making depends on his or her characteristics with regard to gender, generation, social rank and marital status (see chapter five).

The second issue concerns the motives which determine man's economic actions. The individual actor in neo-classical economics is the *homo economicus*, whose actions are all oriented toward the goal of maximizing utility (Tieleman, 1985:49). His actions and considerations are rational in the sense that he chooses the most efficient combination of resources to reach his goal. This conception of rationality was already criticized in 1957 by the economist Simon, who introduced the concept of bounded rationality to stress that the calculative rationale of people is limited, in the sense that they are not assumed to be perfect calculators with indefinite information processing capacities (Simon, 1957). In spite of this well known refinement of the concept, the *homo oeconomicus* meaning of rationality is still predominant in main stream economics. If utility is maximized, the optimal level of individual welfare is achieved under the given external circumstances. Utility is often equated with profit in the analysis of resource use in farm production: the individual farmer will try to raise the *output* of his farm until he reaches the level where the costs required to produce an extra unit exceed the financial benefits that this extra unit of output will bring. This is a narrow interpretation of optimizing utility. Perhaps, optimizing itself can be regarded as a universal strategy in economic activities; but the rules of how to optimize are not universal, and neither is the goal of economic activities. An example which illustrates that what is considered as the ultimate goal of human activities depends on the cultural and religious background of the economic actors, is presented in an article on Buddhist Economics: "Western economists are used to measure the standard of living by the amount of annual consumption, assuming all the time that a man who consumes more is "better off" than a man who consumes less. A Buddhist economist would consider this approach excessively irrational: since consumption is merely a means to human well-being, the aim should be to obtain the maximum well-being with the minimum of consumption" (Schumacher, 1973:176). In my opinion, the motives for economic behavior within a particular economy, should be object of research instead of presupposing the "universal" economic rationality in the narrow sense of profit maximizing. Economic goals reflect ideas

about the quality of life. In the Uma-economy, the quality of life largely depends on the quality of social relations. Within the context of the traditional *marapu* religion, it is extremely important to invest in social position, for example, to obtain a bride of high social rank, or to build a new *uma* and consequently be respected afterward as the founder of a new *Uma*. According to the *marapu* beliefs, life is not confined to this world, but goes on in the world of spirits, and the two worlds interact in the sense that the deified ancestors have a strong influence on the fate of their kinsmen in the secular world. The social position in the secular world will be continued in the world of spirits, and a strong and benevolent *marapu* is a prerequisite for well-being of the living descendants. Decisions about the use of material resources are made within this cultural context. Rationality in the Uma-economy has a meaning which refers to what the Lawondanese consider as the goals of their economic activity.

A third characteristic presupposition of neo-classic economics that poses problems in the analysis of the economy of Lawonda is the existence of markets and prices. In neo-classical economic theory, markets for production factors, markets for other inputs required in agricultural production and markets for the products are the *loci* of exchange, where supply and demand meet, and where prices are determined. In Lawonda, price-markets for land and labor are still virtually absent. Production is primarily for personal consumption, but a considerable part is for exchange within the local economy. Exchange of products and of production factors is mostly in kind. There are marketplaces where the Lawondanese barter their products, but exchange also takes place, for example, at ceremonial events. In an abstract sense the market, as the collection of exchange practices, consists in Lawonda of different circuits of exchange. In each of these circuits, the price for a certain commodity varies along with the social relations between the exchange partners and with "the occasion". A methodological problem is how to compare and attribute value to various transactions if there is no single standard in which exchange values can be expressed. Another theoretical problem is, how to analyze exchange in kind, if the (financial) price mechanism does not apply, and therefore cannot be used in explaining the rationale of transactions. In the Uma-economy, social distance between transaction partners' ranking in spheres of exchange of goods, and the preference for specific modes of transaction as part of the morality of exchange compose the logical framework for transactions.

The fourth and last issue I want to discuss here refers to a methodological aspect of neo-classical economics. The preferential method is deduction from a prior set of assumptions, and this deduction is formulated in mathematical equations (Ellis, 1988:45). The empirical data are preferably quantitative, so that they can be processed in statistical models (Swedberg, 1987:126). A main problem of this method is that such quantitative data have to be (made) available. In Lawonda, people do not measure in standard units that can easily be added to present data for statistics on the economy. They assess the size of their harvests in units of volume that make sense in their own daily lives, that is, in bags and baskets, in bundles or "as much as a man can carry" (see chapter 2). They also use units of exchange-value, but the value in money is only very rarely used. A methodological problem is how to aggregate data on transactions in kind if there is no standard unit of

value available. The more fundamental question can be raised, whether or not mathematical representations are able to show the complexity of economic issues in full color. I object to quantitative statements concerning subjective phenomena such as poverty and welfare, since the apparent precision of mathematical models conceals the subjective evaluations of the people involved (see chapter seven).

If the difference between my approach to the Uma-economy with micro-economic analysis have to be summarized, we could say that I focus on the economy as a process in which people face possibilities and constraints and make decisions, rather than on the results of this process. What makes up the quality of life and who decides on how to reach the desired situation are the questions addressed, instead of what is the calculated level of the optimum resource use as defined by the researcher. The heterogeneity of the actors with regard to motives, preferences and possibilities presents a field of research, of which the results are required to be able to indicate criteria for optimal resource use or other interpretations of what constitutes the quality of life. In the next section, I summarize some major issues of the analysis of the Uma-economy as a repertoire of options.

### **Making use of the repertoire**

I described in chapter four the historical developments that effected the local economy of the Lawonda. The emergence of the State and the growing influence of the Protestant Christian church were the main sources of change in the rural area of Sumba. Compared to the situation at the start of the twentieth century, when the Sumbanese society could be characterized as a tribal one, and in which the *kabihu* were largely autonomous, the emergence of the State has lead to the establishment of a higher level of authority. Initially, in daily life in the villages, prohibition of warfare and taxation were the most prominent consequences of subordination to the central government. More recently, the influence of the Indonesian Government has extended to many other domains of village life. There are numerous programs for agricultural development, road construction, health care and education. Although the programs do not always reach the villagers in Lawonda in the way they were originally intended -recall the example of *kacang ijo* cultivation- they are continuously nourishing change in village life and activities.

The missionaries have also contributed substantially to change in village life. They established schools where they taught the Gospel, and introduced their pupils into a way of thinking and a morality that is quite different from the religious and cultural background connected to the indigenous *marapu* religion. The more secular consequences of the growing influence of the Christian church was the emergence of a new line of social organization, the "Christian family", and promotion of a more western type of economic activity. The very occurrence of these changes is beyond the control of the villagers. As a consequence, their Uma-economy is continuously changing, whether they like it or not. Yet, there is ample room for differential response to changes, and this is what I indicate with

"repertoire of options" for the villagers in the rural area. I have also stressed repeatedly that these options, in the sense of access to new ways to earn a living, or to use alternative lines of social organization for private benefit, are not open to each individual in the same way.

*Different occasions, different hats*

The core units of the Uma-economy are social units, that is, units of people with a specific social relation to each other. An individual lives in a house, and with the fellow inhabitants he or she is part of the household as co-residential unit. I used this unit while collecting data for the practical reason that houses can be visited. Yet, to be able to understand how the members of households make their decisions with regard to the use of resources, they have to be regarded as members of the social units they belong to.

The traditionally predominant social organization is the kinship organization. The *Uma* is the smallest unit of kinship relations. Members of an *Uma* can decide about the use of land, livestock and labor according to their position in the internal hierarchy of the *Uma*. In this respect the household of a young man and his wife and children is subordinate to his father's household, for example, in the sense that the land he cultivates belongs to his father, and his mother can decide which work his wife has to do. A methodological consequence of the interdependence of households within *Uma*'s is that individual household data on agricultural production and the use of labor do not always correspond with actual access to resources and the amount of products available for consumption of the household concerned.

In other economic activities, the *kabihu* are the most relevant units of social organization (see chapters four and five). Obviously, the distinction in *kabihu* is important in the analysis of exchange at ceremonial occasions, such as weddings and funerals, when all participants are obliged to contribute according to their *kabihu*-identity. Yet, the exchange relationships also exist beyond these events, and here we can see how the Lawondanese make use of the repertoire of options. All goods that are comprised within the sphere of ceremonial exchange are preferably obtained through the ceremonial circuit, even if they are needed for other uses. Horses are a clear example. Horses are the main part of the bride-price, and whenever a person in Lawonda needs a horse, he will try to obtain it from people who belong to his "bride-takers". The alternative would be to buy a horse from a horse trader, but this is perceived as only a last resort. Obtaining a horse in the ceremonial circuit does not involve money, the exchange serves the long term relationship between bride-giver and bride-taker, and the reciprocal "gift" can be postponed. The implication of this preference is that exchange in goods that belong to the ceremonial circuit, e.g. horses, buffalo, pigs, and hand-woven cloth, does not take place at markets, but at ceremonial meetings, and in private houses. Consequently, it is very hard to incorporate this type of exchange into surveys on trade in these ceremonial goods, because most of the transactions are invisible to the outside observer.

Another set of kinship relations is especially important in matters of care and support in times of trouble. These are the relations with *oli dadi*, blood companions, or relatives of the uterine line. These are not connected to a specific social unit in Sumbanese society, but dispersed over various *kabihu*, since women pass into the *kabihu* of their husbands after marriage.

An example of how these relations are used is found in chapter nine, in the story of Manu Wolu. In times of food shortage Manu Wolu's nuclear family does not get much support from his fellow *kabihu* members, because they loathe his reluctance to perform his duties within the patrilineage, such as cooperation in agricultural work and contribution to the *kabihu*'s investments (in brides, new houses, care for the parents). They do, however, still receive help from Manu Wolu's wife's relatives. To them Manu Wolu is not only the son- or brother-in-law but also the child of his mother who originates from the same *paraingu* as his wife. Boarding out (small) children is also preferably done with the close relatives of the mother. Uterine line relatives can be scattered all over the island, because the custom of patrilocality dictates that women move from their parents' to their husbands' houses. Because there are many regional differences in climate and season, uterine line relatives present a variety of possibilities for asking food. The conclusion is that the preferential marriage between a man and his mother's brother's daughter appears to be an important arrangement for social security.

Among neighbors, there is also a sense of solidarity to help each other in times of trouble. Though here, the assistance code is not as general as between *oli dadi*. It is confined to those who behave according to the group's norms. If a shortage of food or illness is regarded as due to deviant behavior, little sympathy and help can be expected from fellow *kabihu* members and neighbors.

Access to the resources required to make a living in Lawonda is now often organized in units in which the members are not necessarily related by kinship or marriage alliance. In chapter five, I discussed two kinds of arrangements for exchange of resources, the *kelompok pakeri*, and the "network for exchange of resources". The relationship between the individual members in these units of cooperation depends on the difference in their actual economic positions: their livestock property, the amount of labor they can contribute, the size of their land holdings or their salary in money.

The buffalo herding group represents a set of patron-client relationships between buffalo owners and herdsmen, who cultivate wet rice fields but do not own buffalo themselves. Of old, this type of cooperation, in which labor services are exchanged for buffalo services, was an internal affair within the *Uma*. Yet, since the abolition of slave trade and the increase in scale of wet rice cultivation, the *kelompok pakeri* has emerged as the most common shape of cooperation between buffalo owners and the buffalo-less. The members do not necessarily belong to the same *kabihu*. The basis for cooperation is the uneven division of buffaloes.

Land, labor and livestock are not the only resources that are required to make a good living in Lawonda. Contemporarily, one also needs to have access to what I call "the urban resources": education, money and political influence. Farmers in Lawonda use their

"network for exchange of resources" to get access to these urban resources. The network ties together three parties: the junior labor supplier, the senior land and buffalo supplier and the urban money-politics-education agent. The three parties mutually depend on each other. Part of each member's own resources is spent on their own productive activities, like work on their own fields, or spent on the member's consumption requirements, as in the case where a money partner in the network uses his salary to buy food. The other part of the resources is contributed to the other members of the network, and therefore used as an item of exchange.

An individual farmer in Lawonda can wear different hats: through kinship organization he is member of his *Uma* and *kabihu*; he can call upon his mother's relatives for assistance in times of shortage; as a paddy farmer he participates in a *kelompok pakeri*; and to get access to resources he lacks, he creates and maintains relations in his network for exchange of resources. Making use of the repertoire of options in this sense implies his changing hats in order to reach the most rewarding combination of his resources. The social relations with members of the various units are economic relations as well. The social content constrains the individual's freedom to make decisions concerning the allocation of resources.

Analysis in terms of networks and social relations along the uterine line puts question marks on the boundaries of a "local" economy. The network partners are not selected on geographical criteria, and mother's relatives can live in other regions and even on other islands. There are many links with people in the urban area, and the urban partners have a say in how the land in the rural area is allocated, and on how the priorities are set in spending the common fund of network partners' contributions. This implies that if the analysis of the Uma-economy is referred to as a type of micro-economic analysis, the "micro" indicates its method of focusing on personal, human exchange relations rather than its boundaries in physical space.

### *Manipulating social distance*

"Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend usury"  
(Deuteronomy 23:21).

The occasional visitor could easily come to the conclusion that the economy of the Lawondanese is a kinship economy. The kinship idiom is widely used. Upon closer inspection, using this idiom appears to be a manner of addressing people in a way that immediately reveals social distance and indicates what kind of behavior is regarded appropriate.

With regard to social distance, people in Lawonda classify other people in three categories: "us" (*kita-kita*), "no others" (*bukan orang lain*) and "others" (*orang lain*). The difference between the categories of social distance remains important in the Uma-economy of Lawonda. Social distance cannot be put on a par with kinship distance anymore, although the same pattern is found in the contemporary categories that comprise people who used to

be strangers to each other, but who now interact in a way that makes them regard each other as "us" or at least as "no others". The analytical importance of this phenomenon is that it reveals coalitions of actors who are not obviously comprised within one category, e.g. urban officials with farmers in Lawonda, or the foreign employees of Propelmas with their Lawondanese neighbors. This is a response to the increasing need for new exchange relations, especially for relations that offer access to money. The dominance of the kinship organization in regulating exchange relations makes it imperative to first identify the degree of kinship, before new economic relations are to be established (Raatgever, 1988:234). "Former strangers" are incorporated in a category as if they were kinsmen, and consequently the old rules of behavior within such a category can be applied to these "new kinsmen" or "new allies".

Using the alternative lines of social organization, as discussed in chapter five, people in Lawonda try to reduce social distance to potential partners which could offer them something they are short of. The quest for network partners is the clearest example in which farmers in Lawonda try to get well acquainted with officials who can provide board and lodging for their school children and will help them to mitigate their financial problems as their relationship evolves. Mutual acknowledgment as members of "us", that is of small social distance, has large consequences for the mutual exchanges. "The span of social distance between those involved in exchange, conditions the mode of exchange" (Sahlins, 1972: 196). This includes rules on what kind of items can be exchanged, where and when transactions take place, whether transactions are single events or part of a long chain of reciprocal exchanges, what the terms of exchange are including the kind of compensation (which service or commodity), its amount and the time span of repayment. People in Lawonda find it easier, cheaper or more worth while to get what they need from fellow men within the "us"-group than from "others" or "no others".

This is not only the case in exotic economies like the Uma-economy. Daily life of Dutch families contains many examples of similar considerations. If parents of young children want to go to a party, they have to find a baby-sitter first. Grandparents can be asked to look after the children without any direct reciprocal service, but not too often. Neighbors will do the job if they in their turn can rely on help. The other solution is to ask a friend to take care of the children, but whether or not one should pay a reward in cash is a sensitive issue: some are offended by the mere suggestion of being paid for their services, others are disappointed if they have to do it for free. The alternative is to hire a baby-sitter, but this is expensive. So the different categories of social distance in my Dutch home-town also have their own rules of exchange.

The reverse also occurs, where, for example rice farmers try to evade the claims of their close relatives and prefer to issue paddy loans to "no others", from whom they can ask repayment with interest after a fixed period of time. Officials with a cash salary are another category of people who try to evade the strangling ties with too many people who want to incorporate them into their "us"-group. With the incorporation into the larger economy, increased communication with "strangers" and the increasing need for cash -the

pre-eminent stranger's commodity -the repertoire of exchange rules are not fundamentally altered. Instead, strangers who can provide Lawondanese with the items of exchange they need are creatively fitted in the social distance categories as if they were adopted as kinsmen or allies. The Lawondanese who expect to benefit from evading the traditional rules of exchange within the "us" category of kinsmen identify with the units of the alternative lines of social organization, where deviant exchange behavior is legitimated by other, new, "modern" norms.

The categories of social distance are flexible. Especially in networks for exchange of resources, partners who no longer live up to expectations are removed from the network, and consequently shift from "us" to "no others", or even to "others" in case all relations are ended.

A general conclusion is that social distance between exchange partners is one of the variables that determines the terms of exchange in transactions, not only in "exotic" economies like the Uma-economy, but also in the modern western economy.

There is one more aspect of "manipulating social distance", which is also not specific to Lawondanese society. Let me give a Dutch example. In the Netherlands regular competition, each football club has its own legion of supporters. On the day of the match, the two groups of supporters treat each other as enemies, sometimes leading to real war between them. Yet, if next week the Dutch national team plays, the two groups of supporters sit next to each other as friends, sharing their Dutch identity.

We can see a similar attitude within the various farmers organizations in Lawonda. In matters concerning communication with the government or other organizations, the members regard each other as "us"; the shared identity is derived from the comparison with the other groups. Yet, as soon as the meeting with other groups' representatives is over, the farmers' organization dissolves again into its composing working groups, which more often treat each other as "no others". The old *kabihu* leaders were very well aware of this behavior, and they used it strategically: warfare with other *kabihu* was not only aimed at conquering land and capturing slaves, wives, livestock and food, but also at restoring the shared identity of their own *kabihu* and strengthening their own leadership position.

#### *Using various sources of legitimation*

The third meaning of repertoire of options is found in alternative sources of legitimation. If a person wants to engage himself in new or deviant economic activities, he will encounter contradictions with the traditional norms and rules with regard to economic actions. Let me recall some examples. The complicated cooperative at the beginning of chapter one immediately shows how traditional rules of proper behavior among kinsmen conflict with the internal rules of shop keeping. Customary norms state that brothers within the *kabihu* should not ask each other for direct payment of goods, but a shop cannot continue to exist if its commodities are distributed for free. A second example is the GORA experiment. Small rice farmers can improve their private harvest by adopting this new technology of rice

cultivation. If they apply GORA successfully, they increase the amount of rice available for their own family's consumption, and they also contribute to raising the regional and national rice production level. The participants in the GORA experiment find support with the provincial government, and with Propelmas. They serve their private interests that coincide with Propelmas' aim to alleviate poverty in the area, and act as good Indonesian citizens by contributing to the national effort of raising food production. Yet in doing this, they offend the local rules of cooperation between junior and senior members within the group of kinsmen, and neglect their duties as good clients of the buffalo owners. In this case, being an "efficient" farmer and good Indonesian citizen is on strained terms with being a good member of the local community.

The repertoire of options for legitimation in Lawonda cannot be dissected in distinct and internally consistent sets of norms and rules. Each source of legitimation has a plurality of options within its own domain. State law is part of the legal repertoire in Lawonda. State law is a collection of law which is not confined to what can be found in written acts and rules, but it also comprises what government officials do with those rules and what they add to it themselves. A view from the bottom in Lawonda up to the President of the Republic in Jakarta, shows a vast structure, with many different layers, and hundreds of thousands of officials. Each layer has its own interest, and sometimes these interests reinforce each other, while in other matters they can contradict. The poorest part of the people in the area of Lawonda have a common interest with the government at the provincial level to use the GORA system and to gather birds' nests and sell them to Chinese traders. By coincidence, the macro-economic goals of self sufficiency in rice and increase in production of export commodities support what the poorer people in Lawonda choose to do for private material gain. The village government is more interested in keeping the technology of rice cultivation as it is, and objects to bird nest gathering because of its disturbing consequences in the village community.

People in Lawonda make use of the repertoire of options in a rather eclectic way when seeking support for their economic activities. Just like the government officials at the local and district level, they combine customary rules, church rules and parts of State law or elements of Panca Sila ideology in a way that best suits their own interests. Let me clarify this with an example.

One of the rules of the government in west Sumba is that anyone who wants to be appointed as a government official has to be a registered adherent of one of the officially recognized religions. This is the main reason why some of the people in Lawonda ask to be baptized. It is a church rule that every one who wants to be baptized should enter this ceremony with a clear conscience. The indigenous interpretation of "a clear conscience" comes close to a clear debt record. So, in the days before the baptizing ceremony many people pay a visit to the convert to remind him of the debts that are still due. They hope that his eagerness to clear his conscience will render them the goods they otherwise could only get in extreme emergency cases.

If the morality of exchange of the Uma-economy is put in the broader perspective of normative pluralism, it becomes clear that this morality is not a static concept which allows

for only one singular interpretation. In any changing economy, the "mode of thinking", as in the ways of thinking which are connected to a particular mode of production (van der Grijp, 1993:9), is due to changes, too. It reflects the elements of the different modes of production which interact in the local context. Analysis in terms of a repertoire of options to legitimize economic actions shows this plurality to full advantage. It also leaves room to notice that some categories within the local community do not agree with what can be considered the "main stream" economic morality .

### **Coping with the constraints**

Speaking about the constraints of the Uma-economy I have three types of restrictions in mind: lack of material resources, personal characteristics and restrictions imposed by the current morality of exchange. Coping with the constraints of the Uma-economy is a skill that all people involved require, not only the poor.

The most obvious lack is that of material resources. Growing *kacang ijo* might be a good activity to earn money, but if one does not have a field to cultivate, it is no option at all. Secondly, lack of immaterial resources can restrict the possibilities to make use of the potential of the Uma-economy. Personal characteristics such as creativity, courage, optimism and intelligence are very important assets, because they make it easier to take full advantage of alternative possibilities. In practice, people who suffer from a lack of material resources are often bothered by the lack of these personal assets as well. Of course, I do not intend to argue that all poor people are not intelligent, nor creative; I only want to indicate that having sufficient material resources is not a guarantee for successful entrepreneurship in the Uma-economy.

An example of how a lack of material and immaterial resources are intertwined is found in chapter nine. Manu Wolu could argue that bird nest gathering is serving the interests of the Indonesian nation; but he does not have the power to convince his brothers and cousins that his activities are legitimate. Participating in a specific discourse is not enough for legitimation of deviant actions. Only those who have control over resources and are able to impose sanctions are able to impose their "law" to other members of their own society. People who have nothing to offer to government officials -land, food, services- will find the door closed if they ask these officials to serve them.<sup>2</sup> We have to add here, that what I present as Manu Wolu's possible argument, were not his words. The only reason he gave for gathering birds' nests is that for him, this was a good way to earn a considerable amount of money with relatively little work. Generally, he had the very indifferent attitude toward life that does not stimulate any type of legitimation.

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<sup>2</sup> Police officers who are called in for help to catch a horse thief and regain the stolen horse were only willing to do their duty if they get "smoking money" first. This is quite a large expenditure for common villagers. School graduates who want to obtain their formal certificates have to wait for hours and often return several times to the government offices before their papers are issued.

Lack of resources is evidently also a constraint on the ability to create network relations. Finding new network partners requires courage and creativity. If one does not have any material contribution to offer, there is little reason to be accepted as network partner. Shortage of land, labor or money can only then be compensated by kinsmen, for whom the kinship relation itself is reason enough to give support. For the poorest members of the local society, therefore, little hope can be set on "gifts" from network partners. They have to engage in cash earning activities themselves, just like the well-endowed who want to earn more money. The latter can expect assistance from the "urban" partners in their networks to mitigate their financial problems, but they will not pay every cash expenditure. If the size of cash requirements increases, other ways to earn cash must be found.

For the well-endowed Lawondanese, coping with the constraints of the Uma-economy concerns the restrictions imposed by the morality of exchange rather than by the lack of resources.

Increase of paddy production is a good option for those who have access to a considerable acreage of paddy fields, livestock and labor as well. This means that the relatively wealthy are the only ones who can produce such a large amount of paddy that they are able to sell part of the harvest. Yet, they cannot take the benefit of the extra production to a full extent, since they are faced with the existing distribution arrangements.

In chapter 10, I described how the harvest from the paddy field is divided: part is given to people who assisted in cultivation or harvesting, irrespective of the size of their assistance; part is given to people in need; a third part is given as credit to people who promise to pay it back after their own harvest; a fourth part is bartered. What remains after this round of distribution from the harvest floor, can be stored for seed and household consumption, or can be sold for money. The data in chapter 10 revealed that more than half of the total harvest was distributed straight from the threshing floor.

Combining the insights of chapters three and 10, we can formulate three norms that appear to be basic to this distribution behavior: (a) avarice is wrong, so people who have an abundant harvest should be willing to give part of it to others, (b) the shorter the social distance between transaction partners, the more one should be vague about the terms of transactions, including the reciprocal prestations, (c) in distributing the harvest, priority should be given people at close social distance. If selling paddy is used as a way to earn money, these norms are offended. If part of the harvest is sold, the part for distribution will diminish. If the farmer intends to earn money with his paddy, he will seek clear terms of exchange, and these can be negotiated better with "strange" transaction partners than with relatives or friends. Preference for loans to "no others" reveals that the third norm is not respected. Paddy farmers make their individual assessment weighing the cost of offending these norms in terms of loss of social security, against the financial benefits of selling paddy, or issuing loans in paddy at fixed terms including interest.

The poorest segment of the Lawondanese population is not able to invest in social security by giving gifts of paddy. They do not have anything, or an insufficiently large harvest, to distribute to others. Their only means for investment in social relations is

working for others. Working for a patron is hard work that offers little say in the decisions on the type and quantity of the reward, that is, the return services of the patron. Young people in Lawonda do not like the prospect of near-slavery, and they try to find alternatives. If they assess these alternative ways to make a living against working as an "agricultural laborer", they counterbalance the private material benefit they expect to gain against the loss of support of patrons. In the case of gathering birds' nests, not only loss of support of patrons is at stake, but also the support of the majority of the home community, since this activity is forbidden by the rules of this community. For Manu Wolu (chapter nine), coping with constraints turned out to be living with insecurity, enjoying the luxury of having relatively large amounts of money at times, at the cost of losing access to social security provided by his home community.

### **Future perspectives and recommendations for further research**

After reading this book, one could get the impression that the Uma-economy represents an extreme case. The descriptions only concern the economy of a small area on Sumba where there seems to be only very limited scope for economic activities beyond the level of production for the local population's subsistence. With its small number of inhabitants and limited availability of natural resources, Sumba is also of minor interest to the Indonesian State. Can we expect any wider implications of the study of this Uma-economy?

In my opinion, this study of the Uma-economy serves as a case that illustrates more general questions concerning the analysis of interaction between different economic systems. In the last section of this chapter, I indicate some of these more general issues and connect them to the discussion concerning the direction of change in Lawonda. Will the Uma-economy continue to exist in the next century, or is it only a temporary phase in the process of integration into a market economy?

One of the major changes that is taking place in the Uma-economy is that exchanges with people who do not belong to the same home-community are becoming more important and more frequent. The tendency to become more involved in transactions with "strangers" appears in every chapter on ways to obtain money. Money is pre-eminently the stranger's commodity. Among the paddy farmers in chapter 10, who recently started to cultivate a second, early rice crop, there is a growing inclination to issue loans in paddy to "others" rather than lend part of the harvest to relatives or neighbors with whom they have a much closer social relation. The impersonality of the relationship between the transaction partners in the former case facilitates a more business-like credit arrangement, which comprises engagements about time and quantity of repayment including interest. In chapter 11, it became even more clear that production of cash crops can only be successful as a way to earn money if the buyers of the products are regarded by the producers as "others". Only in that case, the farmers can get money in return for their products, because with strangers there is no social relationship which imposes the moral restriction on the use of money.

Hence, the first tendency in increasing exchange with strangers is the preference for impersonal transactions, in which the items of exchange are valued in terms of market prices. This is the commoditization tendency. Ultimately, this tendency leads to a point where not only are products commoditized, but also where all the decisions about the use of resources have become considerations based on market-prices.

Yet, there is also a second and opposite tendency in the intercourse with strangers. The Lawondanese try to incorporate people with a cash salary in their networks for exchange of resources. If they succeed, they treat former strangers as if they were close kinsmen. The consequence of this transformation is that reciprocity becomes the most appropriate mode of exchange. Although the two tendencies seemingly contradict, they coexist and are used simultaneously. This puts a question mark to the assumption that increasing use of money leads to predominance of market exchange. Furthermore, the case of the Uma-economy of Lawonda illustrates that there is no time sequence in modes of exchange: reciprocity, barter and market exchange cannot always be regarded as sequential stages in a development toward a commoditized and impersonal economic system.

The implication of this last conclusion is that in order to understand economic behavior in economies in which the larger part of transactions do not involve money, an analytical approach is required which is sensitive to the motives for exchange in kind in their own right. Such an approach does not regard exchange in kind as a mere feature of "pre-capitalist", or even "simple barter" economies. Therefore, I recommend further development of a kind of analysis that allows in-kind-economies to show to full advantage. An analysis which acknowledges that people in these economies are not only directed to subsistence but also to exchange that takes place both through markets in a narrow sense, and through various other exchange circuits.

A second recommendation for further research concerns the morality of exchange as a central characteristic of the Uma-economy. The concept comprises the local perceptions on the nature and value of goods, on the characteristics of categories of people as exchange partners, and on the rules and evaluations of transactions. *The* morality of exchange, however, does not exist: it is not a static collection of ideas and rules that hold for and are respected by every member of the Lawondanese society. I argued in chapter three against the thesis of Bohannan that the introduction of money will eradicate a multi-centric economy and, in extension, will lead to the disappearance of the corresponding morality of exchange. Instead, I showed that money is pulled into its own "spheres of allocation", which corresponds with the spheres of exchange of goods. However, the question remains whether or not this is only a short term reaction to increased use of money, and that in the long run one can still expect a complete surrender to the market economy. Arguments for a negative answer to this question can be derived from the works of Wielenga (1933) and Versluys (1949), who both take account of features similar to what I call the morality of exchange, which they observed in the first part of this century, when money was already present on Sumba though used on a much more modest scale than at present. Research on the morality of exchange in Lawonda in the year 2010 could reveal whether the feature I described was

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only a minor undulation in a linear trend toward the unicentric market economy, or a persistent cultural feature that contributes to efforts to refine the theory on articulation of modes of production.

A change that, to my opinion, will have a much larger influence on the characteristics of the Uma-economy than the increasing use of money is the conversion to Christianity.



Sumbanese Christians receive the Lord's blessing over their marriage in the Church of Lawonda after their marriage has been settled in accordance with the customary law

Traditionally, the Uma-economy is firmly connected to the *marapu* religion. According to this belief the world of the deified ancestors, the *marapu*, is connected to the world of the living. Kinship ties are the connections between the dead and the living. In chapter seven I described how this religion influences the priorities in the use of economic resources. Belief in the power of the ancestors over the fate of the living legitimizes the fact that a large portion of the material resources is spent on bride-prices, funerals and feasts to keep up social status. If people are convinced that their life in the world of the living will be continued in the world of the dead, one can imagine that it makes more sense to assess economic activities on their long term effects on social relations than on annual material

production. In this line of thought, it is intelligible that the Lawondanese find it very difficult to make annual household budgets, but at the same time keep an updated balance sheet of assets, debts and obligations (in kind) in their heads.

Once conversion to Christianity cuts the link with the world of the ancestors, many changes in the economy become feasible. Then land can become individual property (see chapter six). Kinship and affinity are no longer the only important kinds of social relations, and this opens the way to cooperation between non-kinsmen (see chapter five). If wealth does not necessarily serve the continuation and expansion of the *kabihu*, livestock can be sold to pay university fees or to buy a motor cycle (chapter three and seven). If people no longer believe in the power of the spirits, both good and evil, arguments to convict bird nest gatherers lose meaning (chapter nine).

At present, the Sumbanese Christian church is regarded as the Church of the majority, at least of the most influential part of the population, including most government officials. The old *marapu* religion has not disappeared, but it is very hard to find people who are still actively practicing this indigenous religion. The local calendar for seasonal activities (see chapter 10) was closely connected to the *marapu* religion, and the agricultural rites were the points in time that guided the farmers in their activities. Now the *marapu* rituals are only rarely performed, farmers no longer have this guidance. Government programs cannot fill this gap, because they are not as well adapted to local circumstances. More and more the local church representatives are faced with moral questions about agricultural practices. Further research could reveal what the connection between the *marapu* religion and agricultural practices was, and how these practices have changed since the conversion to Christianity<sup>3</sup>.

There is one more implication of the changes in the Uma-economy that I want to raise as an issue for further research. This concerns the consequences of modernization on the position of women, especially on their ability to get access to natural resources. If the Uma-economy is taken as a repertoire of options, these options are not gender neutral. Traditionally, the Uma-economy is male dominated: men have control over land and livestock (see chapter six), and social organization is dominated by the relations within the patrilineages (*kabihu*) (chapter five). With the emergence of alternative lines of social organization, and alternative circuits of legitimation, theoretically, the options for women to lead a more independent life and to benefit from the products of their own labor could improve. For example, when it is no longer obvious that the *Uma*'s savings take the shape of horses or buffaloes, there will perhaps be more room for women's priorities in investments. Comparative research between a more traditional and a more market-integrated area on Sumba could reveal whether or not there is a genuine reason to expect that further incorporation into the market economy in this case is beneficial to women.

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<sup>3</sup> A practical application of this research could be the design of sermon outlines that address daily agricultural matters and provide a Christian alternative to the guidance that was formerly given by the *marapu* priests.



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## Propelmas and the Uma-economy

How can knowledge about the Uma-economy be used to improve the quality and effectiveness of development activities? This is the central question for this final chapter of the book.

My primary involvement with the people of Lawonda was as a development worker. I lived in Lawonda not only with the intention to gather material for scientific purposes, but most of all to contribute to changes that would benefit the poorer part of the local population. I realized that development intervention is not a matter of designing straight forward actions to accomplish the targets that can be set in advance. Any new activity competes with existing activities for time and resources, any new organization competes with the existing units of social organization and cooperation, any new idea competes with existing ideas.

All of the previous chapters contain descriptions of aspects of the Uma-economy. In part one, I described the daily activities of the Lawondanese, their morality of exchange, the historical developments that affected the economy of Lawonda from the outside, the indigenous social organization, the ideas about work and the actual division of tasks and local perceptions about land tenure and exchange. Together, these issues depict an image of the economic reality of the Lawondanese. In part two, the focus is on the dynamics of the Uma-economy, and concentrates on the question of how the Lawondanese deal with the increasing need for money.

It is my conviction that in designing development programs one should depart from the "indigenous economics" that comprises both the knowledge and practices of the local population. "Indigenous economics" does not always correspond with the aims of development work; but it represents "economic reality" as it is perceived by the local population. This is the basis on which new ideas and activities are assessed.

This chapter discusses how the staff of Propelmas, including ourselves, generated development programs that are adapted to the Uma-economy. These experiences concern the period between 1984 and 1990. We tried to participate in this indigenous economy without forcing the Lawondanese to participate in programs that they perceived as designed by outsiders. This interpretation of participation is crucial if we want to understand the practical use of elaborate studies of the indigenous economy, such as this study on the Uma-economy of Lawonda.

## **Propelmas and the Uma-economy**

Development in Lawonda is, of course, not something exclusive for Propelmas. Development is one type of change that is usually associated with the positive improvement in the material situation of the people involved. In the previous chapters, especially chapter four, I described how the Uma-economy is constantly changing. The emergence of the State and the growing influence of the Indonesian government in village life have been the most important source of change. Now there are numerous programs for agricultural development, road construction, health care and education. Although the programs have not always reached the villagers in Lawonda in the way that they were originally intended - recall the example of *kacang ijo* cultivation- they are continuously nourishing change in village life and activities.

I mentioned the Christian missions as the second source of change on Sumba. Propelmas is a development project of the Protestant Church of Sumba. It is situated in the history of socio-economic work of this Church. This church-development work is more specifically aimed at the poorest part of the Sumbanese population, compared with the wider government programs. Therefore, we can summarize Propelmas' role in the Uma-economy of Lawonda as giving assistance to the poorer part of the local population in coping with their repertoire of constraints (see chapter 12). For example, education is open for all citizens, but how can the poorer parents find the means to pay school fees? Or, government programs for agricultural development are designed to increase agricultural production in the area in general, but how can farmers with little access to land and little say in how to use their own labor benefit from these programs? Whenever development programs are presented as options, open to anyone who wants to participate, they tend to be taken over by the well endowed and politically influential part of the rural population. Then, young people, women, inhabitants of the more isolated areas, and resource-poor farmers face arrears. In this sense, Propelmas' role as a non-governmental development organization is taken literally: not cooperating with or extending the work of the government, but mitigating the effects of government programs on the relatively deprived categories of the local population.

## **Contradicting intentions**

The type of development work that Propelmas staff intended to do, participating in the local people's economy and taking their activities and ideas seriously, is not easy. What is the indigenous economy? In other words, do the Lawondanese agree about what makes up the best way to organize production, consumption and distribution of material goods and services under the ecological and social restrictions in their own society? How do development workers handle their intention to adapt their activities to the rules and practices of the Uma-economy, if that would imply they have to accept circumstances that they

consider unjust, unfair or undesirable<sup>1</sup>? The list of material shortages and immaterial problems mentioned in the introductory chapter of this book reveals the bad consequences of the Uma-economy, especially for the poorer part of the population. Propelmas' activities were aimed to diminish these shortages and problems. Therefore, adapting development activities to the Uma-economy and taking indigenous economics seriously is not equal to taking this economy for granted. Instead, it means that a thorough knowledge of the Uma-economy is used to translate ideas of intended change into local concepts, and to identify restrictions in order to be able to design acceptable alternatives.

I discuss four issues in the next section to make Propelmas' efforts more concrete. Each of them highlights the tension between the existing ways in the Uma-economy and the changes that Propelmas intended to bring about. The issues are: (a) long term perspective and sustainable development, (b) local social organization and farmers' organizations, (c) the problems of working for the poor, and (d) adapting to the morality of exchange.

### **Long term perspective and sustainable development**

The long term perspective is the first characteristic of the Uma-economy that has to be taken into account in development work. A long term perspective is found in the economic activities of the Lawondanese. The local agricultural system contains a series of activities in which characteristics of the various seasons and different locations of agricultural land impose the logic of the sequence. A single activity fits in the long term sequence. Long term perspective also refers to the importance of maintaining long term social relations, as the major means to the goal of the Uma-economy. The goal is social security for the individual and long term survival of the *Uma* and *kabihu*.

Propelmas and the Lawondanese meet in focusing on the long term. By contrast, the government programs for agricultural development usually comprise more short term activities. During the six years I lived in Lawonda, it seemed that every year the attention of the extension service of the Agricultural Department was directed to another crop, or another activity in agriculture. It was either "the Year of the Soya Bean", or the "Season of Garlic"<sup>2</sup>. None of these programs lasted long, if they had any success at all. The main reason for failure is that the programs did not pay attention to the priorities of the intended recipients. They ignored the fact that the Lawondanese have their own cropping pattern - which crops to sow when, on which patch of land-, and their own corresponding time schedule for labor. In chapters 6, 10 and 11, I have described how seasonality of activities, characteristics of different fields and constraints on the use of labor constitute the variables in the complex management process in which every farmer in Lawonda is involved. Every

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<sup>1</sup> Whether the relatively deprived groups within the local community agree on this judgment is sometimes difficult to assess. On the one hand, they complain about their material situation, about lack of food and the obligation to work hard for patrons, but on the other hand, they accept social inequality as self-evident.

<sup>2</sup> These were not the official names of government programs.

new activity is confronted with the existing work schedule: it demands input of labor, or land, or both. Farmers make their own assessment, whether it will be either more beneficial to them to use these resources for the new activity, or to allocate them in the way that they were accustomed to. The decision to fit in a new activity is made within the long term perspective of the local agricultural system. In chapter 11, we saw that buffalo-less paddy farmers were initially enthusiastic about the GORA technique, which enabled them to grow their rice crop in the months that are most suitable for this crop; and it also implied that they did no longer had to participate in the *kelompok pakeri*, consequently freeing them to use their labor for activities other than working on the land of buffalo owners. Yet, after a season of experiment with this new technique, farmers in Maderi joined the *kelompok pakeri* again, because they could not afford to loose the long term relationship with the buffalo owners. It seems the exchange of resources in this relationship involved more than just exchange of labor against buffalo services.

The long term perspective that determines the terms of cooperation and exchange, therefore, refers both to the comprehensive package of sequential activities, and to social relations between the Lawondanese. The development programs of Propelmas have to fit the long term perspective in both meanings. A single activity has to be part of a long term program, and the required labor input has to fit with the farmers' social obligations. Apart from these two constraints on development activities, Propelmas added another interpretation of long term perspective, that is, the conservation of natural resources. In terms of development workers' idiom at present, the three meanings of long term perspective are comprised in the word "sustainability".

In the period I was working for Propelmas, between 1984 and 1990, the staff members were active proponents of "sustainable agriculture", though they did not use those words yet. In a very general definition, sustainable agriculture comprises "the successful management of resources for agriculture to satisfy changing human needs while maintaining or enhancing the quality of the environment and conserving natural resources" (Reijntjes et.al., 1992:2). The staff of Propelmas took up the challenging task to translate their own ideas of sustainability into the local concepts of long term goals. Their translation of the general idea of sustainability entailed three aspects: (a) ecological sustainability: soil conservation, (b) economic viability: benefits in terms of money and food, and (c) social viability: strengthening farmers' organizations.

In table 13.1, I have depicted a program of sequential activities where all three aspects of Propelmas' sustainable development are comprised. The first two columns contain the actual activities, whereas the third column describes the corresponding phases in the formation process of farmers' organizations.

Table 13.1 A Propelmas Program

More food and money	Conservation of natural resources	Strengthening farmers' organization
<p>1. Cultivation of <i>kacang ijo</i></p> <p>3. Extension of area of dry land fields with the former <i>karabuk</i></p> <p>4. Cooperative marketing of <i>kacang ijo</i></p> <p>5. Tree planting at the edges of contour terraces to prevent erosion and produce fodder, firewood and mulch.</p> <p>6. Cattle-fattening; cattle issued on credit by Propelmas to farmers who are member of a farmers' organization, and who have executed activity 5 to such an extent that fodder is in sufficient supply.</p>	<p>2. Soil conservation: construction of contour terraces in <i>karabuk</i></p>	<p>a. establishment of working groups</p> <p>b. continuation of cooperation in working groups, with this first follow-up activity. Working together is combined with learning new techniques and skills, through extension activities of Propelmas.</p> <p>c. Cooperation between various working groups, establishment of relations between farmers' organization and traders and government services.</p> <p>d. Continued cooperation, leading to establishment of officially registered farmers' organization; expansion of activities in number and complexity.</p> <p>e. Further development of skills on how to deal with marketing, how to make use of government services.</p> <p>f. Gradual withdrawal of Propelmas.</p>

The background of this program is that activities aimed at improvement of the material situation, leading to more food and money, can only last if two preconditions are met. The

first precondition is that natural resources do not decline in quantity or quality. In dry land cultivation, this means that whenever crops are grown on the hill slopes, cultivation has to be complemented with measures to prevent erosion. After the harvest of *kacang ijo*, Propelmas urges the farmers to make contour terraces in the *karabuk*. In the evaluation survey conducted by Propelmas in February 1988 (discussed in chapter 11), it appeared that about half of the participants had constructed terraces in the *karabuk* of 1987. It is not easy, though, to analyze what primarily motivated the farmers to make contour terraces: (a) their wish to conserve the soil, or (b) the local meaning of planting trees, as done at the edges of the contour terraces, being the sign of control over the land, or (c) the fact that a certain length of contour terraces was a precondition to be considered for the credit program for cattle-fattening. In any case, it appeared to be important for activities on conservation of natural resources that these activities were carried out by farmers' organizations. As a member of such an organization, farmers stimulated each other to spend their labor on making terraces; the organization's policy to work on soil conservation served as a legitimate excuse to give priority to these activities and turn down requests for labor assistance that could not be refused by its members individually. The issue that we touch upon here is the second precondition for a lasting development program: the formation of farmers' organizations.

### **Local social organization and farmers' organizations**

Economic activities in Lawonda are embedded in social relations. The Lawondanese are members of their *Uma*, their *kabihu*, they are partners in networks for exchange of resources, members of the *kelompok pakeri* or buffalo owners, involved in local government or just village inhabitants, Protestant Christians, Catholics or *Marapu* adherents, men and women, young and old. Each unit is associated with a specific type of social relations. Development activities enter this social space. Their organization encounters the existing dependency relations and divisions between "us", "no others" and "others". These various types of differentiation have to be considered in the design of development activities.

A good example is labor. Development activities "for the poor" often include the contribution of the participants in labor. The assumption is that the poorer members of the local community cannot contribute material inputs -because they are poor-, but that they are able to engage part of their household's labor in these new activities. Yet, especially those who have little control over land and buffalo, use their labor as a resource for exchange within the networks. This means that their labor is bonded within these networks. The poorer farmers can only participate without problems if the development activity does not compete for these "bonded" resources. If it does compete, the existing relations will be offended, and the farmer will either not participate, or the development activity itself has to be imbedded in new, alternative social relations. A possible set of such new, alternative relations is found in the type of farmers' organizations that Propelmas promotes.

Group formation and building of local organizations can be criticized as a matter of ideology (for a discussion on its rationale, see Esman and Uphoff (1984)). The local population, the government and Propelmas share the preference for working with groups, each with its own arguments. For Propelmas, farmers' groups enable effective communication between Propelmas' very limited staff and a relatively large number of farmers. The farmers traditionally work on the dry fields in small neighborhood groups, and on the paddy fields, they cooperate in the *kelompok pakeri*. If cultivation of *kacang ijo* is also done in groups, coordination with other activities is easier. This is especially true for the poorer farmers, who take the position of clients, because a farmers' organization can assist them to cope with the competing demands of the patrons on their labor. The Indonesian government supports cooperation between farmers, too. Composing groups is a way of organizing people's participation in government development programs. Working groups in government agricultural programs in Lawonda are composed by the village authorities, and not by the people involved themselves. An ideological reason to promote cooperation is especially clear in the case where villagers are asked to contribute their labor for a communal purpose, called *gotong royong*, "mutual and reciprocal assistance as in the traditional Javanese villages. It calls up images of social relations in a traditional, smoothly working, harmonious, self-enclosed village on Java, where labor is accomplished through reciprocal exchange, and villagers are motivated by a general ethos of selflessness and concern for the common good. The term corresponds to genuinely indigenous notions of moral obligation and generalized reciprocity, but it has been reworked by the State to become a cultural-ideological instrument for the mobilization of village labor" (Bowen, 1986: 545). Contrary to the image of harmony, the farmers' organizations in Propelmas' terms are intended to strengthen negotiating power on behalf of the farmers in dealing with patrons, traders and the local government.

Whether or not joining a farmers' organization is favorable to the individual farmer's household, depends on his or her own situation and assessment of the consequences. The benefit consists of his or her share of the products from the activities of the farmers' organization, and access to new social relations that can open up the way to money, seeds, credit, new technology and other inputs. The farmers' organizations are part of the alternative line of social organization in which Propelmas is a supportive institution, both materially and morally. The "cost" of involving oneself in a farmers' organization is that its obligations can be on strained terms with existing contracts of exchange of resources. Only the farmers themselves are able to make this private assessment. Consequently, Propelmas learned the lesson to leave the decision on whether to participate or not, and on whom to cooperate with, up to the farmers themselves. This appeared to be a more viable way of farmers' organizing than the methods adopted by the government. In government programs, such as the "Heka Pata"-program mentioned in chapter 11, all farmers within a certain area were obliged to participate, and the village government officials were the ones who decided on the composition of working groups.

A characteristic feature of the Lawondanese society is the strong social hierarchy. In chapter five, I described the internal hierarchy within the *Uma*, which exists for each of two gender groups, and is based on generation and marital status. Between *Uma* there is hierarchy based on economic strength and social position with the *kabihu*. Between *kabihu* in one geographic area there is hierarchy based on extent of nobility present in each *kabihu*, the sequence in occupation of the land, and economic and political strength. Modern hierarchy is created through government offices: village government authorities and school teachers belong to the government organization, which often gives them a feeling of superiority over the ordinary villagers. The distinction between Christians and *Marapu* adherents is often formulated in terms of hierarchy, at least by the Christians: they call the *Marapu* adherents old-fashioned and backward.

For Propelmas, this social hierarchy, and the strong sense of distinctions between "us" and "others", has always been a difficult issue to cope with. The first question is: how can one carry out a program for the poor, if groups of the poor consider each other as enemies? The Lawondanese primarily identify themselves as members of their *kabihu*, or according to their religious adherence, but not as one of either the poor, or the wealthy. The best solution for this problem that the Propelmas staff could think of was to concentrate activities in geographical areas where a large segment of the population is poor. Then, at least the programs would reach many poor people, although the relatively wealthy of the area could be included as well. This was one of the main reasons to choose Maderi as the main *desa* for development activities.

Another consequence of internal distinctions and hierarchy is the strong division of work. Knowledge about this division, and about the difference between the normative division of tasks and actual division of work, is essential in the extension activities of development workers. Programs for child nutrition were directed at mothers of small children, but in practice, especially among the poor, older children and grandparents were often more involved in preparing meals for the young children than their mothers. In courses on new agricultural techniques, younger men and women were usually involved. This is even more evident in long training courses in agricultural schools, where trainees have to stay for many weeks or months in the training center. If they return home with their new knowledge and skills, they face the hierarchy within their home community, which implies that the older generation controls the resources and decides on the way they are used. In such a social context, extension activities concerning new agricultural techniques have to be divided in separate sessions. In a session for the older generation, the ideas have to be explained and discussed in order to make it possible that those who are able to decide on changes will do so. If they agree that a new technique is to be used, a second session is necessary to explain how the technique works and to train new skills for those who carry out the plans in practice.

If the members of farmers' organizations all belong to the lower level within the social hierarchy, as is usually the case with the poor, Propelmas is faced with "contradicting intentions". We hoped that the farmers' organization could be the institution of the poorer farmers, in which they would have their democratic say, and where the leading offices

would be occupied by the poorer farmers themselves. This turned out to be difficult in practice. The traditional social hierarchy not only shows in an asymmetrical division of work, but also in different social skills. A low social status is traditionally correlated with a large share in the physical work, a small share in management of work and a minor role in ceremonial negotiations and leadership. The absence of leadership and management skills is a problem in local organizations of the poorer people in Lawonda. Training in this respect does not resolve the problem completely, because it is fed by "the asymmetrical ideology, that is, a system of ideas in which forms of social inequality are presented as self-evident and natural, or even as representing God's will" (Van der Grijp, 1993:9). In chapter 11, the case on marketing *kacang ijo* provides an example of the consequences of this ideology in new economic activities. The lesson we learned in this respect was that to ensure participation of the poorest, low status, members in making decisions within farmers' groups, it was better to avoid formal meetings and instead have informal discussions while working on the field. This was a lesson for both male and female groups, since social hierarchy exists within both gender categories.



A working group of the women's organization Maderi Baru has a discussion after working on the field

Within women's groups, additional problems occurred when activities had to be done that traditionally belong to the domain of men. Giving public speeches, negotiating with government officials, traders of other "enemies" requires skills that Sumbanese women in

general did not traditionally develop. At present, school teachers in particular are the exception. Among them are many women and also men, whose parents had a lower social status. In the rural areas, they have emerged as a new category of local leaders, in Church organizations, in government organizations such as PKK (women's organization), and the village council, and also in the farmers' organizations. Adapting to the Uma-economy in this sense means that farmers' organizations should include some members of higher social status to include the skills required for leadership in the organization.

### **The problems of working for the poor**

Differentiation within the Uma-economy does not only have repercussion on the organization of development work. There is not only a social, but also an economic differentiation between the Lawondanese, when referring to the differences in control over resources that render influence in the organization of economic activities, and include the power to engage the labor of other households. Working for the poor means actively taking sides in the political economy of Lawonda. Development activities enter this political economy, in which production, consumption and circulation of material goods are embedded in the social and economic hierarchy.

An initial problem for Propelmas was to identify the poor. In chapter 7, I discussed the tension between poverty assessment and identifying the poor from an objective outsider's point of view, and from the subjective point of view of the villagers themselves. The latter is only clear about who is regarded as not-poor: those who own at least one buffalo, sow more than one bag of rice seed and those who earn a regular cash salary. The clearest way in which Propelmas adopted this local perception of poverty was that the staff decided to direct its attention to dry land cultivation and not to rice cultivation.

A second and more serious problem is whether it is possible to find a way to counterbalance the power of the relatively wealthy Lawondanese. For these not-poor Lawondanese, the Uma-economy is a repertoire of options; but for the poor, who do not have control over these powerful resources, the Uma-economy is more a repertoire of constraints. The example of the introduction of GORA, in chapter 10, reveals the strength of the Uma-economy as a political economy. The buffalo owners did not welcome the new technology since it offended their own interests. If the poorer farmers would adopt GORA it would imply the loss of their labor force to work on the buffalo owners' fields. The buffalo owners' power over the buffalo-less proved strong enough to make the introduction of the new rice technology a failure. In this example, Propelmas did not succeed in helping improve the relative position of the poorer part of the population. The GORA farmers made an assessment of what would best serve their interest in the long run, and this led to a different outcome than what the Propelmas' staff had hoped for.

Here I would like to add a suggestion for further research, which concerns restrictions of the local political economy on innovations in rice cultivation. In Lawonda, the position of the buffalo owners seemed to be an important impediment to the adoption of new

technologies in rice cultivation. With the decrease in number of buffaloes, the need to change technology has become eminent, even in Lawonda. In other areas of Sumba, like Lewa, buffalo plowing was introduced more successfully, and tractors are even used to prepare the paddy fields. A historical comparison of the introduction of new rice cultivation technologies and their adoption in Lewa -a "modern" settlement area- and a more traditional area, like Lawonda or Tabundung (Propelmas second working area since 1989), could explore the connection between the local political economy and the adoption of new agricultural technologies.

A third, and general problem for NGO's in Indonesia is, how to avoid being accused of political subversion. "Working for the poor" could easily be regarded as working against the local elite, and that feeds the impression of political subversion. The local elite not only controls material resources in the village, but they also have the best access to the higher level political institutions. If Propelmas' staff would have opted for the approach of open conflict, this would certainly have led to complaints to the district government, and sanctions could be expected. Within this general political climate Propelmas chose to act as harmoniously as possible.

The practical solution to the political tension was found in the tactics of "entry point activities". The idea was to start cooperation with farmers in a particular area by selecting an activity that attracts the attention of the poor farmers and responds more to their interests than to the interests of farmers with more resources. In this way the activity is self-selective, and avoids a direct confrontation with the wealthier part of the population. The cultivation of *kacang ijo*, discussed in chapter 11, is an example of such an entry point activity. After contact has been established between Propelmas and a group of farmers through this first activity, they both can decide to continue cooperation. The initial activity then turns out to be not only the entry point to cooperation with poorer farmers, but also the entry point to sequel activities<sup>3</sup>.

For Propelmas, another way to cope with the restrictions of the local political economy was to seek support from the members of the "Christian family". As a development organization of the Sumbanese Protestant Church, Propelmas was part of the Church' organization, and the staff members were incorporated into the networks of social relations within this organization. Since many government officials on Sumba are members of this Protestant Church, the Church circuit proved to be an important alternative line to political influence and protection (Vel, 1992). However, members of the farmers' organization that cooperate with Propelmas have only very little access to political influence along this alternative line. During the period I lived in Lawonda, they could at best set their hopes on representation of their interests by the reverend of Lawonda or Propelmas' staff members.

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<sup>3</sup> The idea of an entry point activity within the framework of a comprehensive development program is described in the article by Vel, van Veldhuizen and Petch (1991).

## **Development activities and the morality of exchange**

The morality of exchange in the Uma-economy of Lawonda has been discussed at length in this book. The concept comprises the local perceptions on the nature and value of goods, on the characteristics of categories of people as exchange partners, and on the rules and evaluations of transactions. *The* morality of exchange, however, does not exist: it is not a static collection of ideas and rules, which hold for and are respected by every member of the Lawondanese society. In chapter 3, I reconstructed the spheres of exchange of goods and the spheres of allocation of money as the contemporary normative basis for exchange activities. This can also be used as the basis to predict effects of development activities before they are carried out, and to indicate where contradictions between the activities' aims and the practical performance in the Uma-economy will occur.

First of all, development activities to earn money encounter the moral evaluation of transactions. Let me explain this with an example. A women's group in Maderi was quite successful in growing vegetables in the dry season. Their original plan was to sell a large part of the harvest to earn money for daily expenses and school fees. Due to the fact that vegetables are perishable, the women could only sell their vegetables at the market in their home village. Relatives, neighbors and fellow villagers wanted to get some of the vegetables, but there was no effective demand in the local market, because no-one, except some government officials and Propelmas' staff, was willing to spend cash on vegetables.

This example reveals the reluctance of the Lawondanese to spend money on food. It also illustrates the moral objection to sell food to close relatives and neighbors, as well as the reluctance of the latter to buy, if receiving for free is the more morally suitable alternative.

The lesson we learned was that the aim of "earning money" has to be specified in order to be able to select a matching activity. The kind of cash expenditures that the participants have in mind to spend the development activity's revenues on, have to be considered worth while to sell the activities' products for. The sphere of allocation of money corresponds with the sphere of exchange of goods, and if cattle-fattening, for example, is carried out in order to earn cash for daily expenditures (the lowest sphere of allocation of cash), the moral evaluation of the transaction of "cattle for food" will be negative. In this argument we find one of the reasons why *kacang ijo* is a successful cash crop in Lawonda.

A second lesson is that the buyers of the products should preferably be "others" to make sure that selling is an acceptable mode of transaction.

The case about marketing kacang ijo in chapter 11 was an example of how the members of the farmers' organization involved had to redefine their social relations with each other in order to conduct the marketing activities in a business-like way. Propelmas, or any other development organization, including government agencies, can encounter the consequences of "social distance-thinking" more directly. Clear examples occur in credit programs. One of the first programs of Propelmas in the 1970's was the agricultural tool credit program. The issuing part of this program was a big success. Yet, it turned out to be difficult to get repayment. Why should poor farmers pay anything to a rich organization of strangers in return for the tools? In Lawonda no one feels ashamed to be indebted. On the contrary,

debts are perceived as the clear sign of a good and lasting relationship. The positive interpretation of failure of repayment is that the borrowers did not want the relationship to end, and returning the same object to the lender is, at least in cases of ceremonial goods such as pigs and horses, perceived as the end to an exchange relationship<sup>4</sup>. The negative explanation is that the credit issuing institution is regarded as an organization of "others" or "enemies", which legitimizes negative reciprocity. The lesson Propelmas learned was that, if there is no intention to distribute gifts, it is better to refrain from credit programs until the relationship between the local population and Propelmas' staff is at least characterized as one between "no-others".

The last issue I want to raise as an example of the contradictions between a "development-way-of-thinking" and the morality of exchange in Lawonda concerns the image of money. In activities where money is involved, it is difficult to adopt a common language that is clear to both development workers and to farmers. One of the problems of the "complicated cooperative" in the introduction of this book was that the members of the farmers' organization could not imagine what a fund in money was like, or what should or could be done with it. In the sugar shop, it was used as working capital. Yet, the organizations' members wanted to get sugar for free, "because it was bought with their own money!". To explain the meaning of a fund in cash, we took the example of a new *uma*.

If an *uma*, the main house of a *kabihu*, has to be rebuilt, all members of the *kabihu* contribute. Each member brings building materials to the building site; poorer members bring bamboo and rope and grass, and the richer members bring wood and nails; all contribute to the preparation of meals. The work ends when the *uma* is finished and inaugurated. Then, all *kabihu* members can use the *uma* for ceremonies and rituals. The contributions are fixed in the house. If anyone would withdraw his contribution, and, for example, take out the pile he had donated, the structure would collapse.

Instead of introducing the development jargon of alien words and concepts in the Uma-economy, it is better to translate the ideas in a common language, where the words are understood by both the Lawondanese and the development workers. This can only be achieved if development workers are willing to learn, and search for the local concepts for the features they want to discuss.

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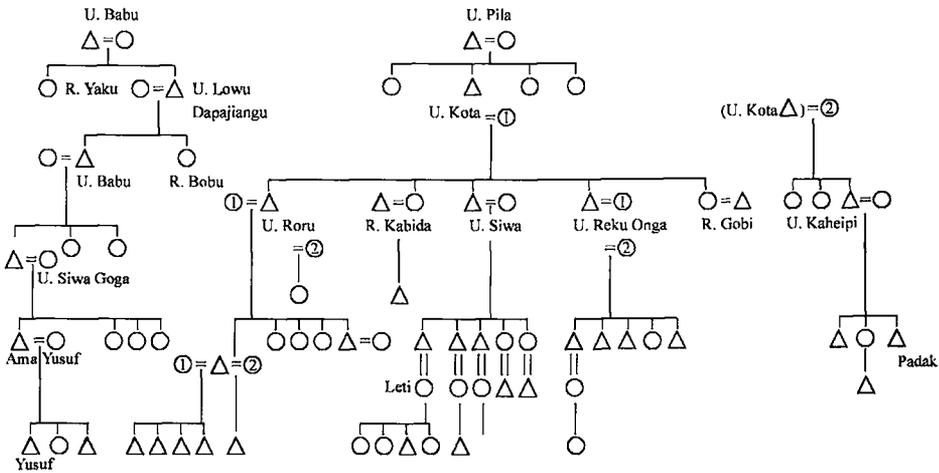
<sup>4</sup> An example of a similar moral assessment of being indebted on a macro-scale is given by Raatgever. She argues that the proposal for remittance of external debts and conversion of debts into gifts is based on the western negative evaluation of debts. In societies where being indebted is regarded as a sign of good relations, these "solutions to the external debt problem of African states which are incompatible with the way of economic reasoning within African societies is doomed to fail" (Raatgever, 1988:162).



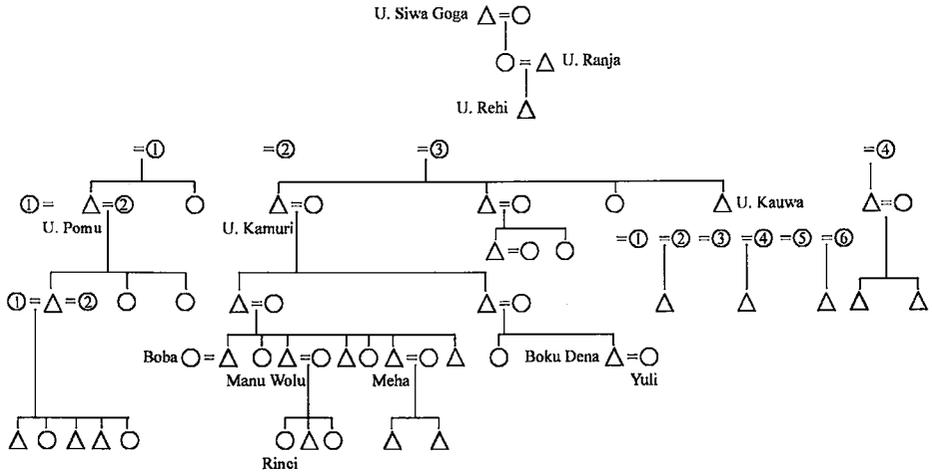
# Appendix

In this appendix the pedigrees of the people of Pangadu Jara are presented. I give two pedigrees, the first of *kabihu* Keriyeugu, and the second of *kabihu* Wai Maki. The pedigrees are depicted as far as they concern the persons mentioned in this book, that is the people who make up the population of my research area Pangadu Jara and their forefathers. The names of persons of these two *kabihu* that I mention in this book, are indicated in the pedigree.

## I. Pedigree of *kabihu* Keriyeugu of Pangadu Jara:



II. Pedigree of *kabihu* Wai Maki of Pangadu Jara:



## Glossary

In this list both Indonesian and Lawondanese words are explained. The Lawondanese are indicated with (L).

adat	customary law, in Lawonda used with special reference to the ceremonial domain; <i>secara adat</i> , in the customary way, is used with reference to exchange to indicate that ceremonial rules of transaction and ceremonial sets of social relations apply. An <i>adat</i> -house is a house built in the customary Sumbanese style, with a peaked roof, and it is a place for ceremonial gatherings.
alang(-alang)	grass ( <i>Imperata Cylindrica</i> ), used for thatching
Ama (L)	father; a married man is addressed in common speech as the father of his oldest child, e.g. Ama Yusuf, the father of Yusuf
Anakara (L)	Young girls; name of the organization of (female) farmers in the central area of the village Maderi
bapak	father
beras	rice (hulled); also used more generally to indicate the cleaned grains or beans of a crop, e.g. <i>beras jagung</i> and <i>beras kacang ijo</i>
blek	unit of volume, a tin, which contains about 13 kilograms of paddy.
B.R.I.	<i>Bank Rakyat Indonesia</i> , (the Indonesian People's Bank)
bukan orang lain	"no others", category of people in between "us" and "others" with regard to social distance
Bupati	government official, head of district ( <i>kecamatan</i> ) government
Camat	government official, head of sub-district ( <i>kecamatan</i> ) government
desa	village, unit of government administration
didi (L)	stone ridges
Dulama (L)	name of the organization of (male) farmers in the northern part of the village Maderi
dusun	neighbourhood, sub-unit of a desa
GKS	<i>Gereja Kristen Sumba</i> , the Sumbanese (protestant) Christian Church
GOLKAR	<i>Sekretariat Bersama Golongan Karya</i> , the Joint Secretariat of Functional Servant, the political party of the Indonesian Government
GORA	<i>Gogo-rencah</i> : a combination of techniques of growing paddy on dry land ( <i>gogo</i> ) and wet-land cultivation ( <i>rencah</i> ); in this technique no animal labour is required
guru injil	teacher of religion

ibu	mother, mrs.
ijon	credit-arrangement in which the harvest of a field is sold before the harvest season; also used if a trader gives a loan in money to a person who promises to pay back with birds' nests
ikat	to tie; special weaving technique
Ina (L)	mother; a married woman is addressed in common speech as the mother of her oldest child as, e.g. InaRinci, the mother of Rinci
jagung	maize
kabihu (L)	group of people related to a founding father and his wife or wives (Geinaert, 1992:428)
kacang	beans
kacang ijo	mung bean ( <i>Signa radiata</i> , L. Wilczek)
kalewaru (L)	a type of swiftlet ( <i>Collocalia esculenta</i> ), that makes nests in caves; these nests are edible and have a high market-value, because they are regarded as a delicacy in Chinese and Japanese cuisine
kaliwu (L)	yard, garden around the house with vegetables and fruit trees
karabuk (L)	"to pull out": patch of grass-land that is partially cleared for cultivation
kepala	head, leader
kita-kita	"us", category of people with small social distance to <i>ego</i>
kita punya bersama	it belongs to us together, shared property
kita punya rumah sendiri	"our own house": a house where one is always free to enter, sit down and stay, even without any special reason
Kontak Tani	a key-person among farmers in communication with the government; on Sumba used in the meaning of organization of farmers, officially recognized (registered) by the Indonesian Government.
K.U.D.	Koperasi Unit Desa, Village Cooperative
ladang	dry field
linggis	an agricultural tool, crow-bar, used to break rocks and stones
lupa huruf	who has lost the ability to read and write due to lack of practice
mamuli (L)	traditional ornament, male ceremonial exchange object
mandara (L)	making a journey on horseback, used for the journey to other regions in search of food
mangu tanangu (L)	the lord of the land, both used for the <i>kabihu</i> that was the first to settle in a particular area and consequently is regarded as the clan in control of the land; and contemporarily more often used in the sense of landowner, for a particular member of the <i>kabihu</i> who controls a particular patches of land.
mapakeri (L)	the followers, see <i>pakeri</i>
maramba (L)	person of noble rank

*Glossary*

Marapu (L)	(Divine) ancestor; spirits. Also used as a short hand for Sumbanese animism.
mondu (L)	irrigated (dry-season) garden on the banks of a river
musyawarah	consultation
ndewa (L)	soul, vitality
njara (L)	horse
ngabawini (L)	bride-taking kabihu
oli dadi (L)	blood-companions: uterine line relatives
orang lain	"others", category of people with large social distance towards <i>ego</i> , enemies
padang khewan	grazing fields for livestock
padi	rice (unhulled), paddy; <i>padi ladang</i> is dry-land rice, <i>padi sawah</i> is wet-land rice.
palawija	second crops, grown on the land after the rice harvest; on Sumba especially used to refer to bean-crops
pakeri (L)	<i>mapakeri</i> : the followers, the buffalo-less. <i>Kelompok pakeri</i> : a working group, arranged around a herd of buffalo. In the rice cultivation season its members cooperate on the paddy fields, and the off-season they take turns in herding the buffalo.
pamijang (L)	the second round of buffalo-trampling, part of preparing the soil of paddy fields
paraingu (L)	traditional settlement, preferably built on a hill top; it usually comprises three to ten houses
periku (L)	weeding-hook
pinang	Areca nut
popak (L)	the first round of buffalo-trampling, part of preparing the soil of paddy fields
Propelmas	<i>Proyek Pelayanan Masyarakat</i> , Project for Service to the Community, development organization of the Protestant Church of Sumba, based in Lawonda.
raja	king; on Sumba: highest indigenous representative of the colonial government.
Rambu (L)	lady; title used to address women of high social rank
ratu (L)	<i>marapu</i> -priest, traditional religious authority
rencah	buffalo-trampling, a technique to prepare the soil of paddy fields
ringgit	Dutch Colonial coin
rumah	house
rumah tangga	household; referring to the units of the government administration for purposes of taxation and statistics; also used as units in the administration of the Protestant Church of Sumba
rupiah	Indonesian currency
sapi	cattle

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sawah	wet-rice field
sekolah	school; <i>sekolah Inpres</i> is a primary school built as part of national program resulting from a decree of the President ( <i>Instruksi Presiden</i> )
sirih	betel fruits
sisuk (L)	literally: (a) the scent of roasted pork, (b) to complete what is lacking; credit arrangement in which a person invites fellow <i>kabihu</i> members or other close relations to contribute a loan to meet the expenses for a special occasion. Usually the contributions are in livestock.
SMP	<i>Sekolah menengah pertengahan</i> , first three grades of the secondary school (junior high school?)
Uma (L)	the social group of the founder of an <i>uma</i> , his wife or wives and their descendants
uma (L)	house; a peak roofed house.
Umbu (L)	lord; title used to address men of high social rank
usaha bersama	cooperative businesses
Waikabubak (L)	the district capital-town of west-Sumba
Waingapu (L)	the district capital-town of east-Sumba
wereng	pests
woka (L)	wooden stick, used to till the soil
yera (L)	bride-giving <i>kabihu</i>

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# Samenvatting

## **De Uma-economie: inheemse economie en ontwikkelingswerk in Lawonda, Sumba (oostelijk Indonesië)**

Dit boek gaat over de economie van Lawonda, een gebied in het midden van het eiland Sumba in het oosten van Indonesië. Van 1984 tot 1990 heb ik samen met mijn gezin in Lawonda gewoond. Mijn man en ik werkten voor de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland als adviseurs voor Propelmas, een ontwikkelingsproject van de Christelijke Kerk van Sumba. De algemene doelstelling van dit project was om de materiële situatie van de plaatselijke bevolking te verbeteren, met name van de armsten onder hen. In de loop van de jaren raakten we ervan overtuigd dat programma's voor armoedebestrijding alleen effectief kunnen zijn, als hun ontwerp gebaseerd is op grondige kennis van de bestaande inheemse economie. Dit proefschrift presenteert een beschrijving en analyse van die inheemse economie, en laat daarna zien hoe de mensen uit Lawonda hun economie aanpassen aan veranderingen, met name hoe zij omgaan met de steeds groter wordende behoefte aan geld. Daarnaast wordt aandacht besteed aan de manier waarop kennis van de inheemse economie gebruikt kan worden in ontwikkelingsprogramma's.

De analytische vraag die centraal staat in deze studie is hoe de inheemse economie bestudeerd kan worden als onderdeel van de lokale samenleving en haar cultuur. Bij een dergelijke benadering moet gezocht worden naar begrippen en eenheden die aangeven op welke manier de plaatselijke bevolking zelf denkt over economische activiteiten en organisatie. De *Uma-economie* is de naam die ik heb gekozen om de economie van Lawonda aan te duiden. Deze naam verbindt de economie aan de meest kenmerkende eenheid binnen de traditionele sociale organisatie, de *Uma*. Het woord *uma* betekent huis, maar geschreven met een hoofdletter heeft het een tweede betekenis, namelijk de groep mensen die bestaat uit het echtpaar dat een nieuw huis, *uma*, heeft gebouwd en hun nakomelingen. Deze groep functioneert als basiseenheid binnen de dagelijkse economie. Binnen de *Uma* worden gemeenschappelijke taken verdeeld, en wordt beslist wie welk stuk land mag bewerken, wat er met het vee gedaan wordt, wie mag gaan studeren, enzovoorts.

Van oudsher is de economie van Lawonda, waarin landbouw de belangrijkste bron van bestaan is, gericht op de eigen regio. Maar Sumba is geen geïsoleerd gebied. In de loop van deze eeuw is Sumba steeds meer onderdeel van de Indonesische natie

geworden, en geleidelijk aan wordt de inheemse economie opgenomen in grotere economische verbanden. Om de veranderingsprocessen die optreden in de Uma-economie te benoemen en te analyseren heb ik gebruik gemaakt van theoretische inzichten, die men aanduidt met de gemeenschappelijke noemer "articulatie (koppeling) van produktiewijzen" (Ray, 1973; Wolpe, 1980; Raatgever, 1988). Het onderwerp daarin is hoe traditionele economieën in een specifieke lokale context geleidelijk aan opgenomen worden in de kapitalistische produktiewijze, maar daarbij een gedeelte van de eigen specifieke kenmerken behouden. Voor de bevolking van Lawonda betekent deze "articulatie van produktiewijzen" dat zich allerlei nieuwe mogelijkheden voordoen: naast wat men van oudsher gewend was zijn er nu verschillende vormen en middelen van uitwisseling, verschillende doeleinden van economische activiteiten, en verschillende denkwijzen en manieren om de eigen handelwijze te legitimeren. Gesteund door inzichten uit de economische antropologie (Sahlins, 1972; Polanyi, 1957; Bohannan, 1957; Parry en Bloch, 1989) en de rechtsantropologie (Von Benda-Beckmann, 1992; Von Benda-Beckmann, *et.al.*, 1989, Griffiths, 1986) beschrijf ik de Uma-economie als een *repertoire van opties*, een scala van mogelijkheden, waarbij de mensen in Lawonda kunnen kiezen om in hun behoeften te voorzien op hun traditionele manier of gebruik te maken van de alternatieve mogelijkheden. Binnen het repertoire van opties onderscheid ik drie keuze-gebieden: (a) alternatieve uitwisselingsvormen, (b) alternatieve vormen van sociale organisatie, en (c) verschillende denkwijzen. Deze begrippen worden besproken in het eerste hoofdstuk. Na de inleiding bestaat het boek uit drie delen.

Het eerste deel van het boek omvat de beschrijving en analyse van de Uma-economie. Dit deel begint met hoofdstuk twee, dat het dagelijks leven in Lawonda beschrijft. Welke mensen wonen er in Lawonda en hoe voorzien zij in hun dagelijks levensonderhoud? Deze eerste kennismaking schetst een beeld van een samenleving dat heel anders is dan wat men zich doorgaans bij een Indonesisch dorp voorstelt. Lawonda is dun bevolkt, met gemiddeld niet meer dan 50 inwoners per vierkante kilometer. In het heuvelachtige landschap wordt droge landbouw op de hellingen gecombineerd met natte rijstbouw in de dalen. De technieken die men in de landbouw gebruikt zijn eenvoudig, er worden maar weinig middelen van buiten het eigen produktiesysteem, zoals kunstmest of pesticide, gebruikt, en de opbrengsten per hectare zijn laag. Veeteelt is een geïntegreerd deel van het lokale landbouwsysteem. Waterbuffels worden gebruikt bij de bewerking van de rijstvelden en paarden gebruikt men als rij- en lastdier. Daarnaast is de sociale en rituele betekenis van vee groot. Hoofdstuk twee presenteert de lezer een indruk van de *couleur locale*.

In hoofdstuk drie wordt de sprong gemaakt naar een onderwerp dat de ingewikkelde samenhang tussen economie en cultuur laat zien. Het centrale begrip in dit hoofdstuk is de *morality of exchange*, het geheel aan normen en regels met betrekking tot uitwisseling van goederen en diensten. Het gaat daarbij om vragen als: waarom hebben mensen in Lawonda voorkeur voor ruil in natura boven verkoop voor geld, waarom wisselen ze liever goederen uit met de één dan met de ander, waarom kunnen sommige zaken

helemaal niet uitgewisseld worden of alleen maar voor heel bepaalde andere goederen, en wanneer spreken ze van een goede ruil. In de markteconomie, als economisch model, worden wordt de waarde van goederen uitgedrukt in marktprijzen. In de Uma-economie bestaat dit marktmechanisme maar op heel beperkte schaal, en de waarde van goederen wordt dan ook niet uitgedrukt in geld. Mensen in Lawonda hebben hun eigen waarderingsstelsel, waarbij goederen worden ingedeeld in verschillende sferen van ruilverkeer (*spheres of exchange*). Dat zijn onderscheiden categorieën van goederen, waartussen een rangorde bestaat. Wanneer iets uit de hoogste categorie geruild wordt voor bijvoorbeeld voedsel, dat tot de laagste categorie behoort, keurt men dat af als een slechte ruil. Daarnaast zijn transacties nooit anoniem in Lawonda: de ruilvoet is afhankelijk van de persoonlijke kenmerken van degene met wie men de ruil aangaat. De combinatie van categorieën van goederen en ruil-partners leidt tot ingewikkelde uitwisselingspatronen. De traditionele normen en regels op dit gebied zijn heel sterk. De introductie en vervolgens het toenemend gebruik van geld, hebben er niet toe geleid dat transacties nu vooral volgens het marktmechanisme plaats vinden. In tegendeel, geld wordt ook in sferen van ruilverkeer ingepast, door het niet te beschouwen als geld op zich, maar verbonden met de besteding waarvoor men het wil gebruiken. Met deze analyse van het ruil gedrag in de Uma-economie is het mogelijk iets meer te begrijpen van de reacties van de bevolking in Lawonda op ontwikkelingsactiviteiten die gericht zijn op geld verdienen. Bijvoorbeeld, waarom men in programma's voor varkenshouderij de varkens niet graag verkoopt om met de opbrengst voedsel te kopen, of waarom de boeren het zonde vinden om de opbrengst van het stierenmestprogramma aan schoolgeld te besteden.

De *morality of exchange* is geen overblijfsel uit vervlogen tijden. In de loop der tijd hebben de Lawondanezen de normen en regels steeds aan gepast aan de veranderingen die op hen afkwamen. Hoofdstuk vier geeft een overzicht van de historische ontwikkelingen op Sumba en hun gevolgen voor de Uma-economie van Lawonda. In dit overzicht ligt de nadruk op interventies van buitenaf zowel door de overheid als door de Zending van de christelijke kerk. Voordat deze interventies plaats vonden was de Uma-economie georganiseerd volgens de regels van de traditionele sociale organisatie, die in dit hoofdstuk beschreven worden. Pas in de jaren zestig was de invloed van overheid en kerk zover toegenomen dat die in het dagelijks leven in Lawonda voelbaar werd. Eén van de gevolgen was dat er alternatieve sociale organisatievormen ontstonden, die ook nieuwe mogelijkheden voor ruilrelaties boden. Wie vroeger elkaar in termen van verwantschap als vreemden beschouwden, kunnen nu als Indonesisch staatsburgers, of als leden van de "christelijke familie" met elkaar omgaan, en op de daarbij passende wijze goederen en diensten uitwisselen.

Deze omgang met "vreemden" is voor velen in Lawonda noodzakelijk geworden. Immers, niet alles waar een modern huishouden op Sumba behoefte aan heeft kan meer binnen de Uma zelf voortgebracht worden. Voor deze produkten van buiten is geld nodig. Een gedeelte van de arbeidskracht van de Uma wordt gebruikt om aan geld te komen. Hoofdstuk vijf gaat over arbeid in de Uma-economie, en behandelt de manier

waarop men traditioneel met werk en de verdeling daarvan omgaat, en hoe dat verandert. Betaalde arbeid is buiten de steden op Sumba in de private sector nog steeds zeldzaam, maar wel is er steeds meer ruil van arbeid voor het gebruiksrecht van land, voor het gebruik van een kudde buffels, en ook voor financiële giften. In dit hoofdstuk wordt aangegeven hoe de alternatieve vormen van sociale organisatie mogelijkheid bieden om arbeidskracht uit te wisselen tegen geld en het gebruik van land en vee.

Naast arbeidskracht is grond de belangrijkste hulpbron in de Uma-economie. In hoofdstuk zes wordt beschreven dat er in Lawonda geen markt voor grond bestaat, maar dat er wel veel uitwisseling is van gebruiksrechten van grond. De traditionele opvatting dat grond geen privé eigendom is, maar aan de *kabihu* behoort ligt hieraan ten grondslag. Vervolgens ziet men in de manier van uitwisseling van gebruiksrechten een andere manifestatie van de *morality of exchange*.

Het tweede deel van het boek presenteert vier verschillende manieren waarop mensen in Lawonda aan geld proberen te komen. De keuze voor één van deze opties is geen vrije, maar hangt af van de mate waarin een persoon beschikt over grond, vee en arbeidskracht, en eveneens van de vraag in hoeverre nieuwe activiteiten, die niet in overeenstemming zijn met de traditionele normen voor economisch gedrag, van hem geaccepteerd worden door zijn omgeving.

Hoofdstuk zeven gaat in op de manier waarop de mensen in Lawonda activiteiten om geld te verdienen beoordelen. Deze beoordeling is gebaseerd op hun ideeën over wat de kwaliteit van het leven bepaalt. In die perceptie is sociale zekerheid cruciaal. Dat betekent dat hoge prioriteit gegeven wordt aan het onderhouden van goede relaties met allen die steun kunnen verlenen in tijden van tekort, en ook met de overledenen, die volgens het traditionele geloof het wel en wee van de levenden in sterke mate beïnvloeden. Deze percepties omtrent het doel van economische activiteiten en de prioriteiten in het besteden van schaarse middelen, zijn anders dan de uitgangspunten die meestal aan ontwikkelingsactiviteiten ter bestrijding van armoede ten grondslag liggen. Dit blijkt bij voorbeeld in de verschillende manieren waarop armoede geconstateerd en gemeten wordt. In dit hoofdstuk worden een aantal van deze *poverty-assessment* methoden besproken, en dan volgt een beschrijving van de criteria die mensen uit Lawonda zelf hanteren om rijken van armen te onderscheiden.

Hoofdstuk acht presenteert de eerste, en meest "traditionele" manier waarop mensen in Lawonda aan geld komen. Zoals men uitwisselingsrelaties aanknoopt met grond- en veebezitters in ruil voor arbeidsdiensten, zo wordt er nu ook gezocht naar mensen met een betaalde baan, die een gedeelte van hun inkomen willen ruilen tegen het gebruik van grond of vee, of tegen arbeidsdiensten. In de hedendaagse uitwisselings-netwerken vindt men de vier verschillende soorten partners vertegenwoordigd. De transacties vinden plaats zoals dat voorheen tussen naaste familieleden gebruikelijk was; de partners hebben de wederkerigheidsrelatie geaccepteerd, en spreken van onderlinge hulp in plaats van directe uitwisseling van gelijkwaardige tegenprestaties. De toegang tot dit soort uitwisselings-netwerken is beperkt, en daarmee ook de mogelijkheid om via deze weg

aan geld te komen. Alleen zij die anderen iets te bieden hebben, arbeid, grond, vee of geld, zijn in staat nieuwe wederkerighedsrelaties te scheppen.

Als men dergelijke relaties met geld-partners mist, of als men zulke grote bedragen aan geld nodig heeft, dat die niet meer alleen uit de bijdrage van geld-partners opgebracht kunnen worden, moet men een meer individuele wijze van geld verdienen vinden. Hoofdstuk negen beschrijft zo'n manier, die wel gekozen wordt door armere jonge mannen uit Lawonda. Hun toekomst perspectief is soms zo slecht, dat zij hun toevlucht nemen tot illegale activiteiten. In dit hoofdstuk gaat het om het verzamelen en verkopen van eetbare vogelnestjes. Het verzamelen is gevaarlijk werk, maar de verkoop van de vogelnestjes levert grote bedragen geld op. Het bezwaar van deze activiteit is dat het tegen de regels van de lokale gemeenschap -met name de nette middenklasse- ingaat: volgens hen staat het verzamelen van vogelnestjes gelijk aan omgang met de boze geesten, en het geld dat hiermee verdiend wordt is "heet" en zal alleen maar tot ziekte en narigheid leiden.

Hoofdstuk tien gaat in op de mogelijkheden om via verhoging van de rijstproductie geld te verdienen. Rijstboeren in Lawonda zijn zeer geïnteresseerd in vernieuwingen die tot produktieverhoging leiden. Een nieuwe wijze van grondbewerking, waarbij minder vee nodig is, vond echter geen ingang, omdat daarmee de belangen van de vee-bezitters geschaad werden. Een eigen experiment van de boeren om een deel van het gewas eerder in het seizoen te zaaien had wel succes, maar leidde niet tot veel extra inkomen in geld. Rijst is het meest favoriete voedsel, dat bovendien makkelijk vervoerd en opgeslagen kan worden. Vanwege die eigenschappen wordt er van de rijstooft altijd een aanzienlijk deel verdeeld in plaats van verkocht. Een verhoging van de produktie verdwijnt via de bestaande verdelingsmechanismen, en het blijkt dat rijst een produkt is dat in Lawonda meer geschikt is voor wederkerige uitwisseling en ruil in natura, dan voor verkoop.

Als laatste in het overzicht van verschillende wijzen om aan geld te komen, behandelt hoofdstuk 11 de verbouw en verkoop van *kacang ijo* (in Nederland het meest bekend als taugé-boontjes). Het blijkt een goed handelsgewas te zijn voor het armere deel van de bevolking, dat leeft van de droge landbouw, omdat het werk in deze teelt samenvalt met het drukke seizoen in de rijstbouw. Men heeft geen moeite om de boontjes te verkopen voor geld, omdat bonen tot de laagste categorie van ruilverkeer behoren, en er bestaat geen verdelingstraditie voor bonen. De verkoop van *kacang ijo* blijkt een aparte en ingewikkelde activiteit voor de boeren in Lawonda, en het hoofdstuk laat zien hoe moeilijk het is om een handelwijze die past binnen de markteconomie over te nemen, wanneer men denkt volgens de regels van de Uma-economie.

In het derde deel van het boek komen de grote lijnen uit de voorgaande hoofdstukken bijeen in twee slothoofdstukken. Hoofdstuk 12 vat samen hoe de mensen uit Lawonda actief gebruik maken van het repertoire van opties. De kwaliteit van de sociale relatie tussen twee mensen bepaalt welk gedrag het meest passend is, en daarmee ook onder welke voorwaarde transacties tussen hen plaats vinden. Daarom kiezen

uitwisselingspartners bij voorkeur voor de identiteit die hen het meeste voordeel biedt. Aan het einde van dit hoofdstuk kom ik terug op de manieren waarop mensen in Lawonda omgaan met de toenemende behoefte aan geld. De hoofdstukken in het tweede deel van dit boek laten zien dat er geen sprake is dat de Uma-economie van Lawonda zich volgens een lineaire ontwikkeling in de richting van kapitalisme beweegt. De vooronderstelling dat het kapitalisme de dominante produktiewijze is, zou inhouden dat wederkerigheid slechts een vorm van uitwisseling is die vooraf gaat in de ontwikkeling naar uitwisseling via de markt, en daarom uiteindelijk zal verdwijnen. In Lawonda is er geen sprake van zo'n eenduidige ontwikkeling. Er zijn twee tendensen. Alle pogingen in Lawonda om aan geld te komen behelzen een toename van de transacties met vreemden, omdat geld bij uitstek de handelswaar van vreemden is. De eerste tendens is dat men steeds meer de voorkeur geeft aan zakelijke transacties, waarbij de kopers de waar met geld betalen. Een tweede tendens is, dat mensen die voorheen als vreemden beschouwd werden, omgevormd worden tot partners in een uitwisselings-netwerk en vervolgens behandeld worden alsof ze naaste familieleden zijn. Dat laatste maakt dat wederkerigheid de meest passende vorm van uitwisseling is, en dat opent de mogelijkheid voor mensen uit Lawonda om financiële giften te vragen van de geldpartners. Hoewel het lijkt alsof deze tendensen tegenstrijdig zijn, bestaan ze naast elkaar, en als strategie om aan geld te komen worden ze naast elkaar gebruikt.

In het laatste hoofdstuk wordt de vraag gesteld wat de mogelijkheden zijn voor ontwikkelingsprogramma's binnen de Uma-economie. Hier komt de spanning aan de orde tussen twee uitgangspunten van ontwikkelingswerk zoals wij dat met Propelmas verrichtten. Aan de ene kant wilden we de normen, regels en praktijken van de inheemse economie accepteren als de bestaande werkelijkheid in Lawonda. Aan de andere kant probeerden we veranderingen te stimuleren die de relatieve positie van het armste deel van de bevolking zou verbeteren, en gingen daarmee in tegen die instituties en praktijken in de Uma-economie die de bestaande ongelijkheid in stand houden. Het hoofdstuk geeft geen recepten voor succesvol ontwikkelingswerk, maar laat zien hoe Propelmas in dit spanningsveld opereerde.

## About the author

Jacqueline Vel was born on the 26th of March 1958 in Deventer, the Netherlands. In September 1975, she began her studies in Agricultural Economics at the Wageningen Agricultural University, where she graduated in 1983. Her major subjects of study were Agricultural Economics and Development Economics, along with minor subjects of Development Sociology and Credit and Cooperatives in Development Countries. During her studies, she carried out field research in Sri Lanka on indigenous saving and credit arrangements in rural areas.

She worked as advisor to a rural development organization of the Protestant Church of Sumba from 1983 to 1990, delegated together with her husband, Laurens van Veldhuizen, by the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. During this period, she conducted field research on the rural economy of Sumba. Her main interests concern the link between economy and culture, informal social security, poverty alleviation and participatory development. She has worked for both the Wageningen Agricultural University and the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands since July 1990, as a Ph.D. research fellow in the Department of Agrarian Law. She has published on issues of legal pluralism, practical development work in rural areas and indigenous social security on Sumba (Indonesia).