

Where Have the “Entrepreneurs” Gone? A Historical Comment on *Adat* in Central Flores

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Abstract

This article presents an historical analysis carried out in order to understand the present state of *adat* (custom or customary law) in central Flores, eastern Indonesia. By exploring the vast network of causal nexuses that have brought the present into existence, this study aims to elucidate what the present, or a certain phenomenon observed in the present, really is. Here I deal selectively with certain parts of that network of causes and effects. Specifically, I explicate how the present state of *adat* in central Flores is causally connected with (1) the slave trade and warfare that took place in central Flores until the early 20th century, (2) Dutch colonial rule, which prohibited both slavery and warfare, and (3) the “development” policy that the Soeharto government executed from the 1970s until its downfall in 1998. I have chosen this focus not only for reasons of space, but also because doing so makes it possible to comprehend aspects of the present state of *adat* that were not conceived of in the “development” discourse that took place during Soeharto’s New Order and have not been conceived of in the current political circumstances surrounding *adat*.

Introduction

The surge of attention given to *adat* (custom) is one of the distinctive features of present-day Indonesian local societies.¹⁾ The Soeharto government enforced a paternalistic interventionist policy toward *adat*, because it felt *adat* had the potential to wield political influence or to hinder the successful realization of “development” (*pembangunan*). On the other hand, the decentralization regulation (UU 22/1999) affecting local government, legislated after the demise of the New Order, rested on the two intertwined concepts of regional autonomy and social empowerment. In addition, this regulation also defined *adat* as the basis of village administration. Given that

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1) Words and phrases in Indonesian and Dutch are represented in italics within single quotes to distinguish them from Lioneese except borrowed words that have been almost fully assimilated in Lioneese like *adat* and *raja*.

Indonesia is predominantly rural, it is hardly surprising that there has been a rapidly growing interest in *adat* among local people, especially local politicians and intellectuals.

This is the case with the administrative regency (‘*kabupaten*’) of Ende in central Flores. In 2000, the government of Kabupaten Ende began enacting numerous administrative ordinances under the decentralization regulation. One of those ordinances intends to afford protection and empowerment to *adat*, as if it were in danger of extinction in the tide of “modernization” (‘*modernisasi*’) and “globalization” (‘*globalisasi*’) [PDKE 25/2000, cf. PDKE 18/2000, PDKE 23/2000]. Moreover, the Agency of Rural Society Empowerment (Badan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa) of Kabupaten Ende collected data on *adat* institutions in 2002, even though its research covered only a few areas because of its fiscal predicament. Accordingly, the regent (‘*bupati*’) of Kabupaten Ende distributed to all village headmen (‘*kepala desa*’) in the regency a questionnaire on the status, role, genealogy and territory of each *adat* chief. The headmen were ordered to return the questionnaire by 23 September 2002. It was appropriate for the survey to focus on chiefs and land, because both are of central importance to *adat* institutions in central Flores.

Adat also is a matter of concern in the few local offices of the central government that are left over after major downsizing in the past several years. The epitome of these is the branch office of the National Land Agency (Badan Pertanahan Nasional) in Kabupaten Ende. Its heads, whom I interviewed during the administration of Soeharto, regarded “collective *adat* landownership” (‘*hak ulayat*’) as an obstacle to “development,” and one of them strenuously insisted that such a right must be abolished totally. Nowadays, however, the office expresses the opinion that even national land policy should be executed with due consideration to *adat* and *adat* chiefs [cf. Kantor Pertanahan Kabupaten Ende 2001]. It seems that such a change has derived from the alteration of national land policy. After the decentralization regulation was enacted, the National Land Agency invested local government with authority to implement land policy and to constitute ordinances demarcating areas of “communal *adat* land” (‘*tanah ulayat*’) shared by a group holding ‘*hak ulayat*’ [PMNA 5/1999; PPPMNA 400-2626]. However, Kabupaten Ende, like other regencies in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur, has not yet constituted such an ordinance.

This article presents an historical analysis carried out in order to understand the present state of *adat* in central Flores. It will focus on Lise, a political domain in Kabupaten Ende. It might appear that such an enquiry is irrelevant to those recent moves for *adat* in the regency. This is not necessarily so, however.

Historical research, through exploring the vast network of causal nexuses that have brought

the present into existence, aims to elucidate what the present, or a certain phenomenon observed in the present, really is. In this article, however, I deal selectively with certain parts of that network of causes and effects. Specifically, I explicate how the present state of *adat* in central Flores is causally connected with (1) the slave trade and warfare that took place in central Flores until the early 20th century, (2) Dutch colonial rule, which prohibited both slavery and warfare, and (3) the “development” policy that the Soeharto government executed from the 1970s until its downfall in 1998. I have chosen this focus not only for reasons of space, but also because doing so makes it possible to comprehend some aspects of the present state of *adat* that were neither conceived of in the “development” discourse that took place during the New Order, nor have been conceived of in the current political circumstances surrounding *adat*. Thus, although it is vital to consider historical changes in central Flores concerning entrepreneurship and land tenure in a comparative perspective with similar phenomena in some other parts of “the Outer Indonesia” [see e.g. Geertz 1963a, 1963b], such a comparison is left as a future subject of investigation.

1. The Slave Trade and War

Flores was until 2003 divided into the regencies (*'kabupaten'*) of Manggarai, Ngada, Ende, Sikka and Flores Timur,²⁾ which geographically corresponded with the former Dutch administrative “subdivisions” (*'onderafdeeling'*) of Manggarai, Ngada, Ende (Endeh), Maumere (Maoemere) and Oost Flores en Solor Eilanden respectively. As in other regencies in Indonesia, Kabupaten Ende consists of *'kecamatan'* (sub-administrative districts) and *'desa'* (administrative villages). Besides these, there are numerous non-governmental political domains in central Flores, designated *tana* (meaning land, territory, mud, or the earth). Lise is the largest domain not only in Kabupaten Ende but in the entire Lionese-speaking area, which covers approximately three-quarters of Kabupaten Ende and the westernmost part of Kabupaten Sikka.

The population of Lise exceeds 15,000 and makes up approximately seven percent of the total population of Kabupaten Ende [Kantor Statistik Kabupaten Ende 1984: 17-18]. Lise’s southern and northern ends reach to the Savu Sea and the Flores Sea respectively, and its east border almost overlaps the boundary between Kabupaten Ende and Kabupaten Sikka (see Figures 1 and 2).³⁾ In Lise, there are nine eminent chiefs (*ria béwa, mosa laki*) and approximately 100 subordinate

2) Manggarai Barat separated from Manggarai in 2003.

3) While most of the hamlets within Lise are fixed in Figure 2 according to data I collected by using a handheld GPS, the positioning of most of the hamlets outside Lise in this figure are based on a map (scale: 1/25,000) published by the Indonesian National Coordinating Agency for Surveys and Mapping.

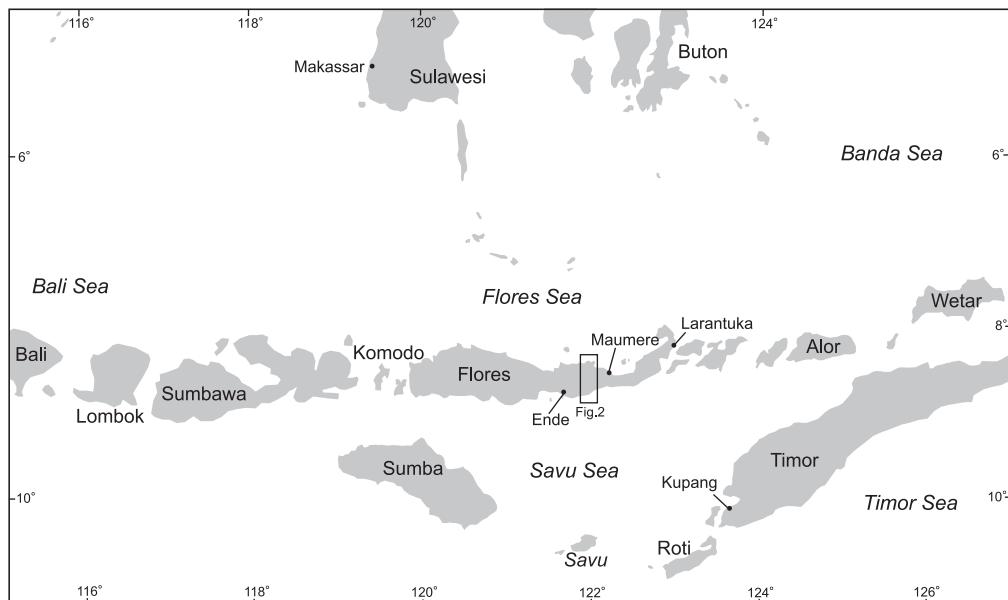


Fig. 1. Flores and Neighboring Islands

chiefs (*bogé hagé*), each of the latter being subject to one or another of the former at least in the eminent chiefs' perception. A subsistence economy, consisting of slash-and-burn agriculture whose staple crops were rice, maize and cassava, was predominant in central Flores through the 1970s, but since the 1990s the cultivation of perennial commercial crops, such as clove, vanilla, cashew, cacao, coffee and candlenut, has been an important source of cash income for local people.

Until the early 20th century, political domains in central Flores, especially around Lise, waged war against each other using firearms. Lise is a domain that developed unusually out of this situation; it formed rapidly through whole or partial annexations of about 20 domains that surrendered to, or were defeated by, the descendants of Woda from Lise Detu (see Figures 2 and 7). The people of Lise recount this expansion process in a series of oral histories. Although rich in variations, these histories consistently indicate that Lise's long-standing rivals were the domains occupying the south coast of central Flores. Late in the 19th century, while allied with Moni and Wolo Jita, Lise was at war with Ndori and gave support to Lise Detu in the latter's fight against Mbuli [Rasi Wangge 1946b]. When Dutch authorities pacified the region in 1907 (discussed below), Lise was pursuing a war with Ndori over a tract of land, labeled Tana Lelu, on the border between them. This was the last war that Lise conducted using firearms [e.g. Rasi Wangge n.d., 1946b; van Suchtelen 1921: 12]. But why were Ndori and Mbuli Lise's long-lasting enemies?

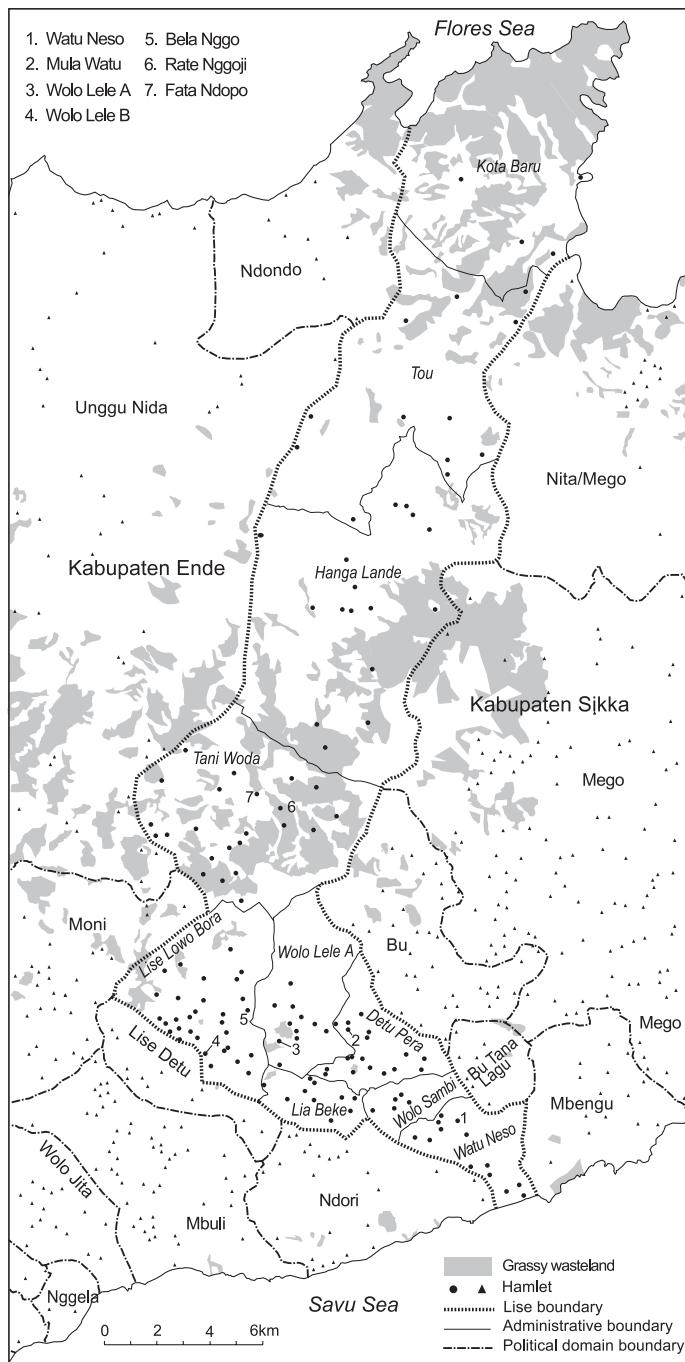


Fig. 2. Lise and Neighboring Areas

Figure 2 illustrates the geographical distribution of hamlets (*nua*) in Lise and its neighboring areas, and Figure 3 shows the population-density of each administrative village ('*desa*') in Lise in 1983, as well as that of the same area in 1911. These figures clearly show a characteristic population distribution in which the high-density area lies to the south and the low-density area to the north. The northernmost area of Lise was no man's land and Kota Baru (literal trans.: New Town) did not exist as an administrative village or even as a place name before a spontaneous transmigration from the southern part of Lise was started for reclamation work there in the 1950s.

It would not be successful to explain such an uneven distribution of population-density in terms of natural environmental factors, such as differences in annual rainfall. Although the amount of annual rainfall in the northern area of central Flores has been smaller than in the southern area (see Table 1), it is unlikely that this has resulted in the north-south difference in population-density. Otherwise, the population density in the north of the neighboring administrative district, Onderafdeeling Maumere, would be lower than its southern district. In fact, the opposite is true. The population-density in Desa Kota Baru is currently higher than that of Desa Hanga Lande (see Figure 3), and extensive rice paddy fields spread there. In addition, the supposedly anthropogenic grassy wasteland in Desa Kota Baru (see Figure 2) that stretches seamlessly to Kabupaten Sikka along the north coast already existed at least late in the 19th century [Metzner 1982: 51-53, 112]. Nonetheless, the northern area was more heavily inhabited than the southern area in Onderafdeeling Maumere.

According to the demographic statistics of Onderafdeeling Maumere in 1911, the most densely

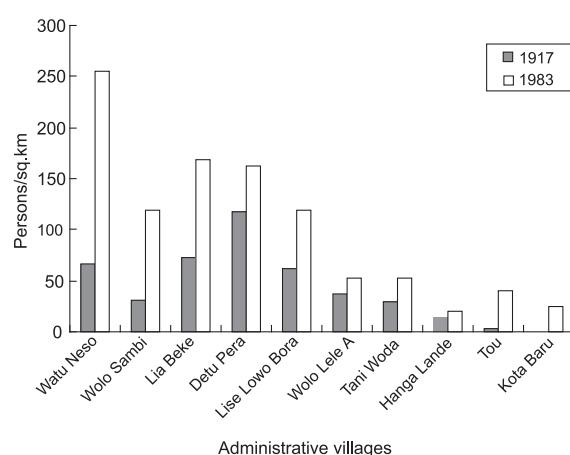


Fig. 3. Population Density by *Desa* in Lise

Table 1. Annual Rainfall in Central Flores

Station	Year	Amount (mm)
South coastal area in Kabupaten Ende		
South coast	1917	1,885
Wolo Lele A	1984	2,653
Wolo Waru	1977	1,166
"	1985	2,247
"	1995	1,202
North coastal area in Kabupaten Ende		
North coast	1917	1,552
Maulore	1985	1,655
"	1995	1,200
South coastal area in Kabupaten Sikka		
Paga	1998	879
Lela	1998	1,551
North coastal area in Kabupaten Sikka		
Maumere	1983	1,165
"	1998	1,126
Waigete	1983	1,295
"	1998	697
Waioti	1983	1,271
Ledalero	1983	1,656
"	1998	1,408
Magepanda	1983	763
"	1998	1,564
Kewapante/Habi	1998	1,011

Sources: [van Suchtelen 1921; Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Ende 2001; Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Sikka 1999; Kantor Statistik Kabupaten Ende 1986; Kantor Statistik Kabupaten Sikka 1985]; Wolo Waru (1977); The measurement by Kantor Pertanian Kecamatan Wolowaru; Wolo LeleA (1984); My measurement.

populated district in that subdivision was Ili, which probably encompassed at least the western end of the coast of Geliting or Bajo, one of the main points of trading activities conducted by the Bajau and Buginese in the Flores Sea area. The coast referred to as Geliting is actually far wider than the Geliting shown in Figure 4. Although Maumere also played a significant role in the commerce carried on in the Flores Sea area, Maumere probably would have been less prosperous than Geliting [Parimartha 2002: 208; Metzner 1982: 51-52; Veth 1855: 163-164].

It is widely known in central Flores that the ancestor of the *raja* of Sikka was originally from Sikka Natar, a hamlet that still exists on the south coast of Kabupaten Sikka.⁴⁾ According to the history embraced by his descendants, the *raja* expanded his territory toward the north and finally conquered Geliting and Maumere. Nevertheless, in fact, sovereignty over Geliting was not beyond

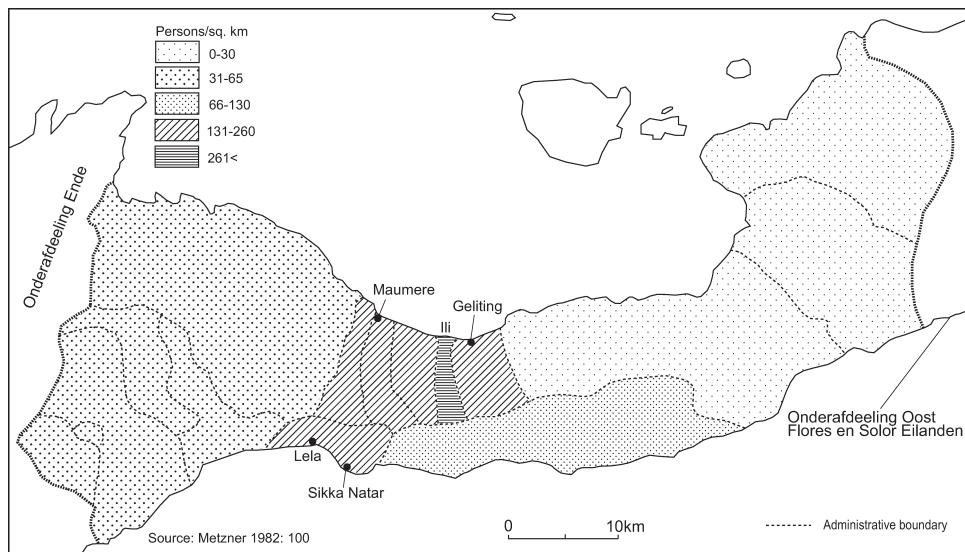


Fig. 4. Population Density by Administrative Unit in Onderafdeeling Maumere in 1911

dispute, and until the early 20th century the *raja* of Sikka, the local people of Geliting and the *raja* of Larantuka (whose base was Larantuka) struggled with each other over claims to Geliting and the taxation of trading activities carried on there.

The most densely populated area in Onderafdeeling Ende in 1917 was the Isle of Ende, or Pulau Ende (see Figure 5). This islet and Ende, a harbor city on the south coast in central Flores, were the centers of the international slave trade conducted in the Savu Sea area, which reached a height of prosperity probably in the first half of the 19th century. The most important article of export was the slave, but livestock and rice were also probably sold overseas. On the other hand, imported articles were firearms, gunpowder, gold, elephant tusks and so forth. The main source of slaves was the island of Sumba, and slave-hunters from Ende frequently visited there to obtain their staple commodities [Needham 1983, 1987; cf. Dietrich 1983].

It seems that such business was carried out on a small scale in a number of places along the south coast adjacent to Ende, because the following pieces of information were acquired in Lise:

(1) Although gold mining has never occurred in any form on Flores, gold treasures have been

4) The word “*raja*” in this paragraph signifies the head of the rajadom which existed before the Dutch established the system of “self-governing districts” (*zelfbesturende landschap* or ‘*landschap*’) in and around Flores. As described later, each administrative district was “governed” by an indirect ruler designated *raja* or ‘*zelfbestuurder*.’

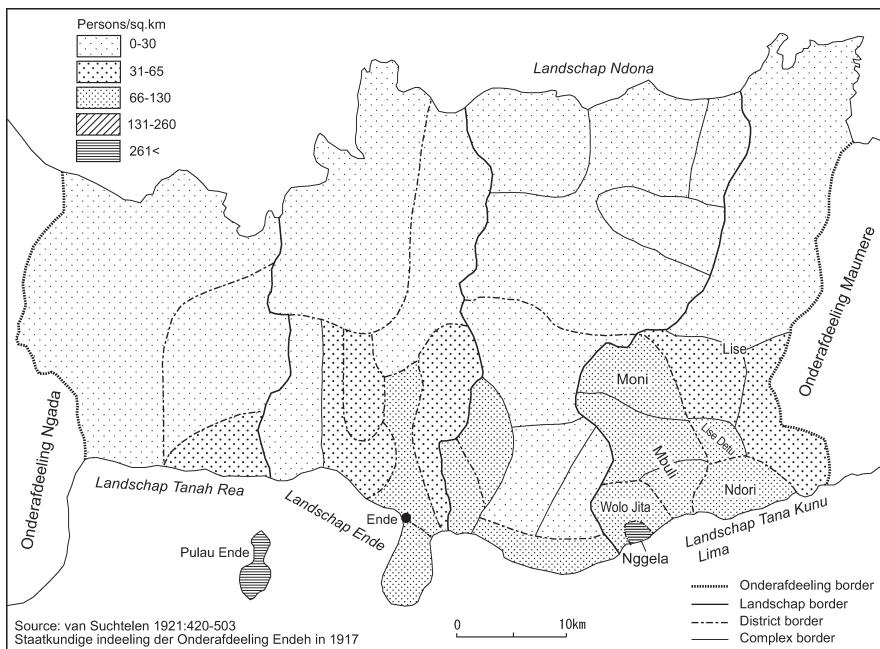


Fig. 5. Population Density by Administrative Unit in Onderafdeeling Ende in 1917

widely distributed in Lise.

- (2) There were a large number of firearms on Flores before the Dutch authorities confiscated them.
- (3) The price of guns was paid in slaves and gold.
- (4) War captives were sold, making warfare a major source of slaves within Flores.
- (5) Until the 1910s, the eminent chiefs in Lise owned and put their sailboats on the south shore of Lise to transport trade articles.
- (6) The chiefs levied tax on commercial transactions conducted on the south coast of Lise until early in the 1910s.

In Kabupaten Ende 72 percent of current residents are Catholic [Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Ende 2001:133]. This situation has arisen out of Dutch colonial policy, which promoted Christianity and controlled the increase of Muslims. It also stemmed from the dedicated cooperation of Pius Rasi Wangge, *raja* of Landschap Tana Kunu Lima,⁵⁾ with Catholic missionaries.

5) One of “self-governing districts” (*'zelfbestuurende landschap'*) constituted in Onderafdeeling Ende after the pacification [Dietrich 1989: 157-161; Rasi Wangge n.d., 1946a; van Suchtelen 1921: 85-86].

According to population figures by religion in Onderafdeeling Ende from the 1910s, Muslims were not randomly distributed, but apparently concentrated along the south coast in Onderafdeeling Ende. Ndori and Mboli were already under the influence of Islam in the purlieu of Lise (see Figure 6). In addition, there was a Muslim *raja* in Ende who had been recognized by the Dutch long before the pacification, and that *raja* governed Ende and its neighboring areas.⁶⁾ It seems likely that all these things were closely connected with the slave trade, because this business was carried out mainly by the descendants of the Makassarese Muslims (who migrated to Ende from Sulawesi in the 17th century) and the Islamized Endenese [Needham 1983].

Mboli and Ndori probably came under the influence of Islam through business transactions with Muslims. Through these commercial relations, these two domains would also have acquired guns ahead of other domains and started to endanger their neighbors. In other words, they set a precedent for the cycle of prevailing over and capturing enemies through superior weaponry,

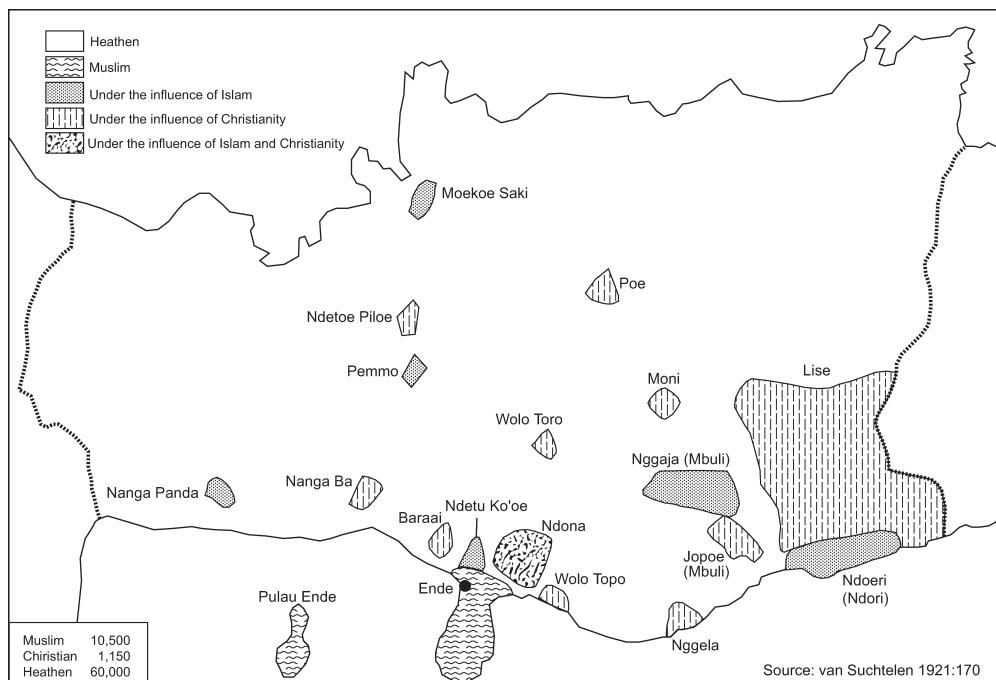


Fig. 6. Distribution of Population by Religion in Onderafdeeling Ende in the 1910s

6) The *raja*'s realm under Dutch colonial rule roughly overlaps the Endenese-speaking area, which comprises quarter of Kabupaten Ende.

obtaining more muskets and gold by selling their war captives as commodities, and further reinforcing their military strength.

It is easy to imagine that, in reaction to the serious threat posed by coastal domains such as Mboli and Ndori, inland domains like Lise had to expand their territories northward in order to obtain military capacity comparable to that of their enemies. Otherwise, it would be difficult to understand why Lise, the largest domain in central Flores, exists just north of Mboli and Ndori and why the inland domains are generally larger than those located in the south coastal area. The inland domains must have enlarged themselves in antagonism against the coastal domains. According to oral histories widely known in Lise, the founders of Lise were originally from Lise Detu, a tiny domain bordered on the south by Mboli and Ndori. They expanded their territory northward first. After the successful annexation of Tana Kune Mara, which geographically overlaps Desa Tani Woda, they ventured on a series of wars to conquer the south coast.

As is shown in Figure 5, there was a gravitation of population toward the south coastal area adjacent to Ende at some stage in the past. This would have been a consequence of the long-term process of allocating human resources to offensive and defensive battles over trade profits on the south coast. This causal nexus seems to be the same as the underlying causality in which population-density became higher in the north, in the vicinity of Geliting and Maumere.

2. The Fragmentation of Causal Domination

One of the classic subjects of anthropological research in the Asia-Pacific region, including eastern Indonesia, is the dominance of the mother's brother (the wife-giver) and of "indigenous people" [Mabuchi 1974; Fox 1980; Fox and Sather 1996; Sahlins 1985; Sugishima 1983, 1987, 1994]. In central Flores, like in other eastern Indonesian societies, this phenomenon inextricably links with the notion of causality in the following sense. Because the mother's brother (as the giver of a woman who brought ego into existence as his sister's child), and the "indigenous people" (as the donors of the land from which ego as an "immigrant" gets subsistence) are regarded as ego's "source/trunk" (*pu'u* or *pu'u hamu*), they exert a decisive influence on ego's life and work. Accordingly, ego must maintain good relations with them. When ego is distressed by incurable illness, childlessness, reiterative frustration and so forth, ego identifies, by means of divination, the "source/trunk" who yielded these difficulties and appeases the causer by making a sacrificial ritual. I refer to such a relationship of the "source/trunk" to ego as "causal domination" [Sugishima 2002].

In Lise, however, it seems that causal domination functions more strongly among patrilineal

relatives than in other relationships. The eldest son, as his father’s substitute (*dari nia*), succeeds to his father’s title and estate. As a result, his younger brothers obtain their subsistence from their eldest brother’s land. Most chiefs, whether eminent or subordinate, are the head of a localized patrilineage, designated *wewa* (door). The relationship between the lineage head and the members of his lineage is modeled on the relationship between the eldest brother/father and his younger brothers/children. The latter are categorized as “younger brothers/children” (*aji-ana*) of the lineage head, and they make use of part of the land acquired by the apical ancestor of the lineage, which has been inherited by lineage heads from generation to generation. Accordingly, the apical ancestor and the successive lineage heads are regarded as the “source/trunk” from whom the lineage members are brought into being. Hence, lineage members who are caught in a serious predicament visit the ceremonial house in which the relic of the apical ancestor is enshrined, and perform appeasing rituals there.

Nevertheless, in Lise chiefs of a younger line exceed chiefs of the elder line in power in many cases. *Ria béwa* and *mosa laki pu'u*, for instance, are the primus inter pares among the eminent chiefs, but as Figure 7 illustrates, they are in the youngest line among Woda’s descendants. In addition, “indigenous people” are in a small minority and are eclipsed by Woda’s descendants in Lise. Woda’s offspring seem to have driven most of the “indigenous people” out of their territories during Lise’s formation through the annexation of neighboring domains. Furthermore, although kin terminology is prescriptive and matrilateral cross-cousins have been considered ideal marital partners for males in central Flores, in Lise there are only a few cases in which matrilateral cross-cousin marriage has been practiced between chiefs consecutively for a few generations.

On the other hand, in Lise Detu where Woda was born, the eminent chief of Clan Jeke is the patrilineal descendant of Jeke and his father, Wawo, who provided Woda’s father with a wife and land. Therefore, in Lise Detu the eminent chief of Clan Jeke maintains a more fundamental right to the territory of Lise Detu than the descendants of Woda’s elder brothers, namely Mbobi, Pati, Mali and so forth (see Figure 7). Moreover, the eminent chiefs who represent Clan Mbobi, Clan Pati, Clan Mali have never been eclipsed by chiefs of a younger line. These things suggest that causal domination is “fragmented” in Lise.

This fragmentation of causal dominance is clearly recognized by the people of Lise. Most of the “indigenous people” in central Flores, including Clan Jeke, are conceived to be the descendants of an incestuous pair of siblings who survived the deluge that destroyed the world. They are designated “the people who came down” (*ata nggoro*) from Mt. Lepe Mbusu, the highest summit in Kabupaten Ende. The political domains in which the *ata nggoro* causally dominate immigrants

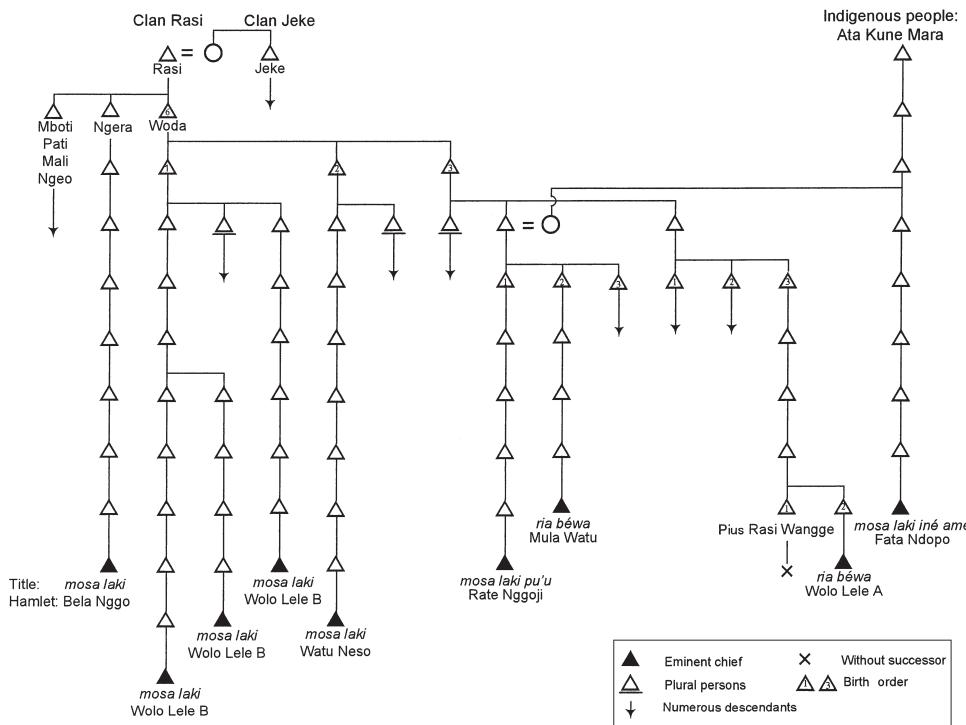


Fig. 7. Relationship between Eminent Chiefs

are referred to as “domains of descent” (*tana nggoro*) and are contrasted with “domains of merit” (*tana godo*) such as Lise, which came into being through the annexation of neighboring domains. Moreover, this distinction is rendered in the couplet, “powerful with body, strong with physicality” (*tego no'o tebo, mulé no'o lo*), which celebrates the ability to stand on one's own feet without relying on inheritance, and to obtain land through one's own exertions. This ethos of meritocracy with a hegemonic character is highly estimated in Lise, especially among the eminent chiefs of younger lines. In fact, *ria béwa* and *mosa laki pu'u* have ascendancy over other eminent chiefs in Lise precisely because their territory, as their politico-economic foundation, is far larger than that of the latter.

The aforementioned couplet, however, has an implication that cannot be translated merely as “meritocracy,” since it is rephrased as “merit is gained by body, *bogo* is earned by physicality” (*godo to'o no'o tebo, bogo mbana no'o lo*). “*Bogo*” and its synonym, “*bugu*” in Lionese signify property acquired by one's own labor, including commerce, and so closely connect with a notion analogous to the labor theory of property whose formulation is commonly ascribed to John

Locke [Locke 1947; cf. Dumont 1977: 51]. In this case, the spirit of “meritocracy” in Lise has been materialized through practicing acquisitive individual activities, and is not inconsistent with modern profit-making business activity.

3. The Impact of Pacification

In July 1907, the city of Ende was attacked and burned down by the inhabitants of its hinterland. The Governor General of the Netherlands East Indies, J. B. van Heutz, dispatched a company of military police (*‘compagnie marechaussee’*) commanded by Captain Hans Christoffel to take punitive action against those responsible for this subversive act and accomplish pacification in central Flores at once. From 10 August 1907 through February 1908 the company conducted military operations in a number of places in central Flores. During this period, approximately 1,000 local people who offered resistance against the troops were killed, and until the end of 1910, most of the firearms owned by the people were confiscated and destroyed [Jobse 1982: 36-75; cf. de Vries 1910; Dietrich 1989: 83-86; van Suchtelen 1921: 13].⁷⁾ Thus, warfare between political domains in central Flores was brought to an end.

Although the slave trade had been banned officially since the first half of the 19th century in the Netherlands East Indies [Needham 1983: 9-10], it only ceased completely in the same year as the pacification [van Suchtelen 1921: 93]. Probably, this is not a coincidence. Warfare as the main source of slaves within central Flores was abruptly stopped by the pacification; rifles and gunpowder as the main imported articles became things that were worse than useless. Furthermore, in the previous year Dutch troops subjugated Mamboru, the center of the slave trade in northern Sumba [Needham 1983: 35-36, 1987: 6, 28].

After the pacification, the Dutch government reformed administrative units in central Flores and constituted two administrative “subdivisions,” namely, Onderafdeeling Ende and Maumere. With regard to the former, numerous political domains were united into four “self-governing districts” (*‘zelfbesturende landschap’*): Landschap Tanah Rea, Ende, Ndona and Tana Kunu Lima, over each of which a *raja* was assigned as head (see Figure 5).

In 1909, the Dutch government began sending children of eminent chiefs of each domain to a mission school in Lela in Onderafdeeling Maumere. Their purpose would have been to educate them as Christian *raja* and local administrators who could communicate with Dutch

7) De Vries reported that the guns confiscated from the beginning of the pacification to 1 January 1910 totally numbered 5,385 [de Vries 1910].

administrators in Malay. It was Pius Rasi Wangge, the eldest son of an eminent chief in Lise, who cut a conspicuous figure in this school. After receiving five years of elementary education, he was appointed *raja* of Landschap Tana Kunu Lima [Rasi Wangge n.d., 1946a]. Early in the 1920s, the four self-governing domains in Onderafdeeling Ende were integrated into two districts, namely, Landschap Lio and Landschap Ende. Pius Rasi Wangge was appointed *raja* of Landschap Lio. This historical process was inseparably related to the Dutch religious policy, but this essay does not go deeply into this subject.

Before the pacification, *adat* chiefs acquired and amassed gold, land and slaves by conducting warfare in combination with trade, as well as investing part of these spoils into extending their military potential. One such investment was to purchase pieces of land around their territory so as to increase *aji-ana* whom they could mobilize according to need. As I will describe in detail in the next section, “*aji-ana*” denotes not only the members of a localized patrilineage represented by a chief but also those who get subsistence from the chief’s territory. A chief with strong armed forces frequently took them off to fight as hired mercenaries, and received pay in the form of gold and a tract of land. In his autobiography, Pius Rasi Wangge recalls his boyhood when he accompanied his father and grandfather to engage in battles fought in many places in central Flores [Rasi Wangge n.d., 1946a].

The pacification not only put an end to such chiefs’ entrepreneurial endeavors but also changed fundamentally the political situation surrounding chiefs, especially eminent chiefs. In the post-pacification context, where it was no longer a matter of life-and-death for a group of people to join forces in an all-out military or commercial effort, strong chieftainship turned out to be useless. In other words, it was no longer necessary for *aji-ana* to actively support their chief. In addition, the weakening of their economic foundation dealt chiefs a further blow. For a certain time shortly after the pacification, even though deprived of earning opportunities, chiefs would have been able to spend their hoarded gold on obligatory activities. After the coffer (*mbola kadho*) kept in their ceremonial house was emptied, they could not but ask for financial support from their *aji-ana*. All that the people were willing to bear, however, was a minimum amount of rice and livestock used in the performance of small-scale agricultural rituals. Thus, chiefs were reduced to priest-like functionaries presiding over rituals conducted according to the agricultural cycle, but they did not differ dramatically from their *aji-ana* economically [cf. Howell 1991: 230-231]. This is revealed by the fact that large-scale offering ceremonies to “a pair of supreme beings” (*du'a ngga'é*)—such as *mopo*, *tasi rio weki*, *towa lima du'a* and *koé luwu oné*—to which more than 1,000 people were invited and which brought fame to chiefs through their ostentatious display

and consumption of wealth, were hardly performed from the 1930s onward.

4. A History of *Ngebo*

Three patrilineages (*wewa*) whose apical ancestors are Segá, Parú and Laka (the sons of Nusa, an ancestral hero who made a great contribution to the expansion of Lise), localize in Desa X, one of the eight administrative villages situated within Lise.⁸⁾ Lineage Segá is the largest among them. It segments into 16 exogamous *tuka* or sublineages, which are referred to in Roman numerals in Table 2 and Figure 11, and its members (including women who have married into the group) exceed 1,300. Although only 31 percent of the members of Lineage Segá inhabit Desa X, they comprise 48 percent of the total population of Desa X.

While the head of Lineage Segá is one of the eminent chiefs in Lise, the heads of Lineage Parú and Lineage Laka are subordinate chiefs. The area of Desa X is partitioned into three tracts of land (*maki*) called Maki Segá, Maki Parú and Maki Laka, the largest one of which, namely Maki Segá, has been inherited by the successive heads of Lineage Segá from generation to generation.

Desa X has an area of 1,900 hectares according to my provisional calculation based on a map (scale: 1/25,000) published by the Indonesian National Coordinating Agency for Surveys and Mapping (Badan Koordinasi Survey dan Pemetaan Nasional) in 1991. The head of Lineage Segá estimated Maki Segá at 800 hectares. This is not an unreasonable conjecture, because after subtracting a forest reserve, Maki Parú and Maki Laka the area of Desa X would be approximately 1,000 hectares.

As previously stated, the members of a *wewa* or localized patrilineage represented by a chief are referred to generically as the “younger brothers/children” of its head. This compound, however, is metaphorically extended to denote the long-term cultivators of a *maki* whose tenure is held by a lineage head. Speaking of adult males, they are analytically classified as follows:

- (1) Allies: The members of patrilineal groups that have maintained cooperation with a *wewa* for a number of generations.
- (2) Secondary members: The patrilineal descendants of slaves attain the status of “secondary member” within *wewa* nowadays. It is strictly taboo to mention their family background publicly and to use the term “slave” (*ata ho’o*) to refer to them. To my knowledge, there are no “secondary members” in *wewa* represented by subordinate chiefs. This suggests that slaves were the exclusive property of eminent chiefs in the past.

8) All proper nouns that I use in regard to Desa X in this article are fictitious names.

Table 2. Cases of *Ngebo* Alienation

Ngebo no.	Place	Alienator	Types of alienation	Alienee
1	In Desa X	Allied group A	Asking forgiveness	The head of Lineage Segas: C
3-a	"	The head of Lineage Paru	Selling and buying	The head of Lineage Segas: C
3-b	"	The head of Lineage Paru	Selling and buying	The head of Lineage Segas: C
3-c	"	The head of Lineage Paru	Compensating for the war bereaved	The head of Lineage Segas: C
12	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Segas	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Sega's son: Sublineage XII's apical ancestor
12	"	Sublineage XI's head	Asking forgiveness	Sublineage VII's head
13	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Jama	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Jama's yB: Sublineage VII's apical ancestor
14	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Jama	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Jama's yB: Sublineage XV's apical ancestor
15	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Jama	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Jama's yB: Sublineage XII's apical ancestor
15	"	Sublineage XII's head	Asking forgiveness	C's son
16	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Jama	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Jama's yB: Sublineage X's apical ancestor
17	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Jama	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Jama's yB: Sublineage III's apical ancestor
18	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Segas	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Sega's son: Sublineage XI V's apical ancestor
18	"	Sublineage XIV's head	Asking forgiveness	C's son
19	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Segas	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Sega's son: Sublineage VII's apical ancestor
19	"	Sublineage VII's head	Giving dowry	C's son
20	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Segas	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Sega's son: Sublineage IV's apical ancestor
21	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Segas	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Sega's son: Sublineage V's apical ancestor
22	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Segas	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Sega's son: Sublineage IX's apical ancestor
23	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Segas	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Sega's son: Sublineage XIIII's apical ancestor
24	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Jama	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Jama's yB: Sublineage XVII's apical ancestor
25	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Segas	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Sega's son: Sublineage II's apical ancestor
26	"	The head of Lineage Segas: Jama	Distributing <i>ngebo podo</i>	Jama's yB: Sublineage VI's apical ancestor
28	"	A man from a neighboring hamlet	Selling and buying	The head of Lineage Segas: G
29	"	A man from a neighboring hamlet	Selling and buying	The head of Lineage Segas: G
i-a	Outside Desa X in Lise	A neighboring eminent chief	Selling and buying	The head of Lineage Segas: C
i-b	"	A neighboring eminent chief	Asking forgiveness	The head of Lineage Segas: Segas
ii	"	A neighboring eminent chief	Concluding nonaggression pact	The head of Lineage Segas: Jama
iii	"	A group of indigenous people	Concluding nonaggression pact	The head of Lineage Segas: Segas
iv	"	A neighboring eminent chief	?	The head of Lineage Segas: C
v	Outside Lise	An eminent chief in Lise Detu	Remunerating for military merit	The head of Lineage Segas: C

*See Figure 9 and 11 concerning proper names in Table 2

- (3) Uxorilocal residents: Men who marry a female member of a *wewa* and live with their wives’ people.
- (4) Others: People who cannot be classified into the above three categories, such as schoolteachers, tentative residents and so forth.

Figure 8 is a tracing of the cadastral map which the headman of Desa X drew in August 2001 at my request. According to this map, the number of *ngebo* or land parcels which can be or have been used for cultivation amount to 395 in Maki Sega, and those *ngebo* are distributed to 142 persons. Maki Paru and Maki Laka were left blank in the original map because the village headman did not have a detailed knowledge of the ramifying situation of *ngebo* there.

Figure 8 appears to indicate that a number of *ngebo* aggregate into a *maki* in one plane. Nevertheless, it is misleading to conceive of such an image. The right to *maki* is clearly distinguished from the right to *ngebo*—at least by *adat* chiefs. In addition, the difference between them is rendered in terms of a layer metaphor: The right to *maki* is referred to as “right beneath land” (*hak ghalé wena tana*) and is distinguished from the right to *ngebo*, which is “right on land” (*hak ghéta wawo tana*). Furthermore, the latter is subordinate to the former in that the cultivators of every *ngebo* situated in a *maki* are obliged to involve themselves in rituals and taboos that the holder of the *maki* imposes in accordance with agricultural cycle. However, they have frequently ignored those obligations since the 1990s.

While the number of *ngebo* in Maki Sega amounts to 395 plots, there are only 11 *ngebo* of the head of Lineage Sega, namely those *ngebo* numbered from 1 to 11 in Figure 8. Although *ngebo* 4 and 7 are luxuriantly wooded, they cannot be opened, because they are the *ngebo* in which the aforementioned *mopo* (an offering ritual to a pair of supreme beings) was performed. It is prohibited to open such *ngebo* without performing the same ceremony once again. In addition, the head of Lineage Sega allows his *aji-ana* to work on *ngebo* 1 and 11. Thus, the land parcels that he can cultivate nowadays, contrary to expectation, form a small portion of the total number of *ngebo* within Maki Sega. This seems to be the consequence of the fact that the successive heads of Lineage Sega have portioned out land-parcels within the *maki* to their *aji-ana*.

Transactions of *ngebo* dating back at least as far as the late 19th century can be classified into the following types:

- (1) “Distributing *ngebo podo*” (*bagi ngebo podo*): In the past, every sublineage of Lineage Sega (except Sublineage I, the sublineage of the eldest line represented by the lineage head) held a land parcel labeled *ngebo podo*. It was allocated to the sublineage’s apical ancestor as his father’s memento, which monumentalized the genealogical linkage between them.

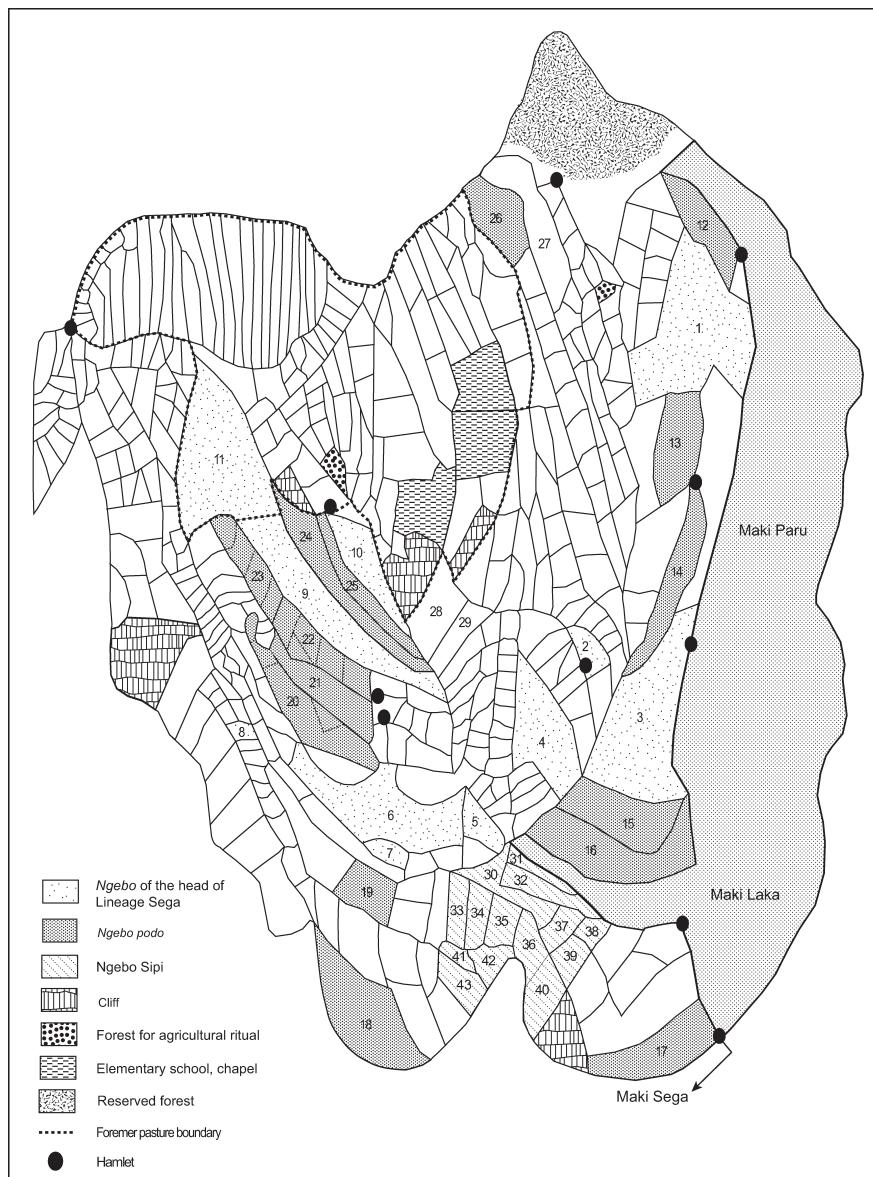


Fig. 8. Cadastral Map of Maki Segá

Part of the rice harvested there and cooked in an “earthen pot for boiling rice” (*podo*) had to be offered ritually to the apical ancestor and more remote patrilineal ancestors. Nevertheless, the *ngebo podo* of four sublineages, namely *ngebo* 12, 15, 18 and 19, have already passed into other hands (see Table 2).

- (2) “Giving dowry” (*pati ngebo lawo lambu*): When a politically significant marital alliance was concluded, the wife-giver gave a *ngebo* as dowry (*lawo lambu*, literally meaning “female loin cloth and upper garment”) to the wife-taker, and the latter gifted gold treasures and livestock to the former as a counter-presentation (*nata bako*, or betel tobacco).
- (3) “Asking forgiveness” (*walé*): When a case of theft (*naka*) or illicit sexual intercourse (*péla* or *péla pani*) was brought to light, the perpetrator gave a *ngebo* and gold treasure to the victim in order to ask forgiveness.
- (4) “Concluding a nonaggression pact” (*rapa jaji*): When a chief concluded a political alliance with another chief who lived in the vicinity and posed a threat, the former gave a *ngebo* and his closest relative to the latter in order to monumentalize the pact.
- (5) “Remunerating for military merit” (*pati godo*): When he won a victory, the war leader (*ata pu'u*) who assumed full responsibility for a war that he projected, gave a *ngebo* or gold treasure to the leader of an auxiliary force which rendered distinguished military services.
- (6) “Compensating for the war bereaved” (*pati toko tuka*): When a fatality occurred on the battle field, the war leader had to compensate the war bereaved by giving a *ngebo* or gold.
- (7) “Selling and buying” (*téka geti*): All available data consistently indicate that it was possible to sell and buy *ngebo* by the medium of gold at least late in the 19th century.

A *ngebo* that has been alienated in any of the above ways is designated *ngebo ledhé* (literal trans.: distinctly visible or solitary *ngebo*) and is distinguished from *ngebo* in general.

The upper part of Table 2 shows which *ngebo ledhé* within Maki Sega have been transferred according to the various types of alienation mentioned above. Those transferred *ngebo* number around 20, and the successive heads of Lineage Sega handled most of them as either alienator or alienee. Moreover, they exclusively made the purchase and sale of *ngebo*. These things are true with six *ngebo* (i-a, i-b, ii, iii, iv and v in Table 2) which exist outside Maki Sega and have an area of about 120 hectares in all. Who held the 300-plus other *ngebo* that exist in Maki Sega?

The head of Lineage Sega, from his earlier years, made a memorandum of whatever village seniors told him about *adat*, land, history and so forth. A passage in this memorandum provides a precious piece of information to answer the above question. Ngebo Sipi, which is mentioned in that passage, geographically covers the *ngebo* numbered from 30 to 43 in Figure 8, which is currently conceived to be held by the persons numbered from 30 to 43 in Figure 9. The passage runs thus:

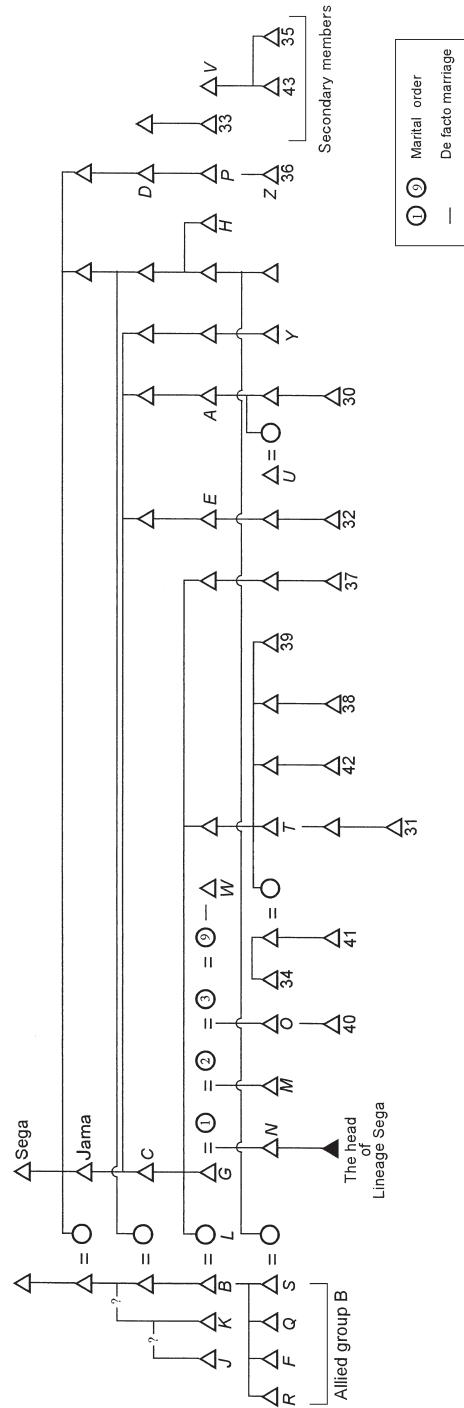


Fig. 9. Cultivators of Ngebo Sipi

Information about Ngebo Sipi that A imparted in Wolo Ndopo [a hamlet in Maki Sega] on 19 April 1961: [...] This *ngebo* was originally [part of the land] conquered in the generation of Sega’s father. B had cultivated it [...] with the permission of C [who was in the position of the head of Lineage Sega until the 1910s]. When A, D and E were clearing farmland in that *ngebo*, F came and set fire [to dried hewn trees]. A caught and hauled F before G [who was the head of Lineage Sega until 1930], whereat B, H, J and K came over and asserted that Ngebo Sipi had been given as dowry from C when L married B. Over against this, G told them that he had never heard such a thing from his father and so it was a *ngebo* of his own. And he let A, D and E continue to work there. In succeeding years, G worked on the *ngebo* for himself and made a stone-fence along the Ria River. Subsequently, M made a ceremonial garden there [in order to perform agricultural rituals as the head of Lineage Sega]. Thereafter, N cultivated twice and planted coconuts there. After that, O and P opened rice paddies there, and Q, R and S worked on the *ngebo* with the permission of N. In 1959, A, T, U and V made their gardens and W, Y and Z cultivated rice paddies. Consequently, Q placed a taboo on the *ngebo* by “hanging leaves” (*téo wunu*) [to which he incanted a magical spell]. This news was brought to me, but I [the head of Lineage Sega] claimed that it was the head of Lineage Sega who held the absolute right (‘*hak mutlak*’) of Ngebo Sipi.

This document reveals that a number of people cultivated Ngebo Sipi under the control and by permission of the successive heads of Lineage Sega until the 1960s. In other words, in the past, Ngebo Sipi did not consist of a number of clearly demarcated *ngebo* as depicted in Figure 9, and this seems to be true with other *ngebo* (except *ngebo lédhé*) in Maki Sega according to all available data. In that case, how have most of the *ngebo* depicted in Figure 8 come into being?

5. The Diffusion of Crop Ownership

The land policy executed in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur during the administration of Soeharto aimed at two objectives.⁹⁾ The first one was to put under the control of the provincial government “communal *adat* land” (“*tanah ulayat*”) which was recognized as a potential hindrance to “development,” in order to utilize the land for the fruition of “development” [PDPNTT 8/1974; PPDPNTT 8/1974]. The second intention was to give legal guarantee (‘*kepastian hukum*’) to the quasi-private property that naturally occurred and rapidly increased as “collective *adat* landownership” (‘*hak ulayat*’) vanished. The latter process was inextricably connected with the National Land Registration Program (PRONA: Proyek Operasi Nasional Agraria), which was

implemented early in the 1980s [Sudjito 1987]. On the other hand, the former antedated the latter by ten years and was formulated early in the 1970s when the Soeharto government started to enforce its land policy.

In the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur, as in other provinces in Indonesia, the land policy was carried out on the basis of Basic Agrarian Law (UUPA: Undang-undang Pokok Agraria). Article 3 and 5 of this act stipulates *hak ulayat* as follows:

Article 3.

[...] the implementation of the “Hak-Ulayat” (The propriety-right of communal property of an Adat-Community) and rights similar to that of Adat-Communities, in so far as they still exist, shall be adjusted as such as to fit in the National and State’s interests, based on the unity of the Nation and shall not be in conflict with the acts and other regulations of higher level.¹⁰⁾

Article 5.

The Agrarian Law which applies to the earth, water and air space is Adat-Law as far as it is not in conflict with the National and State’s interests [*sic*] based on the unity of the Nation, with Indonesian Socialism as well as with regulations stipulated in this Act and with other legislative regulations, all with due regard to the elements based on the Religious Law. [Act 5/1960; cf. UU 5/1960]

These provisions did not work as a brake against the formulation and implementation of the aforementioned land-policy in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur. The provincial government, along with most legal scholars who were active during the period of the Soeharto administration [e.g. Boedi Harsono 1994: 167], regarded *adat* as being on the course of extinction. Furthermore, the land rights of *adat* chiefs were also denied in the following sense.

9) This paragraph draws on the following literature: Hasil Diskusi Masalah Tanah Adat dalam Pelaksanaan Undang-ndang Pokok Agraria di Nusa Tenggara Timur, Tanggal 23 s/d 24 September 1983; Hasil-Hasil Seminar Hukum Adat Tanah dan Hukum Adat Waris di Propinsi Daerah Tingkat I Nusa Tenggara Timur Yang Diadakan pada Tanggal 11 s/d 13 November 1981; Kantor Agraria Kabupaten Ende 1984; Kesimpulan Hasil Symposium Terbatas Persoalan Tanah Suku Daerah Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur, Tanggal 15 Mei s/d Mei 1972 di Kupang; Notulen Rapat Diskusi Tanah Suku/Persekutuan Adat Kabupaten Ende, Tanggal 29 September 1984; PDPNTT 8/1974; PPDPNNTT 8/1974.

10) I think there is an ambiguity in the wording of Article 3. The National Land Agency recently interpreted this article as follows: “Article 3 of the Basic Agrarian Law stipulates that the *hak ulayat* and rights similar to that of *adat*-communities can be exercised by the *adat*-communities concerned in so far as the *hak ulayat* still exists factually” [PPPMNA 400-2626].

As we have seen, the land rights of *adat* chiefs have been personal rights similar in some respects to the modern concept of individual ownership. On the other hand, in the governmental perception in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur, it has been assumed that ‘*hak ulayat*’ is a communal landownership held by a descent group (‘*suku*’) and the head, who represents the group, acts ex-officio as the manager of the communal property (‘*tanah ulayat*’). If he were merely such a manager, however, his ability to exercise causal domination with respect to his *aji-ana* could not be understood.

It is of central importance to understanding land tenure in central Flores to comprehend the multiple-layered articulation of land rights and causal domination. As previously stated, a *maki* held by a chief is the principal source of living for his *aji-ana*. For this reason, the chief dominates his *aji-ana*. As remarked previously, although they could have *ngebo lédhé*, the right to it was subordinate to the chief’s land right. Similarly, an eminent chief asserts authority over subordinate chiefs, since the former is recognized as the successor of an ancestral hero who granted land to the ancestors of the subordinate chiefs according to their merits in war. Nonetheless, this is not the endpoint of the causal nexus of domination. It further extends and ultimately reaches the supreme beings referred to as *du'a ngga'é* or “*du'a* above the moon, *ngga'é* beneath the earth” (*du'a ghéta lulu wula, ngga'é ghalé wena tana*), who were conceived to be the first cause of the “universe” (*ulu ela*) [Arndt 1939; Rasi Wangge 1946c]. Even though “*du'a*” and “*ngga'é*” are almost the only Lionese words which can be translated as “owner,” they are hardly ever used to refer to human beings, whether or not they are eminent chiefs. This implies that even the land right of eminent chiefs has not contained exclusive right of disposal which comprises the heart of the modern concept of ownership.

To my knowledge, this layered character of land rights in central Flores has almost never been mentioned in the “development” discourse [cf. Seda 1983]. In fact, the master narrative of land during the period of the New Order was monolithic and closed to the effect that it was based on the concept of ownership, whether communal or private, as well as the alternative relationship between communal and private landownership.¹¹⁾ Therefore, even if an *adat* chief naively asserted his hereditary land-right, he was generically censured for pretending to be a landowner for selfish purposes, or condemned as a holdover from the feudal times that were repugnant to

11) This description is based on the following literature: Anonymous a [1976]; Anonymous b [1990]; Anonymous c [1986]; Badjo [1982]; Daeng [1974]; Gonstal [1976]; Kesimpulan Hasil Symposium Terbatas Persoalan Tanah Suku Daerah Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur, Tanggal 15 Mei s/d Mei 1972 di Kupang [1972]; Sowynau Dasnan [1983].

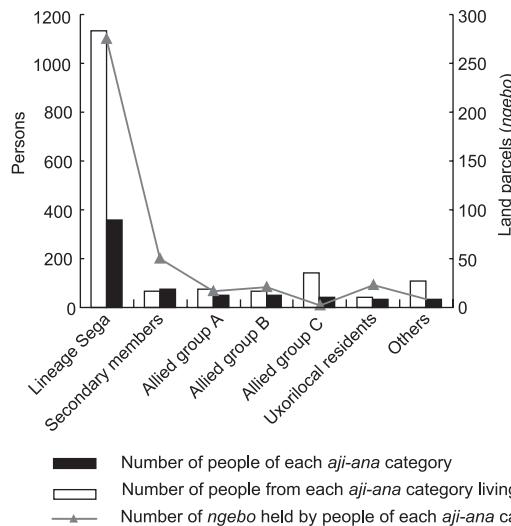
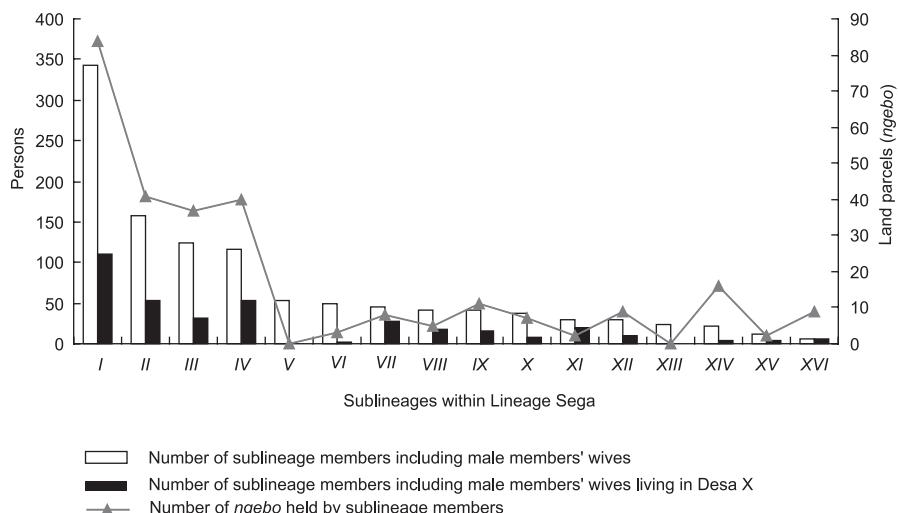
a fixed line of national policy. Thus, *adat* chiefs could voice little dissent on their land and over the implementation of national land policy. In this situation, where *adat* chiefs could not but be silent about land tenure, the introduction of perennial cash crops was loudly promoted as part of the “development” policy.

A close relative of the head of Lineage Sega was in the position of village headman of Desa X through the 1970s and into the 1980s. He was, like many other village headmen, a pious supporter of the “development” policy enforced by the Soeharto government and undertook a project aimed at augmenting people’s incomes by cash cropping. He, with the permission of the head of Lineage Sega, commenced with distributing to the *aji-ana* a pasture of some 100 hectares within Maki Sega, so that they would cultivate perennial commercial crops for themselves. This land distribution was launched in 1976. As Figure 8 shows, there are currently 96 pieces of *ngebo* within the former grazing land. This figure roughly corresponds with the number of family heads who got subsistence from Maki Sega in the 1970s.

With that as a beginning, the village headman continued to portion out land to the *aji-ana* on the condition that they would plant cash crops on their distributed *ngebo*. The head of Lineage Sega supported the village headman’s policy by adopting the strategy that when the *aji-ana* did not fulfill that condition, he claimed back their unutilized part of *ngebo*. In addition, the village headman encouraged the heads of Lineage Paru and Lineage Laka to do the same thing. As a result, approximately 70 percent of *ngebo* in Desa X are now under cash crop cultivation. Therefore, most *ngebo* boundaries depicted in Figure 8 were originally the borderlines of newly planted perennial crops owned by each cultivator. In other words, the ownership of those crops “diffused” into the surface of land itself and transformed it into quasi-private property. I label this phenomenon “diffusion of crop-ownership.”¹²⁾

Figures 10 and 11 show how the 395 *ngebo* within Maki Sega are distributed among a number of patrilineal groups localized in Desa X. The composition of population in Maki Sega drastically changed through the 1950s into the 1970s, because many people transmigrated from Desa X to the northernmost part of Lise. After that, no population change of such a large scale has come about in Desa X. As understood from Figures 10 and 11, the distribution of land to each patrilineal group localized in Desa X correlates with the people who live in Desa X, rather than with the size of those patrilineal groups. This indicates that the “diffusion of crop-ownership”

12) This is the metaphorical use of “diffusion” or “diffusion coating” used in the area of metal surface treatment.

Fig. 10. Number of *Ngebo* Held by People of Each *Aji-ana* CategoryFig. 11. Number of *Ngebo* Held by Sublineages within Wewa Segas

emerged in and after the 1980s.

Registered land-parcels increased rapidly during the period of the Soeharto administration and totaled around 10,000 in August 2002 in Kabupaten Ende [cf. Kantor Pertanahan Kabupaten Ende 1996]. On the other hand, there exists more than one hundred administrative villages in Kabupaten Ende, and it can be safely inferred that there are a number of private-property-like

ngebo that came about in each ‘*desa*’ through the “diffusion of crop-ownership” in and after the 1980s.¹³⁾ In that case, numerous private-property-like land parcels came into being while the land registration program was going on, and the number of these amounts to several times the number of registered land-parcels in Kabupaten Ende.

Concluding Remarks

Adat has been conceived as a changeless entity not only in Kabupaten Ende, but in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur generally. During the administration of Soeharto, it was considered the remnant of a past feudal social order that would become extinct in course of time. Since the downfall of the New Order, it has been treated like an endangered species vulnerable to “modernization” and “globalization.” On the other hand, in this article, I have suggested that the present state of *adat* is not “genetically” determined but should be understood as the cumulative effect of the historical processes that central Flores has undergone since the early 20th century. Within the scope of this paper, two historical changes are highly important to understanding the present state of *adat* in central Flores.

The first change derived from the pacification and related to the circumstances surrounding *adat*, rather than to *adat* itself. As previously stated, the pacification undermined the economic foundation of the chiefs. Accordingly, they could not but ask frequently for financial support from their *aji-ana*. Nevertheless, the latter were not always willing to comply with their chief’s request, since the pacification created a new situation in which they did not require a strong chief. The exploitation of *aji-ana* by “feudal” *adat* chiefs was condemned by governmental authorities and local intellectuals during the period of the New Order. I do not deny that there have been chiefs who have repeatedly extorted money and livestock from their *aji-ana*. Nonetheless, such an image of exploitative chieftainship is obviously a product of history after the pacification, because the fittest person prior to pacification was an entrepreneur-like leader who maximized both the efficiency of his limited resources and his return on investment, rather than a merely greedy chief.

The second change originated in the “development” policy that the Soeharto government implemented. As previously stated, chiefs clearly distinguish *maki* from *ngebo*. Nonetheless, I hesitate to state that this is true with *aji-ana*. People do not explicitly deny chiefs’ right to *maki*. Nevertheless, it seems that the difference between *maki* and *ngebo* has become blurred and the

13) Before the boom in ‘*desa*’ fractionation began under the decentralization regulation, there had been 104 administrative villages in Kabupaten Ende. This boom continues, and the number of desa within the regency is probably well over 120.

right to the latter has merged into the right to the former. This is suggested by the fact that the *ngebo* of the head of Lineage Sega and the land parcels of his *aji-ana* are coplanar on the cadastral map drawn by the village headman of Desa X, and more importantly by the fact that agricultural taboos, which *aji-ana* must observe in recognition of chiefs’ causal domination, have been frequently transgressed since the 1990s. If this blurring has in fact taken place, the emergence of quasi-private property through the “diffusion of crop-ownership” has been undermining chiefs’ land-rights more fundamentally than ever before. This inconspicuous and creeping change has potentially a ruinous effect on *adat*, because the chiefs’ land-right based on causal domination comprises the heart of *adat*.

It is unclear what policy should be applied to the present state of *adat* in central Flores. Nevertheless, whatever policy is adopted, I think it would be inevitable to take into consideration the above-mentioned two major changes which *adat* in central Flores has suffered.

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