

**Change and Continuity on the Margins:  
Livelihood Transformation in Rوتا  
Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia**

**by  
Yani Taufik**

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The School of Culture, History and Language (SCHL),  
College of Asia and the Pacific (CAP) for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
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## **Declaration**

Except where otherwise acknowledged, this thesis describes my own research and analysis.

Yani Taufik  
School of Culture, History and Language (SCHL),  
College of Asia and the Pacific (CAP)  
The Australian National University  
2015

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## Abstract

My thesis studies the formation and transformation of livelihoods in the remote Routa sub-district in Indonesia. The findings arise from my experience living with people and engaging in their everyday lives. Through the perspective of households, I show how people diversify their livelihoods, to include forest gathering, swidden farming, staple food cultivation (particularly rice) and cultivating commercial food crops. I discuss the pathways for informal decision making that households use to negotiate inevitable change.

The abundance of forest products attracts people from surrounding areas to migrate into Routa. The migrants, traders and local people all have their roles to play as agents of change on the frontier.

Environmental change indicated by the dwindling availability of forest products, and the inevitable fluctuation of commodity markets have driven the transformation of livelihoods in Routa. Migrants and traders disseminate information about livelihoods to residents. Traders often become patrons of their clients who supply the provisions that enable households to adapt to the gradual transformation of their livelihoods.

Low population density has led to the problem of seasonal labour shortages that to date have prevented people from obtaining sufficient income from any one particular livelihood. As a result, people have to utilise the labour of all household members and invited migrants to overcome labour shortages. To meet everyday needs and income deficiencies, people diversify. A few still maintain their livelihoods as forest gatherers and swidden farmers.

Change is also felt in the coming of the palm oil plantation in Lalomerui village. The palm oil company has introduced a new working culture that few people from Routa who are employed with the company can negotiate. A large multi-national mining company is also offering opportunities for local people. They established local criteria for employment, formed consultative groups and established a micro-finance institution in each village. But the success of pepper as a cash crop makes the presence of both big investments less meaningful in the lives and livelihoods of the local people.

## Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vi
Tables, Maps and Figures	ix
Table of Images	x
Notes on Style	xi
Glossary and Abbreviations	xii
<b>Chapter One – Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
Routa as a frontier	5
Migration in Routa	6
Livelihood theory	8
Livelihood trajectories	14
The nature of transformations	16
Aim of the study and thesis outline	19
The field site	21
Methodology	22
<b>Chapter Two – Creating a destiny on the frontier</b>	<b>25</b>
Introduction	25
Routa in pre-colonial times (prior to 1906)	29
Early migration in the Dutch colonial period (1906-1945)	33
Initial settlements	36
Darul Islam (DI) rebellion (1952-1965)	37
The New Order period (1966-1998)	42
From village to sub-district ( <i>kecamatan</i> )	50
Conclusion	53
<b>Chapter Three – The formation and development of settlements on the margin</b>	<b>55</b>
Introduction	55
Population	59
Settlements	61
Parudongka	66
Tirawonua	68
Routa	70
Walandawe	74
New villages	80
Tanggola	80
Puuwiwirano	83
Lalomerui	83
The villages-in-preparation	85
Kinship and <i>suku</i>	87
Conclusion	89

<b>Chapter Four – Livelihoods on the margins</b>	91
Introduction	91
General overview of people’s livelihoods	92
Assets	93
Staple foods	94
Addressing labour shortages	95
Improving welfare through cash crops	103
Trading activities	106
Patron-client relationships	113
Livelihood strategies	118
Links to the wider world	120
Conclusion	122
<b>Chapter Five – Resources from a frontier forest</b>	123
Introduction	123
Timber licences	126
Timber wholesalers	129
Agents in the timber industry	130
The assets of timber agents and the owner of a sawmill	130
The organisation of timber trading	132
Economic consideration for a logging enterprise	133
The owner of the sawmill	133
Timber agents	135
Timber-fellers (chanisaw operators)	137
Patron-client relationship in the timber industry	138
The sequence of patronage in the frontier timber industry	139
Non-timber industries	140
Dammar resin	140
The location and the ownership of dammar resin trees	141
Harvesting resin	143
Economic considerations of dammar resin	145
The buyers of dammar resin: <i>bos</i>	146
Rattan	147
Eaglewood ( <i>gaharu</i> )	148
Food and medicinal plants	150
Forest as a land resource	151
Conclusion	152
<b>Chapter Six –Social relations in the frontier: Acquiring status honour</b>	153
Introduction	153
Elders ( <i>orang tua</i> ) and <i>puutobu</i>	155
The role of kin	158
Generating social status through patron-client relationships	160
Upward mobility through education	166
Enhanced power through government positions	168
Social status in Rوتا	170



Conclusion	172
<b>Chapter Seven – Transformationson the frontier</b>	173
Introduction	173
Livelihood transformation	176
The palm oil plantation	181
Towards the mining operations	190
The agents of transformation	198
Conclusion	201
<b>Chapter Eight – Conclusion</b>	202
Suku and Migration to the frontier	203
Settlements	204
<i>Suku</i> and Livelihoods	205
Traders and patron-clients	206
Labour	209
Social relations	209
Oil palm plantation and the mining company	210
Livelihoods transformation	211
<b>Bibliography</b>	213
<b>Appendix</b>	223

## Tables

Table 1.	Sub-district growth as a result of <i>pemekaran</i> in three districts	50
Table 2.	List of villages ( <i>desa</i> and <i>kelurahan</i> ) according to number of households in Routa sub-district	57
Table 3.	Households who own livestock in Routa sub-district	105
Table 4.	The calculation of the profit from one cubic metre of timber trading for Kumea ( <i>Manilkaramerrilliana H.J.L.</i> ) from local timber collectors in Routa to wholesaler in Timampu in 2011	137
Table 5.	Population density per km <sup>2</sup> in Sulawesi Island from 1971 - 2010	195
Table 6.	Migration into and out of Sulawesi Island 2005 - 2010	195

## Maps

Map 1.	The location of the field study	1
Map 2.	Mountains and rivers in Routa sub-district	3
Map 3.	The accessibility to and from Routa	27
Map 4.	The influence of polities on the Routa areas	32
Map 5.	The places of origin of residents in Routa sub-district	41
Map 6.	Settlements, tracks and paths in Routa sub-district	63

## Figures

Figure 1.	Invited and independent migration in Routa sub-district	45
Figure 2.	Population growth in Routa from 2007 to 2011	60
Figure 3.	Evolution of the settlements in Routa sub-district	65
Figure 4.	Family influence in Routa sub-district	87
Figure 5.	Seasonal labour requirements for the four main agricultural activities in Routa sub-district (cited in Robinson et al., 2010: 15)	96
Figure 6.	Annual allocation of labour to grow pepper	97
Figure 7.	The sequence of activities undertaken to obtain a timber licence	127
Figure 8.	The organization of a timber business	133
Figure 9.	Net Migration on Sulawesi Island in 2005 and 2010	196

## Table of images

Image 1.	A view of Lake Towuti	5
Image 2.	Victory poles; evidence of head hunting in Routa, 1911 (Grubauer, 1913)	29
Image 3.	Toraja dammar resin gatherer in 1911 (Grubauer, 1913)	35
Image 4.	Wet rice field and an irrigation channel (located in Larumbu, Tirawonua village)	69
Image 5.	Panorama of Walandawe village	75
Image 6.	Hut of a Torajan resident in Leperi hamlet of Walandawe village	77
Image 7.	Ani-ani, traditional knife used for harvesting rice in Walandawe	78
Image 8.	Field hut of Walandawe people during dry rice harvest	77
Image 9.	Tanggola resident with his dry rice yield	82
Image 10.	<i>Afdeling</i> of the palm oil plantation nearby Lalomerui village	84
Image 11.	Traditional communal pestle, optimising child labour to de-husk rice in Lalomerui village	99
Image 12.	Pepper poles and newly-planted vines	101
Image 13.	Women wage labourers as pepper pickers in Routa	102
Image 14.	Cacao disease	104
Image 15.	A women trader, a patron in her kiosk in Routa	116
Image 16.	Timber agents in Routa sub-district	136
Image 17.	Wood in the port of Lengkobale, ready to ship to Timampu	138
Image 18a.	The pathway to a dammar resin concession in Laloulaho Walandawe village	142
Image 18b.	People mark their dammar location by slashing saplings and bushes on the boundary	142
Image 19.	Dammar resin tree, tapping and gathering tools	144
Image 20.	Hard dammar resin in a sack	146
Image 21.	<i>Kalo</i> used in a wedding ceremony	148
Image 22.	A <i>puutobu</i> in Parudongka village	154
Image 23.	<i>Orang tua</i> in Routa	155
Image 24.	<i>Orang tua</i> and <i>Puutobu</i> in Routa	156
Image 25.	The night market in Lalomerui village in September, 2014	179
Image 26.	Oil palm plantation in Lalomerui	188
Image 27.	The palm oil factory in North Konawe regency	189
Image 28.	Digging and drilling employees of mining; most of them are from Routa	191

## Notes on Style

I use single quotation marks when citing any written works and interviews.

I use both Indonesian currency (Rp) and Australian currency (AUD) for the monetary amount with the exchange rate 1 AUD = Rp 10,000.

I write local terms and local languages in italics; similarly, the names of animals, plant and timber appear in italics.

In general Indonesian names and terms are written according to *Ejaan Yang Disempurnakan*, abbreviated EYD or the Perfected Spelling System (PSS), the latest system of Indonesian spelling (1972).

Personal names of living people in the text are pseudonyms.

## Glossary and Abbreviations

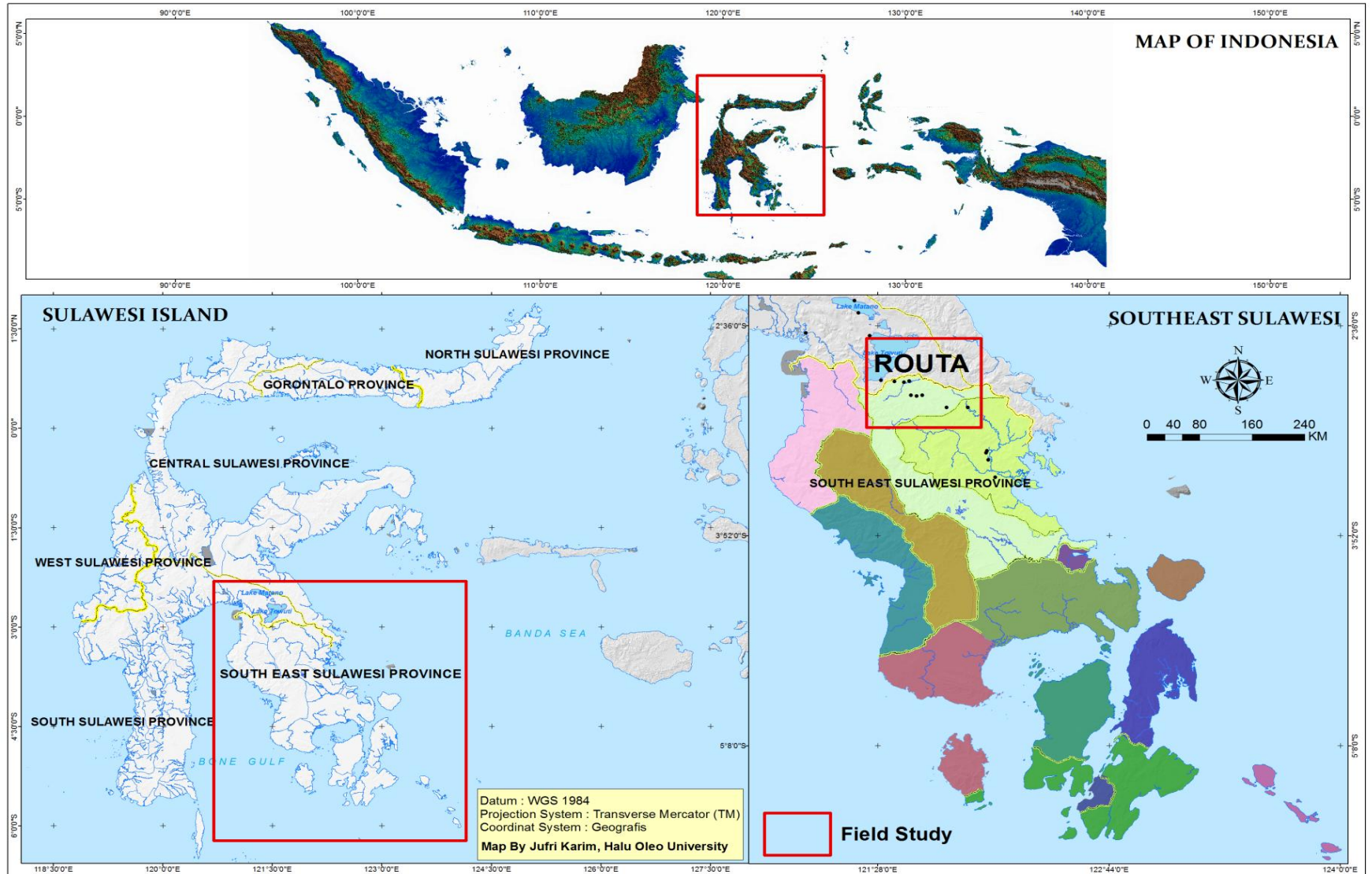
<i>afdeling</i>	: Accommodation provided by the oil palm company for its workers.
<i>ani-ani</i>	: Traditional finger knife used to harvest rice one stalk at a time.
<i>anoa</i>	: Dwarf buffalo only found in Sulawesi Island, Indonesia.
BAPPENAS	: Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional; It is the national development planning agency, located in Jakarta, Indonesia.
BAPPEDA	: Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah. A local development planning agency, located in every province and district.
<i>basu</i>	: A basket made from sago bark, used for gathering and carrying dammar resin.
Bongaya	: A treaty between the Dutch colonial administration and Sultan Hasanuddin from the Goa kingdom to recognise trading rights for the Dutch East India Company. It was signed on 18 November 1667.
<i>bos</i>	: A man or a woman who acts as a patron in a particular village or few villages.
BPD	: Badan Permusyawaratan Desa or Village Consultative Body. An institution to accommodate and channel people's aspirations at village level.
cacao	: A cash crop for a range of cocoa products.
<i>camat</i>	: The head of a sub-district ( <i>kecamatan</i> ). A civil servant, the government administrative leader under the head of district ( <i>bupati</i> ). <i>Camat</i> leads several villages.
CARE	: A non-government organisation which operates worldwide to provide poverty-alleviation programs in developing countries.
CSR	: Corporate Social Responsibility. A government requirement of a company to undertake community development programs.
Danramil	: <b>Komandan Daerah Militer</b> , a military commander domiciled in a sub-district.

DI	: Darul Islam was the name of rebel group which was led by charismatic leader Kahar Muzakkar
DR	: Dana Reboisasi. A levy collected from timber companies for reforestation or forest preservation.
Eid Al-Adha	: Day of sacrifice. An important day in the Islamic calendar to celebrate the pilgrimage of a Moslem to Mecca when they arrive in Padang Arafah.
<i>gaharu</i>	: A valuable resinous aromatic heartwood from <i>Aquilaria</i> species. Also known as agar wood.
<i>gubal gaharu</i>	: The best quality <i>gaharu</i> . The colour is dark.
IPKHH	: Izin Pemanfaatan Kayu Hutan Hak. Types of permits required to process wood from one's own land.
<i>jonga</i>	: Local deer.
<i>kalo</i>	: The symbol of unity for Tolaki— the largest <i>suku</i> in the mainland of Southeast Sulawesi — is made from rattan twisted into a circle.
<i>karung</i>	: A sack made from plastic; it is used for gathering and carrying dammar resin. Currently many dammar resin gatherers use <i>karung</i> instead of <i>basu</i> .
<i>kecamatan</i>	: An administrative area under district or regency level. I use the term sub-district. It consists of several villages.
<i>kelurahan</i>	: An urban village which is the capital of a <i>kecamatan</i> .
<i>lurah</i>	: A civil servant who is head of a <i>kelurahan</i> .
<i>kepala meja</i>	: The head of the team in a sawmill who has specific skills to operate sawmill machinery.
<i>kondektur</i>	: The assistant to a logging truck driver, usually two or three persons per truck.
Ma	: Local title for a women who is married and has children. Generally Ma is followed by the name of her first child in Rوتا.
New Order era	: The name of the period when Indonesia was led by its second president, Soeharto, from 1966-1998.

<i>ojek</i>	: Motorbike taxi. In Rوتا, it is used to take people between villages, particularly from the port of Lengkobale.
<i>orang tua</i>	: A title for people who are older, considered wise, have lived in a particular village for a long time and other residents regard him as meritorious. The term <i>orang tua</i> is also Indonesian for 'parent'.
<i>orang Rوتا</i>	: People who considered themselves Rوتا locals, because their forebears lived there for a long time, or they were born in Rوتا or in the refugee settlements during the Darul Islam rebellion (1952-1965).
<i>padi ladang</i>	: The name of rice produced from a dry field or in an upland field.
<i>pajekka</i>	: Buffalo transportation for hauling timber; the term is originally Toraja language, but is now in general use in Rوتا.
Pa	: Local title for a man who is married and has children. Generally Pa is followed by the name of his first child in Rوتا, as a teknonym.
Pak	: A title used in Indonesia to show respect to a man. The term Pakis usually followed by the name or occupation of the man being addressed or referred to.
<i>patekke</i>	: Buffalo transportation used to carry items other than timber; the term is originally Toraja language, but is now in general use in Rوتا.
PSDH	: Provisi Sumberdaya Hutan, a provision for forest resource/reforestation funds.
PT. Mulya Tani	: The name of the palm oil company now functioning in Lalomerui village.
PT. SCM	: Sulawesi Cahaya Mineral is the name of the mining company which operated in Rوتا, owned by a succession of mining companies: Rio Tinto based in Australia jointly with Cheerit from Canada, but since 2013 owned by Nomadic, from China.
<i>puutobu</i>	: A customary leader in every village; Tolaki language.

rattan	: A forest vine from any of the climbing palms of the genus <i>Calamus</i> or allied genera, often used for furniture and cane work.
Reformation era	: The period from after the New Order era (1999) until the present.
SD	: Sekolah Dasar or elementary school.
SMEA	: Sekolah Menengah Ekonomi Atas, a vocational school focusing on business and economics.
SKSKB	: Surat Keterangan Sahnya Kayu Bulat, the validity certificate for timber from the district forest officer.
SKT	: Surat Keterangan Tanah, a local land certificate, issued by the village head.
SKAU	: Surat Keterangan Asal Usul Kayu, a certificate showing the origin of wood. The village head as a local person of standing has the right to issue this certificate before the timber can be transported.
STM	: Sekolah Teknik Menengah; it is a vocational high school with a focus on engineering.
sub-district	: An administrative region in Indonesia; a subdivision of the district, consisting of villages and <i>kelurahan</i> .
<i>suku</i>	: A socio-cultural group of people who come from similar place of origin, use the same language and have a shared culture.
<i>tambo-tambo</i>	: A tool used to facilitate the flow of resin in a certain direction. It is made from either a sago stem or a pandanus leaf. It is a Tolaki term.
<i>tapparang</i>	: A Toraja term for a small lake.
<i>teo</i>	: The name of a small lake where people in Routa always visit at the end of dry season to catch fish.
Waru	: The local language of Lalomerui people.





Map 1. Location of the field study

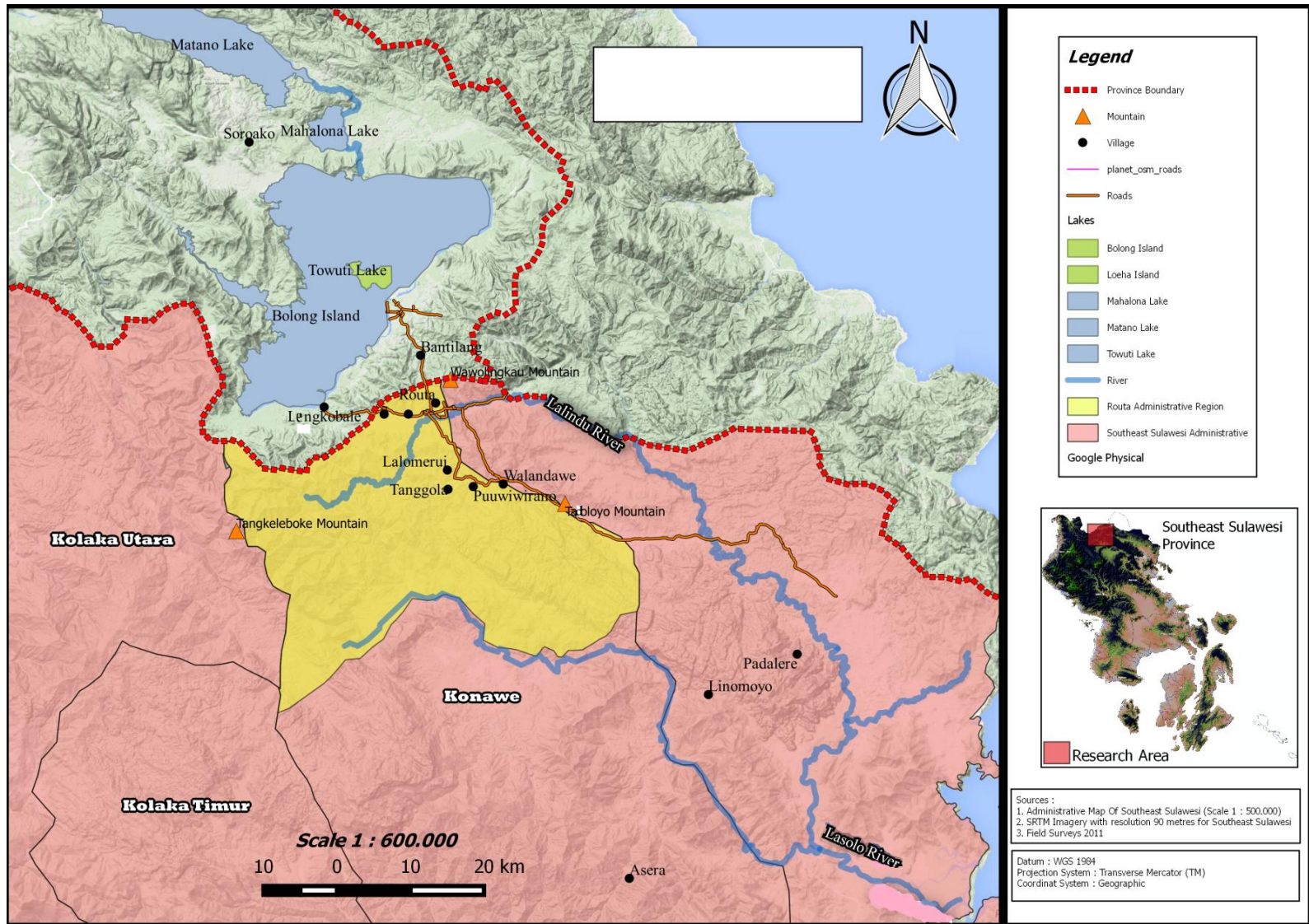
## Chapter One

### Introduction

This thesis describes the pathways and trajectories of livelihood transformation in a remote area, the frontier region of Rota. Immigration, market influences through local traders and the recent arrival of a national oil palm plantation and multi-national investors (a mining company) have affected the pace of livelihood change. Generally, people adapt to the transformation they can envisage, but in the current period development is not proceeding as they imagined; they are finding it challenging to adapt to the changes that are imposed by the large investment companies. The ability of people to transform their livelihoods and adapt to the changing situation highlights the cultural responses that reflect their mindset, skills and flexibility. Rather than relying on either the palm oil or mining company, many people consider the cultivation of pepper has provided them more opportunity to cope with their increasing needs.

Rota sub-district (*kecamatan*) is situated adjacent to Lake Towuti. This sub-district reaches almost to the middle of the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. With an area of 560 km<sup>2</sup>, it is the largest lake on the island and one of five of the Malili lake system. The three major lakes, Matano, Mahalona and Towuti, are large, deep ancient lakes of tectonic origin (von Rintelen et al., 2004: 2541). The Rota region is flanked by the steep jungle-covered mountains of Tangkeleboke, Tadoloyo and Wawolingkau, with heights of between 400m and 900m. The combination of lakes and mountains means that the region is drained by large rivers such as the Lalindu. Even the Lasolo, one of the great rivers that flows in the northern region of Southeast Sulawesi province, is fed from rivers which originate in Rota (see Map 2). This remote and dramatic geography of rugged terrain has created many beautiful small lakes, such as Tapparang Teo, where many people from villages surrounding Rota often go to catch fish at the end of the wet season. On the other hand, the rugged terrain has made the Rota area remote, challenging and difficult to reach with its limited facilities and access.

This thesis explores livelihoods of people in Rota who come from various places of origin bringing different cultures to establish and transform their livelihoods in response to environmental changes, turbulent situations, market fluctuations and development from national and multi-national investments. I begin with the history, particularly



the history of migration to Rوتا, and follow the formation of settlements by displaced and dispersed people, movements which have had both positive and negative effects for the local people. The people of Rوتا have historically suffered dislocation and privation but in the face of adversity and isolation they have developed feelings of togetherness, which have encompassed the various *suku*<sup>1</sup>. They see themselves as one people, *orang Rوتا*.

In the space of a few generations, the people on this frontier have moved from relying on forest products and swidden agriculture to cultivating cash crops, but some, particularly in times of crisis, will rely on forest products, I observed what appears to be a time-honoured and proven strategy to cope with financial difficulties such as harvest failure and unforeseen circumstances. I found that the transformation of livelihoods is inevitable. The coming of migrants both as farmers and traders has brought information, influenced the creation of new livelihoods and connected people to external markets. Traders establish mutually beneficial relationships with residents through patron-client relationships. I also pay attention to the rise in social status of people who most often were commoners in their places of origin.

Although households have found that, these days, pepper can generate a fairly high income, labour shortages prevent them from achieving reliable incomes from this cash crop alone. Most households diversify their livelihoods in order to have reliable incomes to meet the rising cost of living, to provide for increasing expectations for consumer products and to help their children secure an improved standard of living through better education.

People in this frontier can follow and adapt to the gradual changes initiated by traders. Although the mining company has recruited some young people in Rوتا, they only occupy very low positions as menial workers. Large foreign-owned companies have work cultures which are entirely foreign to the lifestyle that has stood the locals in good stead for generations; there is little cultural interface between the local culture of people in Rوتا and large investment companies, whether national or multi-national. This may be rendered irrelevant by the pepper boom, at least in the short term. However, both the palm oil and mining company have improved roads to and within the Rوتا area.

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<sup>1</sup> *Suku* defines a socio-cultural group of people who use the same language, have similar culture and come from a similar place of origin.



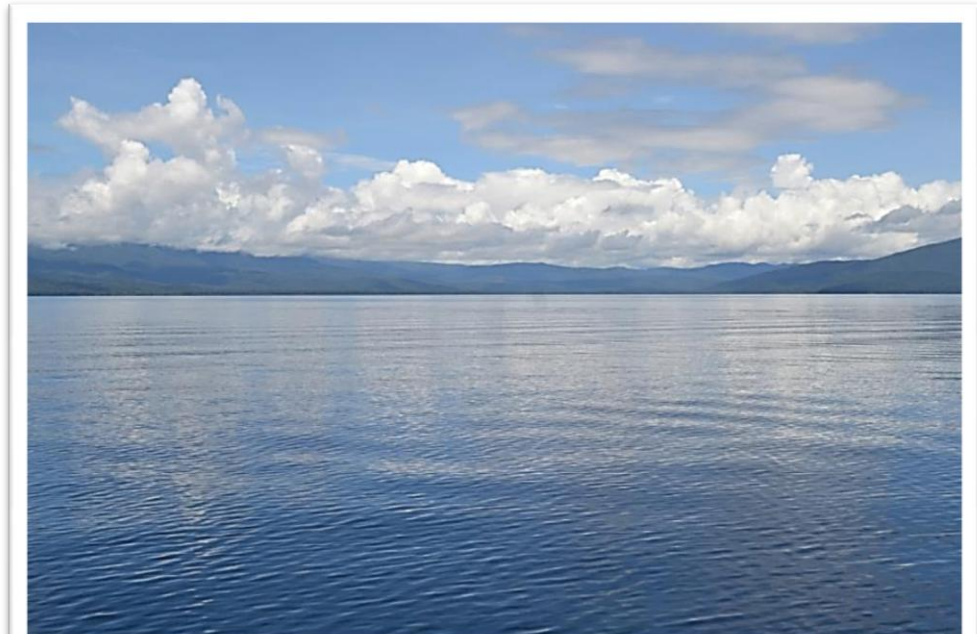


Image 1. **A view of Lake Towuti**

### **Routa as a frontier**

Frontier men are the entrepreneurs on the margins of development. For them, distinctions between legal and illegal, public and private, disciplined and wild are blurred and productive (after Tsing, 2003: 5100-5106). They are focused on their desired outcome. The frontier then appears to roll with its own momentum. It is the place where possibility becomes reality. While these pioneers of development may operate on the margins, they do not see themselves as marginalized. For this reason, the terms 'frontier' and 'margins' are used interchangeably.

At the end of the 19th century, Turner describes the frontier as 'the meeting point between savagery and civilization (Turner, 1894 cited in Tsing, 2003: 5102). Development in the Routa area has been complex. The focus on this frontier has evolved from tribal war (headhunting) of people in inland Sulawesi to become a place where natural resources (dammar resin and other forest products) were paramount as well as a rebel hideout of Darul Islam led by Kahar Muzakkar between 1950s and the middle of 1960s (discussed in Chapter Two). Although Routa had a stigma as being a place of a former insurrection, the abundance of unexploited land and the low man-land ratio provided opportunity for people and capitalism to migrate. In recent times, the national (oil palm plantation) and the multi-national company (mining) are drawn to the abundance of

resources in this frontier. Barbier (2012: 110) claimed that 'nowadays, frontier expansion involves not just land and agriculture but also other natural resources, such as minerals and extractive activities'.

Almond and Coleman (1960, cited in Nielsen and Johnston, 1966: 279-301) examined the inter-dependence between the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors during the course of economic growth in developing economies in Africa and Asia. They found that agricultural development must be viewed as a part of modernization encompassing widespread literacy and access to education, considerable geographical and social mobility, an extensive network of transport and communications, a comparatively high degree of urbanization and widespread participation by members of the society in modern economic processes, characterized by extensive use of capital and inanimate energy. Similarly, Welch (2006: 35) revealed that the agrarian transformation in Brazil was affected by globalization which led to the loss of millions of farm livelihoods. This has explained the rise of the autonomous peasant movement in the late twentieth century and describes the recent development of a polemic between a peasant vision of expanded family farming and the agricultural capitalist model, promoted by powerful agribusiness interests. Development in Routa has followed the similar path. There, people are gradually engaging in the consumption of an array of goods and services other than food stuffs which have become important social markers of success.

### **Migration in Routa**

Rigg (2007: 120-126) highlights the strong connection between migration and livelihoods: 'It [migration] may be propelled by poverty, and encouraged by wealth; it may reflect scarcities at the local level, or be an outcome of prosperity ... it may help to support agricultural production; or it may be a means to break away from farming altogether' (Rigg, 2007: 126). Furthermore, McDowell and de Haan (1997: 3) have emphasised migration as one of three important variables influencing sustainable livelihoods; other factors are agricultural intensification and livelihood diversification. According to them, there are several reasons why people might move from their places of origin, including a decline in the productivity of their farm, decreasing acreage of land, inequalities (social and economic), declining terms of trade between farm and non-farm, increasing needs, or improvement of infrastructure such as roads and cheaper transport. Generally, people migrate from rural areas to an urban centre or from economic periphery to core (Hugo,

2002a: 67; de Haan, 2007: 3; Kelly, 2011: 479-506). People usually migrate from areas with an abundance of labour but a scarcity of capital to areas where the converse applies, namely plentiful capital but scarce labour. If land can be considered an important form of capital, this explanation can be readily applied in Rounta where people have moved to increase or improve their landholdings.

In Rounta a discussion of migration cannot be separated from a discussion of history. Historically, there have been many reasons which have predisposed people to migrate. Dutch colonial rule, internal wars, climate change, varying demands and patterns of regional and world trade (Robinson, 1986: 72-73; Li, 2002: 427; Acciaoli, 1989: v) are factors that influenced migration in the archipelago.

In the beginning of this thesis, I explore the movement of people from rural areas to one even more remote than their place of origin. Historically, Rounta has been a migration destination for the Bugis and Toraja and people from other parts of South Sulawesi province. Some maintain good relationships with relatives in their places of origin, occasionally returning for family rituals such as funeral and nuptials<sup>2</sup>.

Migrants to Rounta from areas of southern Sulawesi are predominantly Bugis. The main motivation for many Bugis to migrate is the desire to improve their status, so they seek their fortunes far from home and return to display their success to family and friends. Lineton (1975: 173-201) explains that many of the characteristics considered most admirable in the Bugis personality — bravery, acumen in business and a spirit of adventure— provided the motivation for the Bugis to become migrants or wanderers (*pasompe*).

The Bugis engage in two kinds of population mobility, namely sojourning, *palaolisu* or *laolisu* which refers to temporary movements, and permanent migration, *mallekke dapureng* (Abustam, 1989: 186-188). Bugis migrants have penetrated many regions in the archipelago where they often dominate local economies and have an important role in the social order (Ammarell, 2002: 51).

The importance of the Bugis in trade activities in Sulawesi began with trade in iron used in armaments and for agricultural tools in the 16<sup>th</sup> century particularly in Luwu. The boundary of the East Luwu district is only a few kilometres from Rounta. Bugis were also actively engaged in the collection and trade of jungle products such as rattan and

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<sup>2</sup> As my informants in several villages told me.

dammar resin (tapped from *dipterocarpus* trees) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Robinson, 1986: 65). The (dammar) resin trade was stimulated by world market demand. The Dutch were eager to benefit from the boom, however the remote area around Luwu, nominally part of the Netherland East Indies, was outside the orbit of Dutch control at that time. This situation encouraged coastal sultanates, especially Luwu, Bungku and Ternate, to become active in trying to control the dammar trade; as well, the Chinese played an important role in dammar trading (Robinson et al, 2010: 11-12).

Besides the Bugis and Toraja, there are also Tolaki who settled in Routa and today they constitute the largest cultural-linguistic group. Tolaki originally came from Lasolo and Asera (North Konawe regency) and from Latoma (Konawe regency) in Southeast Sulawesi province. They consider their forebears as the first inhabitants of Routa. Except for land obtained by clearing the forest, many Bugis and Toraja bought land in this region from Tolaki; the names of old villages such as Puuwiwirano, Walandawe, Tirawonua and Routa are in the Tolaki language. Some Tolaki told me that prior to 1955 there was a polity called Wiwirano; the centre of this polity was located where Puuwiwirano village is now. Many Tolaki believe that the territory of Wiwirano polity covered most of the present Routa area.

Although migration continues in Routa, it occurs gradually and the population size remains low. Seasonal labour shortages are the main issue working against agricultural expansion in Routa. Many households rely on extended family and friends to handle labour shortage problems. They then attract followers and the immigrants become closely linked to the pioneers (and their descendants) through patronage, as well as marriage. Some of the invited and independent migrants choose to move permanently to Routa. Most of these migrants take up land; a few of them diversify to become traders and contribute to the growing economic and social activities in this remote place. They also contribute to the proliferation of settlements in the Routa area.

### **Livelihood theory**

In the last two decades, government policy in many countries, particularly in Asia and Africa, has used an approach of improving livelihoods as a tool for the alleviation of poverty. Generally, the purpose of what is termed as 'the livelihood approach' is to improve capability and resilience by optimising people's assets in order to reduce vulnerability and enhance wellbeing. As defined by Chambers and Conway, a livelihood is



sustainable when 'it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance ... capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base' (1991: 1). This definition has been taken up by other scholars such as Rakodi (1999: 316), Krantz (2001: 1), Haan and Zoomers (2005: 31), Hussein and Nelson (1998: 3), Scoones (2009: 5), and institutions that have been using the livelihood approach in addressing poverty such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), Department for International Development (DFID) and scholars associated with the International Development Studies (IDS).

The concept of livelihoods is considered very important in efforts to overcome poverty, vulnerability and marginalisation, factors which are interrelated (Krantz, 2001: 1). Thus poverty alleviation may be considered a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the achievement of sustainable livelihoods. Chambers (1995: 173) acknowledges that poverty is more than simply low income or limited consumption, so its alleviation includes how to enable poor people to take control over their assets to establish livelihoods and to generate sustainable production and income while maintaining environmental sustainability. Scoones (2009: 172) maintains that people have a variety of ways to live with intricate activities and interactions. Differences in environments, cultures and assets result in different pathways, trajectories and outcomes of their livelihoods (Scoones, 2009: 172). People who live near forest areas will rely on forests to construe their livelihoods. Generally their assets are concerned with collecting forest products and they clear land to cultivate staple foods and cash crops as their main livelihoods. According to Scoones, people tend to move from relying solely on natural resources to a livelihood based on a range of assets, so in order to theorise, scholars and institutions emphasise the importance of taking into account the range and combination of people's assets. This will be well illustrated in Routa in following chapters.

DFID (1999: 1) in their livelihood 'guidance sheet' (a collection of ideas) maintains that the assets of a livelihood can be classified into five types of capital: human, natural, financial, physical and social. Connected to that categorisation, Bebbington (1999: 2022) declares that assets are a vehicle that can facilitate empowerment and change people's lives. If people have more information and skills, own land and have financial assets and other resources, they will find it easier to establish profitable livelihoods. Furthermore, Bebbington (1999) sees that assets not only serve as sustenance for human life, but 'also give meaning to the person's world'. According to Bebbington, assets can take on

meaning according to a person's perspective. Someone who values money will construe assets in financial terms. Someone else may see assets as simply providing security. There are those who give respect to someone who has more assets than they do and some enjoy the higher status that assets may confer.

Scoones (1998: 7-8) has a slightly different classification of assets (capital), identifying four different types of capital: natural, economic, human and social. Rakodi (1999: 316) asserts that assets can make up a stock of capital which can be stored, collected, exchanged and used to produce income or another advantage. Both Scoones and Rakodi argue that the core of livelihood is the way people combine the range of assets they possess in order to enhance life and ensure survival. Ellis (2000: 3-4) takes a related approach, emphasising the importance of access to assets in order to maintain livelihoods. He divides assets into five categories: human knowledge, natural resources, social capital, physical resources and financial capital.

Knowledge is important to determine the best combination of each of the assets that people own in order to achieve optimal livelihood outcomes. McCulloch et al., (2007: 46) assert that education is important for exiting poverty, for two reasons. First, people who have a good education will have greater opportunity to reach high levels of productivity; generally, educated people have more information or know where and how to obtain information. Second, better education enhances the likelihood of accessing alternative pathways; people who are more courageous and creative will look outside the usual roles and channels in order to diversify their livelihoods. Exploring local innovation and sharing knowledge with the poor by using a range of channels is an important strategy of development agencies of the people themselves to enhance capabilities (DFID, 2000; Rakodi, 1999; Ellis, 1998).

In terms of human assets in Routa, households rely on their experience and that of others rather than formal education. Their lives include the knowledge about collecting forest products for food, medicine and commercial use as well as knowledge about farming from their forebears. Most of Routa's residents also obtain knowledge and skills from migrants and people who live close by, as well as from traders who have access to up-to-date information from further afield.

Natural resources including land, water and other environmental services are pivotal not only for improving the welfare of households but also for determining community resilience in the face of changing circumstances (Rakodi, 1999: 316). The main

assets people have in Routa are natural assets such as forests (timber, resin, eaglewood<sup>3</sup> and rattan), rivers (sources of water to support agricultural activities, everyday life and to produce electricity) and land (for houses, agricultural fields and grazing land). People in this area have always relied on natural resources for their livelihood, however the dwindling pristine jungle areas by the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century has motivated people to rely on cash crops.

The ownership of natural resources has also determined the status of residents in Routa. Pelzer (1971: 152) states that there is a correlation between social stratification and the amount of assets owned, particularly with a natural resource such as land. However, Hart (1986: 19-24) claims that the distribution of resources in a community cannot be simply elaborated by the kinds and levels of social structure. In Routa, status is not only about the assets or resources that someone possesses, but it reflects social honour and kinship relationships. People have earned respect because they have been pivotal in the establishment of Routa. They generally have large extended family spread across many villages.

Social networking and connection, membership of a formalised group and relationships of trust, reciprocity and exchange are all embodiments of social capital, which can help to facilitate the sharing of knowledge (Ellis, 2000: 299). Social relations encompass 'gender, family, kin, class, caste, ethnicity, and belief systems', whereas, institutions encompass the rules that govern people's lives and that can determine the ways people access assets (Ellis, 2000: 299). Social relations and institutions can help an individual or household to access assets in order to fulfil needs. According to Hill (2000: 195), social improvement gives effect to social cohesion and harmony. Social assets, such as friends and tight kinship connections, are prominent and important in Routa. Sometimes, a social asset is more important than physical assets in Routa, particularly for poor people (the elderly and widows) who often receive succour from friends or relatives. The relationship between patrons and their clients on many occasions not only covers trading activities but also extends to social support.

Physical resources such as infrastructure availability are significant for supporting livelihood sustainability. According to Ellis (Ellis & Freeman, 2005: 31, 104), the construction of rural roads can reduce the cost of all types of spatial transaction, including

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<sup>3</sup> A valuable resinous aromatic heartwood from the *Aquilaria* species. It is also called *gaharu*, *aloewood* and *agarwood*.

labour, inputs, outputs and consumer markets. Roads, rail and telecommunications are a part of physical capital that can help people to obtain information and open new opportunities. The lack of physical capital hampers people's ability to use a sufficient and appropriate input and reach market opportunities (Rakodi, 1999: 316-317). Basic physical capital includes road access and electricity supply, which can enable people to improve their livelihood. Easy access and other infrastructure, such as markets, will reduce production costs (McCulloch et al., 2007: 35).

Physical assets are very limited in Routa. When I first began research in 2011 there was no road, only logging tracks; electricity generated from private suppliers (*genset*) was only available in a few villages. Micro-hydro generation is only in Tirawonua village, and supply is limited only to the hours of darkness, 6pm–6am. There is no formal market and no formal financial institution. It is interesting to see how people in this remote area negotiate challenges of all kinds to secure their livelihoods.

Financial capital is a multi-purpose asset. It can be directly converted to other types of capital. However, 'there are desirable outcomes that may not be achievable through the medium of money' (see DFID, 2000: 16). The lack of formal credit facilities is widely known as a barrier to productive investment (Ellis & Freeman, 2005: 87). Many micro and small enterprises need credit to enhance their businesses, but the complexity of bank regulations in Indonesia has hampered their access to credit (World Bank, 2006: 1-2).

The absence of a formal financial institution in Routa means that cash circulation is very low. Most of the people there rely on traders (who usually they call '*bos*') for their daily and agricultural needs, including cash if necessary. No formal financial institutions make it difficult for farmers when managing income. At harvest time, there is nowhere for them to save any excess revenue. By contrast, at times when no crops can be harvested, farmers look for an alternative survival strategy; they have only one option to obtain cash from a patron. The patron-client economy thrives and many farmers (clients) become indebted to their patrons but the clients have few options. It often happens that people borrow money from traders in advance of collecting dammar resin so they have to render their entire dammar yield to the traders at what would be considered quite a low price.

The lack of sufficient income provides motivation to diversify livelihoods (Ellis, 2000: 296) but in Routa the limited opportunity has also reduced their chance to try new things, even though the prospective rate of profit is apparently high. Several people I met encourage their household members to undertake off-farm labour, maybe as wage

labourers in the timber industry (sawmill), on farms of wealthy people (many workers are women), or working as drivers of logging trucks.

Generally people increase their use of resources, diversify and use small-scale economic strategies in order to cope with difficult circumstances and to enhance their resilience or prosperity. Ellis (2000: 1) defines livelihood diversification as 'the process by which rural households construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities in order to maintain or improve their ability to make a living'. Although many of the people of Rوتا sub-district have cash crops as their main livelihood, in order to spread the risk they do not rely solely on one livelihood strategy. This is particularly so for those who are just beginning to establish their cash crops (pepper farms).

In addition to the types of assets mentioned above, vulnerability (such as drought, pest attack and crop disease), structures (role of government or private sectors), and processes (institutional, policy and cultural factors) jointly determine people's capability to access assets and livelihoods (Haan & Zoomers, 2005: 29). Thus the ability to access assets determines the outcomes that can be obtained through various types of livelihoods.

The ability to implement livelihood strategies depends on the range of assets owned, human capabilities, the social-economic situation and environmental circumstances. As a way of enhancing resilience, people in developing countries (Asia and Africa) tend to diversify rather than specialise in any one particular livelihood. This diversification is derived from various considerations, such as accumulation of assets and investments, spreading risks and coping with crises (Hussein & Nelson, 1998: 10-14). Baiquni (2008: 101-104) emphasises that a livelihood strategy is the link between capabilities (pattern of resource use), assets (ownership and access to resources), activities (efforts to fulfil basic needs), environmental conditions, technological developments and social dynamics.

The strategy that a household is able to choose varies over time depending on circumstances. Working across Indonesia, Baiquni (2008: 101-105) found that livelihood strategies can be categorised into three types, namely survival, consolidation and accumulation. Survival strategies tend to be undertaken by the poor who have inadequate assets, while consolidation strategies tend to be undertaken by households that have sufficient assets to meet subsistence needs and their social status is higher than households that undertake survival strategies. Households that commit to accumulation

strategies have plentiful assets and are more prosperous than others. In a similar vein, Carswell (2000: 3-5) states that there are three aims of livelihood strategies: coping, adaptation and accumulation. Poor people who are struggling to survive tend to employ coping and adaptation, while better-off households are more likely to accumulate.

Households or communities have different experiences and trajectories to cope with changing situations or to improve wellbeing. Each household attempts to avoid vulnerable situations (shock and stress) and tries to improve resilience. Choices made by a household in order to manage unpredictable circumstances may be the investment of assets, the substitution of one asset for another and the sale of assets (Rakodi, 1999: 318-320). In addition, Rakodi (1999: 320-322) explains that there are other strategies implemented by poor households, such as intensifying the use of natural, physical or human capital, diversification of economic activities, borrowing, seeking charity and reducing consumption. Carswell (2000: 3-5) identifies a range of diversification activities including trade, unskilled wage labour, cultivating, herding, artisanship, handicrafts, forest products, service provision, fishing, rental income and migration. All forms of investing which are designed to improve livelihood prospects can be regarded as a household's asset strategy (Ellis, 2000: 296).

### **Livelihood trajectories**

Households in Routa gradually convert their livelihoods from relying on forest products and swidden farming to permanent sedentary farming, both for staple foods and commercial crops. The transformation is influenced by environmental changes (dwindling forest) and market influences (fluctuation in demand and price).

The area surrounding Luwu (including Routa) has long been known as a region with an abundance of resin (used in the manufacture of paints and varnishes). The world market stimulated the resin trade which attracted many people, particularly Toraja and Bugis, who have been coming to the region surrounding Routa since around 1906 (Robinson, 1986: 70; Sanusi Dg Mattata, 1967: 14).

Rigg (2007: 35) proposes 'identifying and understanding livelihood pathways rather than livelihoods per se'. This thesis describes the livelihood pathways and the evolution of people's livelihoods from gathering forest products and engaging in shifting cultivation to becoming sedentary farmers (see also Pelzer, 1948). Some shifting cultivation practices are still undertaken in Routa, such as slashing and burning for land clearing. This practice

requires less labour so it is a strategy for overcoming labour shortages. I will be looking at the trajectories of livelihoods, how and why people in the frontier region of Routa move from one to another, but some people still preserve their previous ways to establish their livelihoods.

Labour shortage is most evident at times of labour intensity. People use simple fencing (using bark) to protect fields against wild pigs. Before harvesting, particularly rice, they must guard their crops; this is undertaken by men during the hours of darkness, women during the hours of daylight and children after school. This organisation is labour intensive; people optimise the production per unit of labour rather than per unit of land.

The agricultural economy in Routa is not entirely a subsistence one disconnected from market forces. These swidden agriculturalists, in addition to planting their subsistence food crops, typically plant market-oriented cash crops as well, and as a result they are more integrated into a wider economy (see also Dove, 1983: 88).

Toward the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the demand and price of forest products such as dammar resin and rattan decreased significantly. Almost at the same time, market demand and price of cash crops such as cacao, cloves and pepper increased. Li (2002: 415-417), in her research in upland Sulawesi, argues that in recent times the supply of forest products such as rattan and timber has been progressively decreasing in most of upland Central Sulawesi. Drought, which often increased the likelihood of pest attacks, has encouraged people in upland Sulawesi to find alternative crops. A similar phenomenon is also occurring in Routa; logging has reduced the stands of dammar trees. Although gathering forest resin for sale is still important for some as a source of income, these days people in Routa are also planting cash crops.

Although residents have tried to cultivate cloves and pepper, cacao was the most successful crop and became the mainstay of farmers in Routa from the mid-1980s until the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There was a general move into cash-crop cultivation, which meant that households spent less time harvesting the forest and more time in their established cacao plantations.

From around 2008, fungal disease decimated most of the cacao crop in Routa, which compelled many farmers to find another cash crop. Based on the success of farmers cultivating pepper on the shores of Towuti Lake and information from traders, farmers in Routa began cultivating pepper again in around 2008 and achieved success. However, the labour shortage problem prevents them expanding their pepper farms.

Despite the high price for pepper, small acreages mean that many of them are still diversifying livelihoods to meet subsistence needs.

In 2005, expansion of the oil palm plantation reached Rوتا through Lalomerui village and the news of a forthcoming mining operation also provided hope of a new livelihood alternative. However, residents in nearby Lalomerui thought that they were not able to adapt to the rules of work in the oil palm plantation, so most of them refused to work there. Payment for the menial jobs was considered very low, and insufficient for subsistence for such a time commitment which would preclude maintaining their farms. Hence, the palm oil company brought in migrant workers.

In 2011, when a mining company began recruiting for exploration teams to explore the nickel deposit in Rوتا, a different situation prevailed. Even though people could only take up low-skilled work such as assistants to geologists as diggers and drillers, the pay scales were more attractive than those offered for menial work by the palm oil company. Whilst the company has been trying to provide every chance for local people to join their workforce, inclusion is not always possible. The skill level of people in Rوتا is considered low because they do not have paper qualifications, and experience alone is not valued. The company does give opportunities for local traders and residents to be their partners in supplying goods and services.

The coming of these two big investments has influenced the improvement of access (tracks) to Rوتا, which has increased mobility of people, so it is easier to market cash crops. Hence people have easier access to up-to-date information about a range of livelihood opportunities. The metamorphosis of people's livelihoods in Rوتا has changed the kind of assets that people want to accumulate. Many households now prefer to buy a logging truck rather than water buffalo, a motorcycle rather than a hand tractor, a TV rather than agricultural tools. The improvement of access has encouraged more traders to come to the region and offer rice cookers, water purifiers and other goods that are quite new.

### **The nature of transformations**

Theoretically and empirically, agricultural transition is always associated with agents of change that can either come from outside (exogenous) or internally (endogenous) (Grogan et al., 2012: 78). A change in agriculture is rarely associated with a single factor, but change in population is allegedly one of the prime movers of change (De Koninck and



Dery, 1997: 1; Turner et al., 1977: 384; Svensson, 2006: 387). It is often essentially coupled with reduced availability of natural resources and/or the introduction of new technologies (Turner et al., 1977: 384). Connection to 'external markets offering opportunity beyond the basic lifestyle is, however, resulting in subsistence being rapidly replaced by a more cash-driven or income-oriented economy' (Grogan et al., 2012: 87).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the global market for dammar resin was booming, traders had already contributed to the formation of the Routa economy. Traders supply information to encourage change and they pioneer new things and provide examples of change. As the market in dammar resin has declined, traders have encouraged people to move into the timber and rattan trades. When the market demand for cash crops increased at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, traders encouraged people to cultivate cacao. Traders provide seeds and other agricultural inputs, as well as acting as buyers and connecting people to the markets. The longstanding relationship then grows into a strong patron-client relationship and traders provide not only tangible goods for agricultural activity and everyday needs, but also intangible goods such as up-to-date information, and even act as leaders in religious affairs.

It is a common phenomenon that areas were formerly dominated by swidden cultivation in Southeast Asia are now rapidly being transformed into other land uses (Mertz et al., 2009: 259). We can see this process occurring in Routa, and patron-client relationships are important in this transformation, especially in the absence of a financial institution providing capital or the government providing information. The transformation instigated by traders allows local households to preserve their traditional livelihood as subsistence farmers while also gradually moving to cultivating cash crops.

The palm oil company started their activities in 2005 in Lalomerui village; they converted a huge area of forest there to become an expanse of monoculture, 4,000 ha over five years. Rather than becoming wage labourers in the plantation, all households have just been waiting for the profit-sharing in accordance with the agreement between the households and the palm oil company. While waiting for this unknown bounty, households continue to perform their livelihoods as forest gatherers and subsistence farmers. This will be elaborated in a subsequent chapter.

Before starting their activities, the multi-national mining company undertook strategies that differ from those of the national palm oil company. They carried out a social base-line study to understand the nature of the local economy and culture

(Robinson et al., 2010). They then consulted with local people in each village in order to find a mechanism that would allow them to prioritise local people as employees or suppliers and to recruit employees in a transparent manner. When I completed my research in 2012, a few local people were participating directly in the mining activities as drivers, drillers and diggers (the lowest positions as a mining employee). As well as suppliers, local traders can provide staple goods and local transportation (motorcycle taxis called *ojek* and water buffalo).

The mining company has designed a long-term project to provide children in Routa with good education so they can in time take up better positions in the company; scholarship programs and vocational training are included. However, it will take a long time for many households to directly benefit from the activities of the mining company. As an alternative strategy to win the hearts and minds of the local people, the mining company has tried to empower people in their current livelihoods (Robinson et al., 2010).

The mining company prepared a program to increase productivity of cash crops. They also identified alternative livelihoods, such as new cash crops, fish ponds and the production of organic fertiliser. The mining company also assisted in the formation of a micro-finance institution in every village, which will give farmers an alternative place to save their money.

The appearance of the two big investments in this remote place has become a new magnet for migrants to come to Routa, not only from surrounding areas but also across the Indonesian archipelago and even beyond. The expansion of palm oil in parallel with the mining operation will contribute to significant change in Routa economic structures and infrastructure. The presence of those big companies will eventually provide easier access to Routa.

These developments also point to opportunities for creating a range of new livelihood alternatives for people, including for well-established residents of Routa. On the other hand, the new migrants with various backgrounds and interests will generate a feeling of competition for locals who would like to be recruited as employees and suppliers for the mining activities. Competition for land acquisition and other natural resources may also arise. Conflicts concerning land arose in nearby Sorowako between local people and the mining company. Mining officials' prevented farmers from cultivating land that, although still part of the public domain, bordered the townsite' (Robinson, 1986: 177). 'Road construction and early mining excavation led to the destruction of

some irrigation channels. The farmers complained about crop failure, in some cases from lack of water, and in others, because the water was fouled with silt' (Robinson, 1986: 178).

A range of negative impacts has occurred in many Indonesian mining locations; instances of general social disorder in the community, introduction of diseases, escalated demand and prices for local resources, increased cost of living, pollution of the local water supply, annexation of traditional areas for hunting and fishing and increases in socially undesirable activities, such as prostitution and gambling, have been reported (Esteves, 2008: 41).

### **Aim of the study and thesis outline**

This thesis outlines the change and development of livelihoods in Routa, a sub-district on the frontier region of Southeast Sulawesi, which has been designated as a location for a multi-national mining company. I combine the historical and the contemporary to collect information concerning changes from the beginning of the formation of their livelihoods in Routa. This is a critical and pivotal period in the transformation of Routa.

My research is an extension of the social base-line survey conducted by the ANU which was supported by Rio Tinto (Robinson et al., 2010); I study households in Routa sub-district to gain a comprehensive picture of the contemporary economic situation before mining began. I focus on observing people from various *suku* (cultural groups) who have migrated to Routa and combined a range of assets and activities to construct their livelihoods to enhance their prosperity. I raise questions regarding:

- 1) the motivations of various *suku* who migrated;
- 2) the way each *suku* establishes settlements and forms livelihoods;
- 3) the factors that influence people to transform their livelihoods;
- 4) the agents of transformation.

This thesis consists of eight chapters which describe and analyse the dynamics of livelihoods in a remote place, Routa. In less than four generations, the people of Routa have transformed their livelihoods from being forest gatherers to becoming sedentary farmers, growing staple and cash crops, adapting to environmental changes as well as market demands. In Chapter Two, I elaborate the migration of people into this frontier zone. I found that there has been a range of motivations over time. In contemporary times, people move to this frontier to find land to establish cash crops; many of them

escape impoverishment because they are landless in their places of origin. They follow their family and friends as migrants, seeking improved livelihoods.

In Chapter Three, I discuss the formation of settlements in Routa. I found that limited government intervention in this remote place has motivated people to take their own initiative in making settlements. The formation of settlements is based on people clustering with members of the same *suku*. Some new settlements, such as Tanggola and Puuwiwirano, are located in even more remote places, which have implications for their response to transformation. People in the remote settlements or villages (*desa*) continue to cultivate cacao, while people in the older villages have recently moved to cultivating pepper.

Chapter Four clarifies the formation of contemporary livelihoods of people in the midst of labour shortages. I propose four strategies that people typically undertake to reduce the adverse effects of labour shortage:

- (1) they optimise labour of household members;
- (2) they rely on friends and/or relatives to help in times of peak labour requirements;
- (3) they establish cash crop areas little by little;
- (4) they live as close as possible to their farms.

A few of them still use the strategy of swidden agriculture as a stepping stone to expand their commercial farming, through clearing secondary forest and subsequently establishing cash crops in the fields after several years of rice production.

Chapter Five examines the contemporary role of the forest. I found that forest products, notably timber, remain the mainstay for a few people who have a sawmill and people who deal with timber trading to earn significant income. Although many people have moved from relying solely on forest products to cultivating cash crops, in certain villages (Lalomerui and Walandawe) people continue to combine their livelihood strategies with a reliance on forest products, particularly dammar resin. Others, especially in Routa village, use the forest products as a form of insurance to address a situation of unforeseen need.

Chapter Six describes the formation of a local pattern of social stratification. Although migrants were commoners in their places of origins, some have been able to achieve economic success, and hence high social status. This success then allows many of them to acquire followers who rely on them for many of their needs. In terms of the

development of social stratification, people acknowledge those whom they regard as having made a large contribution to the formation of Rوتا. I suggest that 'honoured status' in this frontier is fluid and mutable; although it can be entrenched, it is not fixed like inherited status. It must be earned and requires effort to maintain.

I suggest that the vast majority of the residents are originally farmers, however some entrepreneurial farmers become small traders, exporting products from Rوتا to outside markets and importing basic needs. Over time, they then expand to become traders and patrons. Patrons act as money-lenders (informal financial institutions) to accommodate the absence of a formal financial institution.

Chapter Seven elucidates the livelihood trajectories of people, the diversification of livelihoods and livelihood transformations. All people diversify their livelihoods with different motivations. Some diversify to meet their subsistence and additional needs, others diversify to accumulate assets and expand their livelihoods. The presence of the oil palm plantation and the mining company appears to have provided livelihood alternatives to people in Rوتا, however only a few local people can be incorporated into these new activities and in very low positions.

In the conclusion, I address the complexity of livelihood adaptation; it is as much a function of the pace of change as a function of its direction. Livelihood transformation has always been a feature of life in Rوتا. The locus of control of the transformation is the new difference.

### **The field site**

I chose to deal with livelihoods of people in Rوتا considering my professional background as an agricultural economist. I also consider it advantageous and relevant that I had two and a half years' experience working with a non-government organisation (NGO) CARE International Indonesia, where I was a facilitator for people who live in remote places in Lombok Island of West Nusatenggara province and Buton district of Southeast Sulawesi province to undertake a dry land farming system.

Rوتا is located in a remote corner of the frontier of three provinces of Southeast, South and Central Sulawesi. Government attention is very limited there, which makes development in this place lag far behind that of other places in Southeast Sulawesi province.

When I stayed in a hotel in Makassar, South Sulawesi, on September in 2011, I was surprised because an employee of the hotel suddenly asked me about a new mining location close to Sorowako. Although he did not know the place, he mentioned that it is on the shore of Towuti Lake. I was sure that the place he meant was Rota. The news of mining activities had spread not only within Rota area but to people in Kendari (the capital of Southeast Sulawesi province) and Makassar (the capital of South Sulawesi province) who started to find out more about Rota when it was ignored before.

### **Methodology**

I arrived in Kendari in August 2011 and I enrolled my son in the local school in Kendari. I was ready to begin my field work after completing my research permit. I collected data during my field work from August 2011 until October 2012. I took time off from staying in Kendari between November 2011 until January 2012 because my daughter, Natasya Mutia Widyaningrum, passed away in November 2011.

Since I had never travelled into Rota before and I understood there were several routes to reach Rota from Kendari, I took time to meet family and friends and mining company members who gave me information on how to reach Rota. Even though at that time (August), it was nearing the dry season, it was still raining in Rota.

For my first trip to Rota, I decided to fly from Kendari to Makassar (the capital of South Sulawesi province) and to continue the journey by bus to Timampu, a port on Lake Towuti, which took about 14 hours. This was longer than other routes to Rota from Kendari; however it is the most efficient, although it does require about 20 hours on various forms of transport. Basically, all trips to Rota from Kendari have their own challenges. Later, I tried other ways of travelling to Rota from Kendari, through North Konawe and North Kolaka regencies. From my own travel experiences back and forth, from Kendari to Rota by plane, bus, motorbike and when necessary walking, and very often staying overnight in villages between Kendari to Rota, I gleaned much information regarding how people travel and migrate into Rota, as well as a better understanding of the cycle of information.

I began with the tasks of understanding the process of migration into Rota through the history of the surrounding areas and Rota itself. I combined my research with the narratives of local people as my informants. Subsequently I continued to follow how the migrants spread into every village in Rota and to construct their livelihoods.

From the base-line research already undertaken by ANU (Robinson et al., 2010), I knew that the population in Routa consisted of migrants from three provinces: South, Southeast and Central Sulawesi. In the first three months of my field work, I concentrated on researching the populations who live in the four main villages, Parudongka, Tirawonua, Routa and Walandawe. I started to gather information concerning the kinship of Tolaki people who reside in Routa, Walandawe and Lalomerui villages. I traced the Tolaki kinship not only through Tolaki who reside in Routa, but I also went to meet Tolaki people who had moved away from Routa, such as the former head of Routa who led Routa for more than 30 years. I undertook the same method to gather information concerning the kinship networks of Bugis and Toraja people who mostly live in Tirawonua and Parudongka. I also went to Tanggola and Puuwiwirano villages to collect information regarding the kinship of other Bugis and Toraja who came at different times and from different places of origin.

Information was gathered regarding people's livelihoods through engaging in their everyday lives over a period of 12 months and becoming involved in farm activities, both planting and harvesting rice, harvesting pepper and cacao. Forest gathering activities were traced by staying with people who engage in forest gathering and having in-depth conversations with them.

Almost every night I connected with people through playing cards (dominoes), which provided an opportunity to chat with people. Besides interviewing some people in every village, I also became involved in social activities and the daily lives of people in every village, including the activities of Indonesian Independence Day in August 2011. A dam cleaning project for the micro-hydro plant in Routa village provided an opportunity for social engagement, as did preparation for Eid Al-Adha in Routa, Parudongka and Tirawonua villages. I visited people at their farms and was involved in cultivating and harvesting wet rice (*padi sawah*) and dry rice (*padi ladang*), as well as harvesting pepper and cacao.

In order to collect data concerning the oil palm plantation, which started activities in Lalomerui village in 2005, I often travelled to Routa through this village and stayed for a few days and took the time to stay overnight in the oil palm plantation camps. From my experience travelling and staying both in Lalomerui village and in the oil palm plantation

*afdeling*,<sup>4</sup> I gathered information regarding the history of the oil palm plantation, the labourers and their place of origin, and the relationship between residents in Lalomerui and the palm oil company and its workers.

In order to understand how people overcome the limitation of transportation facilities, I stayed in the two most remote villages, Tanggola and Puuwiwirano, travelling to these villages by motorbike, combined with walking in both dry and wet seasons. I also picked up more information regarding livelihood strategies; how to overcome the limitations of supplies of their everyday and agriculture needs when establishing their farm enterprises, how to deal with labour shortage problems and how they undertake livelihood diversification.

I had discussions with traders in Routa and Timampu in order to understand the patron-client institutions and the ways Routa connected to markets. I had intensive discussions with some timber traders who have mills in Routa sub-district. I went to the jungle to meet some timber fellers and dammar gatherers.

During my field work, I travelled back and forth to Kendari and on those occasions, I also met and interviewed the community leaders from Routa who were living outside Routa, in North Konawe, Konawe and Kendari, such as a former head of Routa sub-district. I visited the statistical bureau, regional planning board (BAPPEDA) at the provincial and district levels, and the forestry agency both at the district and provincial levels in order to collect data from government.

During my field work, the mining company which at that time had started their operations, invited me to participate in group discussions with people in each village. I used these occasions to talk with people regarding their migration history, livelihoods and other activities in Routa.

The field work, although often fraught with challenges both predictable and unexpected, was always full of surprises and social support. It was 12 months of life-changing experiences.

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<sup>4</sup> *Afdeling* is accommodation provided by the oil palm company for its workers. *Afdeling* is originally a Dutch term to describe a larger government jurisdiction, now commonly used to divide areas in many plantations in Indonesia.



## Chapter Two

### Creating destiny on the frontier

#### Introduction

My impression of Routa as isolated has prevailed since I first visited in September 2011. Not many people know how to get there. Whenever I made enquiries, people warned me of the difficulties of transportation. Each of the three possible ways have their respective challenges.

The first route requires riding in a four-wheel drive vehicle or on a motorcycle from Kendari through North Konawe. The roads are good for the first three hours, some 30km after Wanggudu, the capital of North Konawe district (see Map 3); the rest of the way is just a dirt track toward Lalomerui village. There are several rivers without bridges; one of them is over the Wataraki River just before you reach Lalomerui village. Motorbikes and vehicles use a raft to cross this river. The worst conditions are from Lalomerui to Routa. Despite the fact that it is only some 35km, it usually takes four hours or longer to negotiate in the wet season.

The second route is by four-wheel drive or motorcycle from Kendari through Kolaka district via North Kolaka and its district capital, Karebbe (on the border with South Sulawesi province), to Timampu, crossing Lake Towuti on a simple barge to Lengkobale and then to Routa by motorcycle taxi or logging truck. If you wish to take your vehicle from Timampu, it is possible but expensive and fraught with danger when putting the vehicle on or getting it off the barge. Another challenge on this route is the distance involved, more than 700km with about 20km of a steep and winding road before you reach Karebbe.

The third possibility is to fly from Kendari to Makassar and then take a bus from Makassar to Timampu, a journey of 14–15 hours, without a change of driver. The challenge is the seemingly endless journey on steep and narrow winding roads from Makassar to Timampu in a vehicle without seatbelts. Many traffic accidents have affected buses on this route because drivers prefer to travel at night when they have the advantage of headlights to warn them of oncoming vehicles.

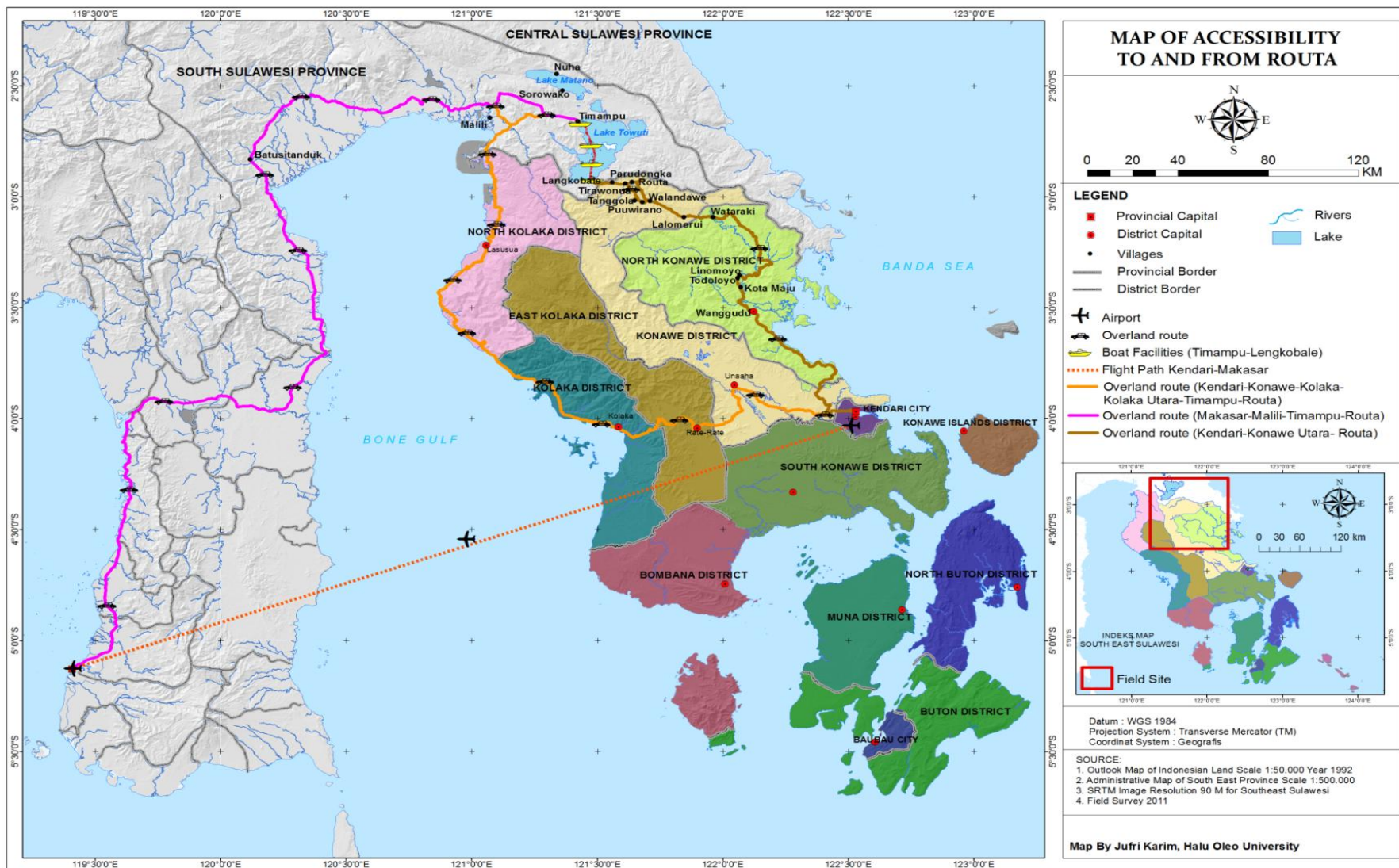
All these choices have their distinct disadvantages. I made my first choice because I was travelling with someone who I knew and trusted; he had travelled to Routa before. I flew from Kendari to Makassar and continued by bus from Makassar to Wawondula, then

took local transport (mini-buses called *pete-pete* or *angkot*) to the port of Timampu. This route did little to alleviate my anxiety, especially when I witnessed the result of a tragic accident near Palopo (between Makassar and Wawondula) around 3 o'clock in the morning.

All this cemented my impression of the remoteness of Routa, not necessarily in terms of direct distance from Kendari (around 200km), but as isolated and insulated because of terrain and difficult access. My friend who had experienced travelling there over the previous two years reminded me to buy staple foods such as rice, instant noodles, chicken and fish in Timampu. He said that although some of those items were available in Routa, they were very expensive. People in Timampu said that even though Indonesia proclaimed independence in 1945, or more than a half century ago, the Routa area still does not enjoy the fruits of development.

The story of Routa cannot be separated from its location, at the frontier between three provinces, South, Central and Southeast Sulawesi. Kopytoff (1987, cited in Ammarell, 2002: 52) explains the characteristics of a frontier as 'permissive rather than determinant'. Rather than creating a type of society and culture, it 'provides an institutional vacuum for the unfolding of social processes' (Ammarel, 2002: 52). Furthermore, frontiers are defined both socially and politically by the communities from which the frontiersmen originate (Ammarel, 2002: 52). This is also the case in Routa. In this chapter, I narrate the history of migration into Routa, its frontier characteristics and its formation from the pre-colonial era until the present. The transformative power of migration has been pivotal in the development of this remote area.

Routa appeared to be ungoverned and ungovernable in the pre-colonial era but little information has been recorded regarding its situation from the pre-colonial until the colonial era. Although the Dutch laid claim to Sulawesi in 1667, marked by the Bongaya treaty, they managed to reach as far as the highlands of the interior of Central Sulawesi only in 1906 (Robinson, 1986: 61-65; Aragon, 1996: 43-48 and 2000; Schrauwens, 1991: 190-193; George, 1991: 537-539). In this highland area of Sulawesi, before 1906 can be considered the pre-colonial period, headhunting and tribal wars preceded reciprocal peaceful relations between the people on the coast and those of upland Central Sulawesi (Robinson, 1986: 61; Aragon, 1996: 43-48; George, 1991: 537-539; Pelras, 2006: 111-125; Li, 2010: 42).



Map 3. Accessibility to and from Ruta

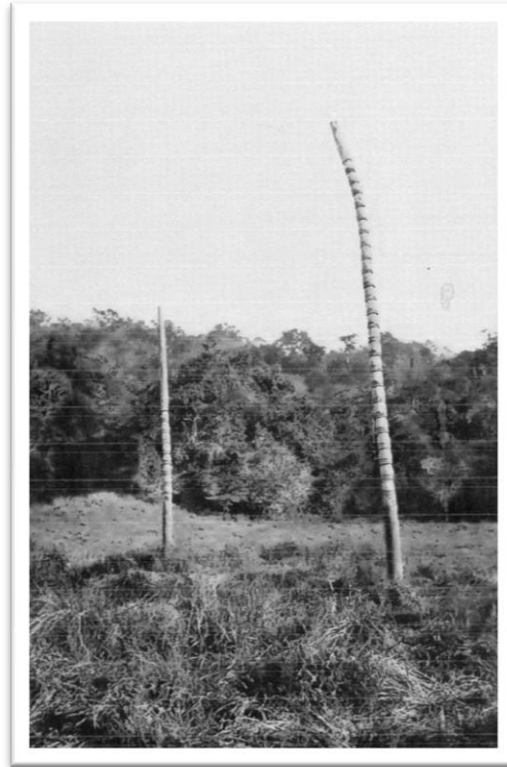
Because of the dearth of written records in pre-colonial times, the turbulent nature of the headhunting practices and endemic tribal warfare, it is difficult to know who ruled where and when prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The rugged terrain and the steep mountains meant many chiefdoms were tenuously connected to their central rulers, particularly on the steep mountainous areas in the interior of Central Sulawesi (Volkman & Caldwell, 1990: 12; Li, 2001: 42). The lack of control allowed those chiefs a considerable degree of autonomy. Robinson (1986: 61-62) writes about the domain of Matano that covered the area around Lakes Matano and Towuti. She notes that the ruler of Matano, Mokole Matano, was a vassal of the Datu (ruler) of Luwu, at least in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although these chiefdoms no longer formally exist, it is probable that at times Rوتا was in their orbit.

There were powerful polities in the areas around Lake Matano and Towuti which included those of the Luwu, Mori and Bungku. The petty rulers surrounding Rوتا frequently changed their allegiance following the rise and fall of those polities. Tambiah (2013: 503-534) and Tannembaum (1993: 45-59) proposed the term 'galactic polity' to describe the relations between the central and subordinate rulers in Southeast Asia regions. They maintained that territorial jurisdiction was not defined by permanent boundaries but reflected a fluidity or flexibility of boundary depending on the relative diminishing or increasing power of the centre. It seems that a similar situation took place in Rوتا. In keeping with the idea of galactic polity, to feel secure the people in Rوتا have tended to follow the star which shone brightest. The ability to adapt to many changes may be a legacy of their forebears. This legacy perhaps then influences the ability of people in contemporary Rوتا to adapt and to transform their livelihoods. According to the history told to me by the local people, during pre-colonial times, people in Rوتا were under the influence of the Bungku Sultanate around the 1500s but in the colonial period since 1906, their allegiance changed to the chief of Nuha district, a descendant of the Luwu monarch and the Mokole Matano appointed by the Dutch.

Frontier places are regions of contrasts; on the one hand a frontier is a centre of contestation with no clear political authority, on the other it is a cradle of original social and cultural solutions or a place of peaceful interactions (Naum, 2010: 102). In the institutional vacuum noted above, new institutions may form. This is so in Rوتا.

### **Routa in pre-colonial times**

Because there is little recorded history regarding Routa prior to 1906, I have taken the available written sources that provide illumination on events in the region around Routa, and augmented them with oral history from the people themselves.



**Image 2. Victory poles; evidence of headhunting in Routa, 1911 (Grubauer, 1913)**

According to oral history, headhunting was practiced in Routa. A frontier can be a hot war zone (Naum, 2010: 102). Information from Pak Ansar, a former village head of Routa, revealed that headhunting was carried out between Routa people and the Padoe, a group who lived across Towuti Lake. He told me that the name Routa<sup>5</sup> means ‘the debt of a head’. Grubauer (1913: 148-149) encountered two ‘victory poles’ (Image 2) located in a field not far from Wiwirano which displayed a number of heads collected by successful warriors from Routa. From other studies in Sulawesi, we know that headhunting was a feature of inland (To Bela)<sup>6</sup> and coastal relations (Robinson, 1986: 61-67; Aragon, 1996: 47-48; Li, 2001: 45-47; Schrauwers, 1991: 1892-1995).

Even though the Dutch government had not officially reached the interior of Sulawesi, the Dutch had begun taking an interest in metals and mining in their colonies. In 1878, the Dutch universities of Leiden, Utrecht and Groningen began teaching geology.

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Ro’ means *head* and ‘uta’ means *debt* in the Routa language

<sup>6</sup> To Bela is a Bugis term to describe the inland people.

This coincided with the greatly increased interest in the study of geology by the Dutch East Indies (Honig & Verdoon, 1945: 320-335). The Netherland Society and the Netherland Bible group had first settled the frontier of Central Sulawesi as a new mission field in 1890. Albert C. Kruyt, a Dutch missionary, had been in place east of Lake Poso from 1891 (Aragon, 1996: 47). The Dutch placed other missionaries, such as Professor P.D. Chantepie de la Saussaye and Nicolaus Adriani, in the interior of Central Sulawesi, in order to begin to incorporate this remote area into the Netherland East Indies (NEI). The interactions of those missionaries with the local people accelerated mutually beneficial relationships and gradually reduced headhunting practices (Schrauwers, 1991: 51).

Relationships between inland and coastal people developed from fighting to trading, but such a transformation was not achieved without bloodshed, as evidenced by the victory poles photographed by Grubauer. Survival eventually became a matter of trading rather than the taking of heads. People from the inland produced rattan, dammar resin and fragrant woods, while people on the coast produced tortoise shell, dried and salted fish as well as copra. Some of the products were exported to other islands, while others were traded among themselves. Aragon (1996: 47-48) expressed the reciprocal relationship in terms of exchanges between inland rulers and their lowland overlords in the interior of Central Sulawesi.

Before the Dutch colonial period, Luwu's economy was supported by products coming from the interior and iron tools from the area around Lake Matano, at least from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century (Bulbeck & Caldwell, 2000: 9; Robinson, 1986: 61-63). The area surrounding Lake Towuti was renowned for a wide range of activities including ore smelting, blacksmithing and the making of agricultural implements (Robinson, 1986: 57 & 113). Increasing trade from the sultanates of Luwu and Ternate (Maluku) also increased the interaction between inland and coastal people. Because iron was such an important material for the manufacture of weapons, it encouraged polities in southern Sulawesi and as far to the east as Ternate to struggle for control of the natural resources in the more remote areas of the interior of Sulawesi (see Map 4).

The Bongaya treaty, which was signed on 18 November 1667 between the Dutch and Sultan Hasanuddin (the Sultan of the Goa kingdom), acknowledged the authority of the Dutch in the territory of the Goa kingdom, however many areas in the highlands of Central Sulawesi were difficult to reach and were considered an uninhabited frontier (Pelras, 2006: 166). For this reason, many petty rulers of minor principalities in the

interior highlands of Central Sulawesi were able to maintain control over their territories. Robinson (1986: 69) states that after the signing of Bongaya treaty, the connection between the Dutch and indigenous rulers remained 'ambiguous, complicated by continued jockeying for power among themselves'.

In mainland Celebes (now Sulawesi)<sup>7</sup>, there were strong local polities (sultanates) on the northern coast of the Gulf of Bone. Luwu, the cradle of Bugis civilisation, was one of the most powerful (Mattulada, 1998: 91). According to Schrauwers (1997: 356), the ruler of Luwu, established trade relations with the sultanate of Ternate in the Moluccas to the east and Malaka (Malaysia) in the west. The influence of the Ternate sultanate reached the areas of Luwuk and Banggai (in Central Sulawesi), north-east of Lake Matano and To Bungku<sup>8</sup> which became a centre for trade in iron machetes and other iron tools to Ternate (Pelras, 2006: 123 and 132).

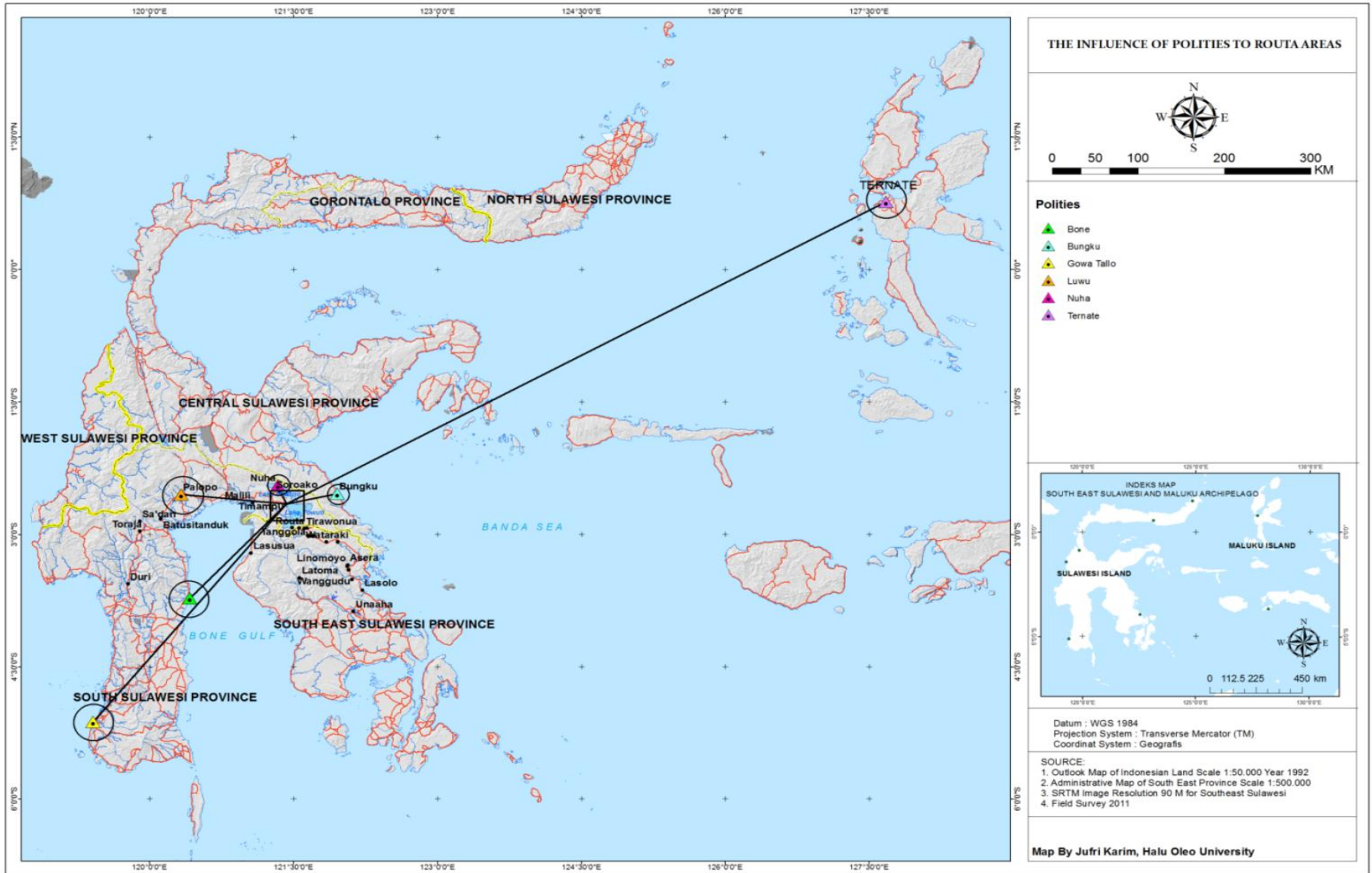
There were two routes for the iron to be traded out of Lake Matano, one through Bungku to Ternate, another through Malili under the control of Luwu. De Klerck (1938, cited in Robinson, 1986: 69) also asserts that the central part of Sulawesi (Bungku and Mori) was under the rule of Ternate. From around the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the mainland of South and Southeast Sulawesi to the interior of Central Sulawesi became a zone contested by Luwu and Ternate to control a variety of products such as bark cloth, gold, iron and even slaves (Pelras, 2006: 143; Schrauwers, 1997: 156). The traded goods such as iron tools and other forest products were carried overland. Towuti Lake is connected to Bone Gulf through the Larona River (Vailant, Haffner & Cristescu, 2011: 635-636).

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<sup>7</sup> The Portuguese were the first to refer to Sulawesi as 'Celebes'. The meaning is unclear; originally it did not refer to the entire island, as the Portuguese thought Sulawesi was an archipelago. The modern name 'Sulawesi' possibly comes from the words *sula* (island) and *besi* (iron) and may refer to the historical export of iron from the rich Lake Matano iron deposits (Watusseke, 1974).

<sup>8</sup> The small state of To Bungku was situated on the east coast of Celebes and was bordered to the west and south by the small states of Luwu and Kendari. It stretches down along the coast from Togong Teong as far as Cape Nipa-Nipah at the southern-most point. A deep bay forms the northern-most coastal area, which in many writings is called the Gulf of Tomori, but is locally known as Teluk Tomaiki (de Clercq 1890: 135, in Taylor & Richards, 1999: 94).





Map 4. The influence of polities on the Routa areas



Prior to 1906, people moved in and out of the surrounding polities to the Rوتا area to exploit the natural resources. The rugged terrain and the remoteness made people in this area more opportunistic than reliant on a single polity (see Map 4), and they tended to rely on what they already knew. People from southern Sulawesi tended to recognise the rulers from Matano or Luwu, while people originally from Bungku tended to rely on the ruler in Bungku. Contemporary *suku* (kindred) ties influenced people in Rوتا, a situation that continues today.

### **Early migration in the Dutch colonial period (1906-1945)**

The Dutch who finally assumed power over the interior of Sulawesi in about 1906 banned the practice of headhunting and the carrying of weapons (Robinson, 1986: 73; Aragon, 1996: 48; Pelras, 2006: 324; de Jong, 2009: 266). It is likely that, as in other former headhunting areas in Indonesia, the relationships between warring groups over time became the basis of exchange, alliance and trade between them (Hoskins 1989, cited in George, 1991: 538). In addition, Robinson (1986: 73) states that headhunting and warfare were connected with customary religious practices which brought peace and stability to the region.

Around 1908, when the Dutch civil administration was established in Luwu and they had appointed the Luwu noble as District Chief (Kepala Distrik) in Matano (Robinson, 1986: 72), they then imposed a tax (to be paid in cash) which stimulated the extraction of forest products (Robinson, 1986: 71-72). Only people who had paid their tax could go freely down to the market in the lowlands (coast). Those who refused to pay attracted the risk of 'harassment' if they visited the coast (Li, 2010: 53).

The obligation of paying taxes in cash imposed by the Dutch colonisers on mainland Sulawesi, including the areas around Lake Matano and Towuti, posed a problem for cash-poor villagers. Many of the inland people moved further into the jungle in order to collect forest products because their only source of cash was payment for the collection of rattan and dammar resin (Robinson, 1986: 73). This tax requirement forced men to spend much time away from their villages. Some people also sought to escape Dutch imposition and resided permanently in the remote hinterland in places such as Rوتا. Scott (2009: ix) emphasises that people on the frontier are often fugitives, fleeing the oppression of taxes, epidemics and warfare.

During the colonial period in Southeast Asia there was plenty of land (Scott, 1998, cited in Ammarel, 2002: 53). People felt free to move anywhere and therefore, 'the power of state was predicated largely on the control of population rather than territory'. It was a general policy of the Dutch regime to resettle people to more easily maintain control. The people who lived in the mountains surrounding Sorowako were relocated in order for them reside closer to the new roads in Wasuponda, Wawondula and Sorowako (Robinson, 1986: 73). This was the beginning of government control on the frontier.

As well as keeping the obligation of paying tax at bay, many people came to the remote area to accumulate funds for a dowry or to meet other expenses (Li, 2001: 54). From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many people from the highlands such as the Toraja moved to the sparsely populated lowlands because of the networks of trade in arms, coffee and slaves with the Bugis ruling elites in Luwu and Enrekang. Trade increased in the highlands of Sulawesi (Bigalke, 1981, cited in de Jong, 2009: 262). The movement of the Toraja people into the area surrounding Malili was encouraged by their predilection for gambling (Waterson, 2000: 67) — Toraja people, unable to pay gambling debts, ultimately sold themselves, or their whole families, into slavery. Moreover, Sanusi Dg Mattata (1967) recalled that when his father returned from Toraja, he brought two slaves to Malili as a present from a Toraja nobleman. Grubauer (1913: 14 & 109-110) notes that when he travelled by boat from Palopo to Malili on 2 September 1911, there were hundreds of Torajan immigrants in the boat seeking to collect dammar resin around Towuti Lake. Between 13 and 14 September 1911, he found Toraja who were dammar resin tappers in the same area. Grubauer reached Routa on 14 September 1911, during his journey of Timampu-Loeha-Tokolimbu-Routa around the lake. He explained that the arrival of many Toraja at that time was probably related to the cessation of slavery in the Toraja region, as many former slaves then left Tana Toraja to seek a better life outside Toraja area. Grubauer supposed that people from Toraja had already come into Routa to participate in the resin trade before he visited (Grubauer, 1913: 467, cited in Robinson et al., 2010: 12).

The Toraja and Bugis people told me that in the Dutch colonial era, their forebears collected dammar resin from the forest around Routa and transported it using buffalo '*patekke*'<sup>9</sup> to Lengkobale on Lake Towuti. They sold the dammar resin to Bugis traders

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<sup>9</sup> Buffalo transportation used for items other than timber is known as *patekke*, whereas buffalo transportation for timber is *pajekka*. Although both *patekke* and *pajekka* are now in common usage in

there. The Bugis traders then marketed dammar resin to wholesalers in Timampu or the Chinese in Malili.

Dammar resin was a material for 'decorative and protective purposes' for wood in a severe climate. Mantell (1935: 1371) writes that natural dammar resin from Sulawesi is produced from *Agathis Alba*, and *Dipterocarpaceae*. Over the period 1926-1934, the United States (US) ordered about 38,000,000 lb of natural resin annually from all over the world (Barry, 1932, cited in Mantell, 1935: 1371). The price was considered high at that time. In the Malili district, 200,000 trees were tapped under NEI government supervision (Mantell, 1935: 1371).



Image 3. Toraja dammar resin gatherer in 1911 (Grubauer, 1913)

The strength of the resin trade at that time attracted more and more people from Toraja and Palopo. They moved into the area surrounding Towuti Lake to seek dammar resin, causing many newcomers to move progressively deeper into the forest. Later dammar collectors (Buginese and Torajan) established another place of transit in Lengkobale around the 1920s (Robinson et al., 2010: 44).

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Routa, according to my informants, the terms are originally Toraja language because Toraja was the first *suku* to use buffalo to transport dammar resin.

The Bugis and Luwu traders have long been engaged in trade activities in the area surrounding Routa (Timampu), principally as wholesalers and middlemen (Grubauer, 1913: 467, cited in Robinson et al., 2010: 12). People in Routa told me that in the heyday<sup>10</sup> of dammar resin collection there were Bugis traders who resided in the port of Lengkobale<sup>11</sup>. Based on the information related by people in Routa, together with several references, it is likely that migration into Routa started in the Dutch colonial era with the heyday of dammar resin and the decline of inter-communal warfare.

### **Initial settlements**

In the Dutch colonial era, there were only a few temporary settlements set up by forest dwellers in the area that is now Routa sub-district. According to Grubauer (1913: 111-153), there were only two settlements in the region at that time, Routa and Wiwirano<sup>12</sup>. However, some Routa residents (the Tolambatu<sup>13</sup>) had moved to establish a new settlement on the eastern side of Lake Towuti known as Tokolimbu (probably now Bantilang village or a village named Lambatu, located 1.1 km from Bantilang, see Map 2). When Grubauer arrived in Routa (now Tirawonua), he found only 12 houses. He continued his journey through the forest to Wiwirano settlement, where he found burial caves on the sides of the mountains. According to the Tolaki people now living in Walandawe village, Wiwirano was originally located on the current site of Puuwirano<sup>14</sup> village. Later, in the 1920s and 1930s, people of Wiwirano were displaced to the east, to a location now known as Walandawe village (Robinson et al., 2010: 67).

Some Bugis traders in Tirawonua and Toraja in Parudongka told me that their forebears had come to Routa during the Dutch colonial period. Some elderly people in Tirawonua, Parudongka and Routa said that the port of Lengkobale had been frequented by Bugis traders who bought dammar resin and other forest products from Routa. They also established warehouses and kiosks there. A Toraja elder who resides in Parudongka told me that the father of a well-known merchant from Tirawonua had been working as a

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<sup>10</sup> They did not mention the exact time, but probably around the 1920s as Robinson (Robinson et al., 2010) explains.

<sup>11</sup> The port on the shore of Towuti Lake where people from Routa take the boats to cross to Timampu.

<sup>12</sup> Many Tolaki groups in Routa and Walandawe villages told me that Walandawe and Puuwirano villages were formerly called Wiwirano. Currently Wiwirano is the name of a sub-district under North Konawe district. It is located on the boundary between Routa sub-district and North Konawe district.

<sup>13</sup> *To* means people, the term 'people' is used to describe their identity group.

<sup>14</sup> In Tolaki language 'puu' means trunk or it can mean the beginning, origin and foundation (Austronesian Comparative Dictionary [http://www.trussel2.com/acd/acd-s\\_p.htm#29870](http://www.trussel2.com/acd/acd-s_p.htm#29870)).

warehouse keeper for a rich Bugis merchant in Lengkobale before the Japanese invasion in the Second World War. Most of his relatives then moved further away from the lake and established settlements in areas around contemporary Parudongka and Tirawonua villages. Furthermore, he revealed that his forebears from Toraja not only resided in Routa but also in other settlements located near Towuti Lake such as Bantilang, Loeha Island, Tokolimbu and Lake Mahalona. From the above, it can be seen that the initial wave of migration from southern Sulawesi to Routa occurred during the Dutch colonial period.

In the colonial era, the southeast Sulawesi region was administered as part of South Sulawesi province, called *afdeling* Buton-Laiwui, with the government centre located in Bau-Bau (now the capital of Buton district on the island of Buton). *Afdeling* (district) Buton-Laiwui consisted of three *onder-afdeling* (sub-districts); *onder-afdeling* Buton, Muna and Laiwui. *Onder-afdeling* Kolaka at that time still fell under *afdeling* Luwu. Kolaka officially became a part of Southeast Sulawesi province based on Government Regulation Number 29, 1959 after independence.

The development of settlements and their infrastructure, such as tracks and the formation of local government, was initiated by the communities of the different groups who migrated to this frontier. People relied on kinship ties and preserved good relationships with those from their places of origin. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was almost no government intervention from the Dutch in the Routa area.

### **Darul Islam (DI) rebellion (1952-1965)**

Indonesia proclaimed independence on 17 August 1945, yet political turmoil persisted until Soeharto took over authority from Soekarno in 1966. The turbulent situation in South and Southeast Sulawesi was associated with the insurrection of the Darul Islam (DI) rebellion which sought the establishment of a new republic as an Islamic state. Kahar Muzakkar, a military figure in Sulawesi who had joined the battle in Java against Dutch colonial forces in order to fight for Indonesian independence (1945-1949), was disappointed that the Indonesian army would not include the independence fighters (Van Dijk, cited in Pelras, 2006: 334-335). From 1952, Kahar proclaimed a coalition with Kartosuwiryo in West Java who also wanted to establish Indonesia as an Islamic state

(DI)<sup>15</sup>. Harvey (cited in Robinson 1986: 84) puts forward the view that 'the exclusion of the freedom fighters of Sulawesi from the new professional army of the republic' raised 'general fears of Javanese domination'. Furthermore, Robinson (1986: 84) explains that rivalry at the national level between Islamic groups and the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI)) and 'the conflict between Java and Outer Islands' also drove the DI rebellion.

Juhannis (2006: 304) provides a different view, as he emphasises that a more text-based form of Islam was the central tenet of the DI movement. Kahar and his followers were keen to enforce a textually based interpretation of Islamic law (*shariah*). During the period of 1962-1965, Kahar and his limited number of followers sought refuge in the jungles of what is now South and Southeast Sulawesi (including in the Rounta area). They established control in remote places such as Rounta, using them as their bases and avoiding the Indonesian National Army (Tentara Nasional Indonesia/ TNI).

The rugged mountains and the remote situation on the frontier made Rounta an ideal refuge and a place for DI rebels to establish their Islamic government, as recounted by people in Rounta. The worst period for many people in Rounta was between the mid-1950s and 1965 when guerrilla warfare was raging. At different times some were displaced to the Southeast Sulawesi region, and others to southern Sulawesi. Almost all settlements (*kampung*) were burnt to the ground either by the DI troops or by the Indonesian army.

The DI rebellion forced many Bugis, Toraja, Tolaki and others who lived in the hinterland of Sulawesi to become adherents and followers. Juhannis (2006: 50) states that the main bases of DI were Luwu, Bone and Duri, while support bases were located in Makassar, Pare-pare and southeastern Sulawesi. Many people from the regions fled the DI troops, abandoning their places of origin. Hugo (2006: 78) states that many people from South Sulawesi were 'forced to affiliate as Kahar Muzakkar followers (guerrillas) or otherwise move outside the region (*merantau*)'. Scott (2009: ix) comments that people in southeast Asia generally fleeing conscription hid on the frontier. Some elderly Bugis, Toraja and Tolaki people in Parudongka, Tirawonua, and Rounta told me that many of their forebears were forced to join Kahar Muzakkar as guerrillas. Those who did not affiliate with the DI rebellion chose to disperse outside Rounta, to places like Tadoloyo village (now

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<sup>15</sup> DI also well known as DI/TII is abbreviation of Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia (Darul Islam/Indonesian Islamic Army).

under North Konawe district), to the south (to Batusitanduk in Luwu district) and to Bungku in Central Sulawesi (see Map 5).

Between the DI troops and the Indonesian army, everyone in Routa experienced difficult times during the war. Kahar and his supporters enforced a strict form of Islam with little tolerance for many established local cultural practices (Robinson, 1986: 84). They introduced a 'Dewan Syariah' (Sharia Council) to enforce Islamic law and banned traditional ceremonies such as *lulo* (a traditional dance of the Tolaki), wedding feasts and harvest festivals. The practices were considered heretical (*bid'ah*), improvident and not in accordance with Islamic doctrine.

Hanung, the first village head (*kepala desa*) of Walandawe, informed me that during the DI rebellion, almost all the residents of Walandawe (at that time known as Wiwirano) were evacuated by the Indonesian army further south to Lasolo and Asera, now sub-districts of North Konawe district<sup>16</sup>. Pak Ansar told me that he was working as a forest ranger from 1963-1965 and like so many people in Routa, he too had been forced to become a follower of Kahar for a time. He told me that the people in Routa were displaced several times on the initiative of the Indonesian national army (TNI), a move designed to restrict food supplies to the rebel forces. For around 10 years (1956-1966), most of the Routa area remained under the control of Kahar and his followers and they attracted supporters from other areas. Almost all economic activities were destroyed during the rebellion.

An elderly Bugis woman from Sinjai district in South Sulawesi who lives in Parudongka village told me about the hardships faced by civilians under DI. They were displaced from Routa to Kota Maju (near contemporary Tadoloyo village in North Konawe district, see Maps 3 and 5). She recounted that they had to walk for two weeks through the rugged terrain in the jungle with limited food and sleep during the arduous trip. They stayed in Tadoloyo for about 10 years before returning to Routa.

Some Routa residents (Tolaki, Bugis, Toraja and other groups) were born and married in their place of refuge and cultivated wet rice fields there. Because these situations were experienced by all residents regardless of their cultural group, over time they came to consider themselves as constituting a group encompassing several *suku*, a

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<sup>16</sup> Following the protracted struggle and the defeat of the DI rebellion in 1964, some of the former residents of Walandawe remained in Lasolo-Asera and established a new Wiwirano settlement which became a sub-district centre when North Konawe district separated from Konawe district.

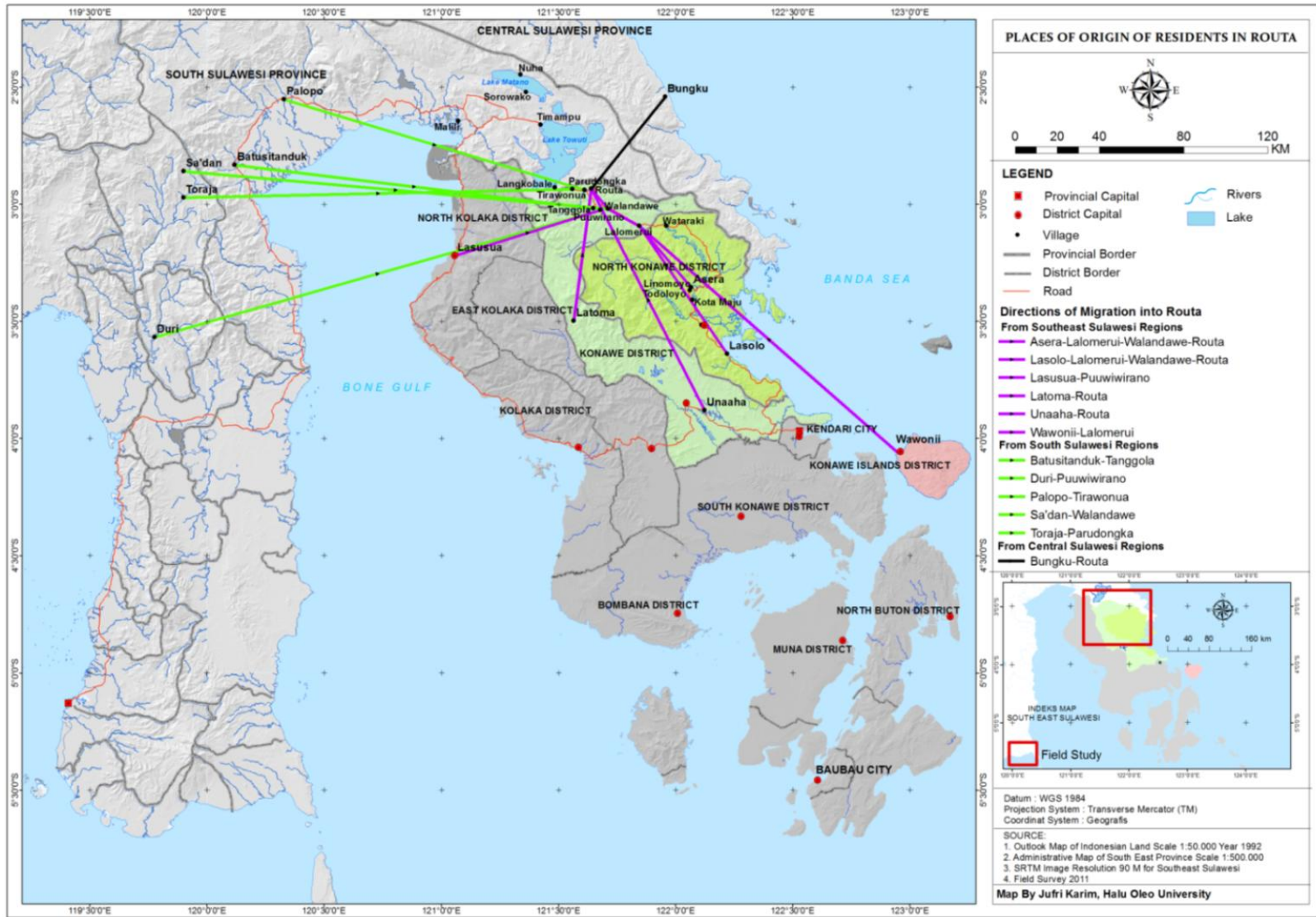
group which they termed *orang Rوتا* (the people of Rوتا) which persists to this day. This agglomeration may lead over time to what Scott terms a 'marooned community', one which has lost sight of its *suku* origins (Scott, 2009: ix).

Many elderly people who I met remember the DI period as one of disruption, dislocation and dispersal. Although there were opportunities to move to the frontier region of Rوتا after the DI rebellion had been put down, not many new migrants were interested. Until the late 1980s, the impression of Rوتا among people in South and Southeast Sulawesi was as a place of tyranny and uncontrolled violence. Many people still dreaded being arrested by the Indonesian army at that time, particularly if they could be linked to the DI rebellion. This situation meant that many sought to minimise their interaction with the government. Scott (2009: ix-x) claims that in many parts of Asia people generally avoided being noticed by the authorities and avoided contact by dispersing into the rugged terrain of the frontier.

In the late 1960s, most of the former residents of Rوتا returned to their abandoned frontier settlements, such as Parudongka, Tirawonua, and Walandawe. Some brought their families and friends. People told me that life was very difficult at that time. At night, they relied on torches of dammar resin as fuel; flashlights were rare and considered a luxury item. They rebuilt their houses and re-established their food gardens. To meet daily needs, most relied on sales of forest products, particularly resin and rattan. People used buffalo as the main form of transportation (*patekke* or *pajekka*), carrying products from the forest as well as supplies from Lengkobale or through the mountains which stand as ramparts around Rوتا. They needed all of their pioneering spirit to survive.

To survive in a frontier environment, there must be a transformation from feeling overwhelmed by the environment to becoming its master (Tsing, 2003: 5102). This requires resilience, tenacity, optimism, strength, luck and self-reliance, so not all migrants will be successful.





Map 5. The places of origin of residents in Ruta sub-district

### **The New Order period (1966-1998)**

After the DI rebellion, people originally from Routa sub-district (*kecamatan*) of Konawe district (*kabupaten*) of Southeast Sulawesi province, now living in Kendari (the capital of Southeast Sulawesi), Wanggudu (the capital of North Konawe) and Unaaha (the capital of Konawe district) spoke of continuing tough times during the first decade of the New Order era in the 1970s. Some retired government officials in Kendari considered the Routa area was a former base of Kahar Muzakkar followers and, along with the absence of roads, it made people from surrounding areas reluctant to return. The remoteness meant that the province and national government had limited information about Routa (Scott 1989: 2). This echoes which experience in Routa, located in the remote highlands and only now beginning to gain government attention because of its natural resources.

The difficulties of transportation and access meant that government officials rarely visited Routa, appearing only occasionally, as at election time every five years. According to the first head of Routa village, it would take him more than a week to reach Kendari in the 1970s. To undertake government business, he often took almost one month to travel back and forth, particularly in the wet season. At that time, Konawe district had not yet been formally established, becoming so only in 1982. The capital of Konawe district was officially moved from Kendari to Unaaha on 29 September 1982.

From the 1980s, new migrants arrived in Routa during the New Order period. They came from Southeast and South Sulawesi provinces. The Tolaki from Southeast Sulawesi migrated to Routa, mostly from areas in Lasolo and Asera sub-districts in the north of Konawe (see Map 5). Many of the new migrants had poor livelihood prospects in their place of origin because of land scarcity. They tried their luck through clearing new agricultural land in the Routa area where land was abundant. Most of them had relatives who had been residing in Routa from the DI era. There were also some cases of new migrants from the area of Lasolo and Asera sub-districts who married people from Routa and decided to live permanently on the frontier. As well, many new migrants from South Sulawesi persuaded their relatives to join them in Routa to support their pioneering activities in the timber industry, farming and trading.

The remote situation provided opportunities for people. Limited control and supervision from local government facilitated illegal logging practices<sup>17</sup> in the forest areas surrounding Routa. Most of the loggers applied for timber-processing permits from the Southeast Sulawesi government which prescribed the volume of timber that could be logged. Despite this, a forest official in Kendari told me about his suspicion that there are many infractions regarding the timber volume taken. Most of timber is traded via South Sulawesi (Timampu) and the shortage of forest officers hampers the control of timber trading in Routa. When infractions are discovered, the full force of the law is rarely brought into play even now.

Until the mid-1980s, the gathering of forest products, particularly timber, rattan and dammar resin, combined with dry rice cultivation, comprised the main livelihoods of people in Routa. They cleared land for food crops and were reluctant to establish cash crops because of labour shortages and compounded by the difficulty of transportation to markets. There was no boat connecting Lengkobale to Timampu. Lantang, a pioneer in Routa, explained that even in 1995 he had to walk 6–8 hours around the lake, carrying the eaglewood he had collected in Routa, through jungle and over mountains to Bantilang (see Map 2). At that time, payment received for the forest products was sufficient to meet the limited daily needs of frontier residents. Some Bugis people, notably petty traders from South Sulawesi, pioneered trading activities through the provision of basic needs such as food and clothing. These traders eventually came to dominate most of the market-related economic activities in Routa through patron-client relationships and money-lending. Their role in society was and remains pivotal because the patron-client relationship has mutual benefits. In addition to being traders, many Bugis are also farmers; they come from Luwu, in South Sulawesi province and from as far away as Kolaka in Southeast Sulawesi.

Some Torajan people also migrated to Routa during the period of the New Order. They spread into almost all the villages in what is now Routa sub-district, coming from many different places in southern and southeastern Sulawesi. The descendants of early Toraja migrants who came before the DI rebellion now reside in Parudongka and Tanggola villages. They are from Sangalla in Tana Toraja (Toraja Land) and Batusitanduk, a sub-district under Luwu regency (see Map 5). Other Torajan migrants are from Bantilang

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<sup>17</sup> Illegal practice in this context means that sawmill owners and timber traders always cut timber which exceeded the timber quota mentioned in their licence.

and Sa'dan. Toraja from Bantilang reside in Routa but some have also dispersed to other villages, while Toraja from Sa'dan mostly live in Leperi (a hamlet in Walandawe village). Some of the Toraja, particularly those from Sangalla who migrated long ago to Routa, such as Muhammad in Parudongka, consider Routa their home rather than Tana Toraja.

From the mid-1980s, people in Routa began to cultivate cash crops, particularly cacao, but the frontier population size remained low so labour shortages remained significant. This problem was compounded by the lack of mechanisation which meant a dependence on human labour. The late 1980s was marked by a shift from people relying solely on forest products to an increasing reliance on cash-crop production, mainly the growing of cacao. People also tried to establish other cash crops, such as cloves and pepper, but without much success.

My informants told me that people in Routa started to cultivate cacao in around 1986, almost the same time as cloves, however the yield of cloves was low. In around 1995, people began to cultivate pepper, but pepper production was also very low. My informants said that most of their pepper only bore fruit at the top of the vine (*hanya berbuah di atas*). This was probably due to not having a proper understanding of pepper cultivation. Many people were not using fertilisers and not maintaining their pepper vines properly. During the New Order, the government of Indonesia prioritised the agricultural sector as a mainstay of economic development and supported the establishment of agricultural extension institutions (Balai Penyuluh Pertanian (BPP)) in every sub-district as well as the appointment of many agricultural extension officers (Penyuluh Pertanian Lapangan (PPL)) in every village. Despite this, there has never been a dedicated government building for an agricultural extension officer in Routa, let alone an official posted to this frontier. This is but one indication of the absence of government support and the continued designation of Routa as a remote frontier. As well as infrastructure, most of the agricultural development has been initiated by local people with the means and will to do so.

Starting from 2008, most cacao crops, particularly those in Parudongka, Tirawonua and Routa, suffered a fungal attack called Vascular Streak Dieback (VSD). This disease is caused by *Oncobasidium theobromae*; VSD causes losses among cacao seedlings and kills branches in mature cacao trees throughout Southeast Asia and parts of Melanesia (Guest & Keane, 2007: 1654). Owing to the significant decline of cacao production and a drop in its price, people since 2008 have tried to cultivate pepper again, but with more

knowledge than before. They now use more organic fertiliser, better seeds and are maintaining their pepper with a better understanding. I found one of them using a manual for pepper cultivation that he had been given by a relative. A pioneering spirit requires self-reliance.

Migration into Rouda persisted in the 1990s, however it was very gradual and dominated by Bugis and Toraja people from South Sulawesi province. Price (1963 cited in Lineton, 1975: 196) suggests the term 'chain migration' to describe Bugis migration to Kalimantan and to Johor (southern Malaya). Chain migration is a process whereby migrants to a new land are encouraged to migrate by the success of relatives or friends from their home village or region. They are encouraged by the prospect of potential success. In many cases they then build up village or regional links and concentrations abroad.

I will further divide chain migration into 'invited migration' and 'independent migration'. Both invited and independent migration may have links with family who have previously migrated; invited migration carries the connotation of a social connection, one that will be strengthened if an invited migrant decides to migrate.

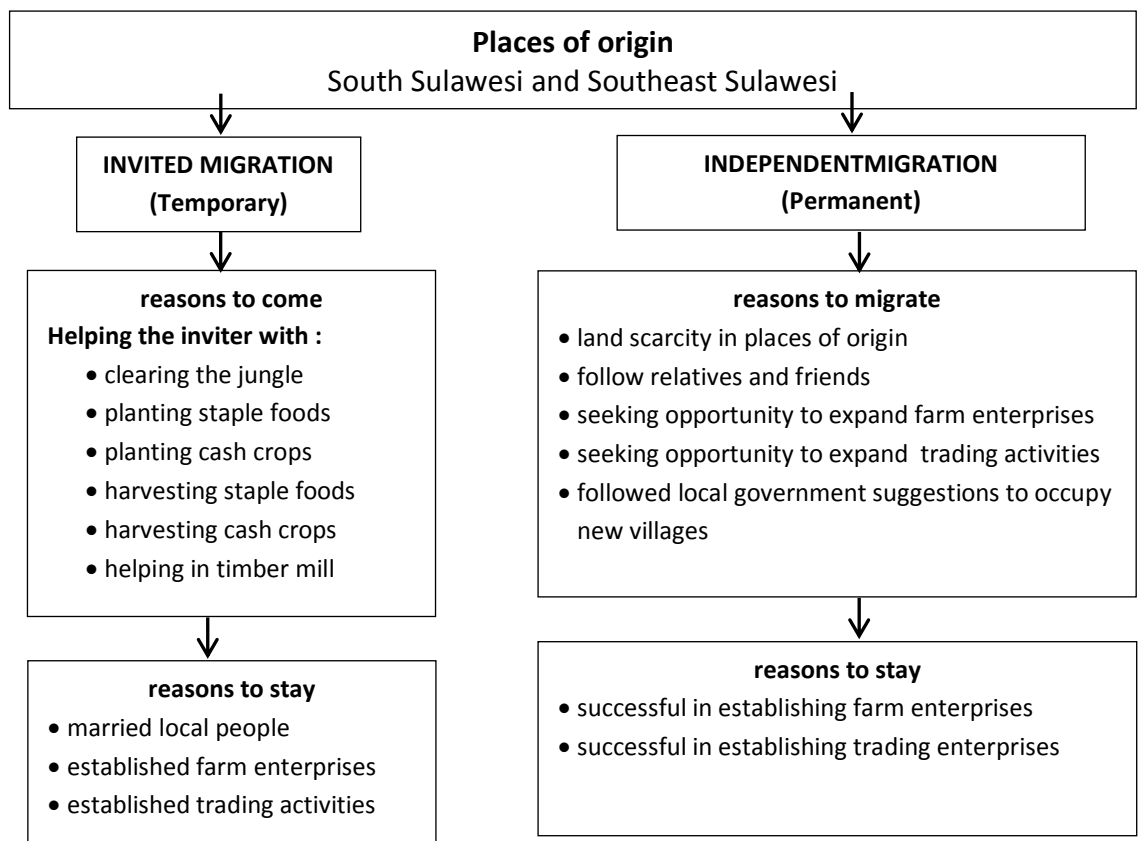


Figure 1. Invited and independent migration to Rouda sub-district

Often people will invite relatives to help (*bantu-bantu*) set up, plant or harvest cacao, pepper or staple foods and operate the sawmill. This practice is what I term 'invited migration'; their motivation is to come to help. The migrants who come with invitation have a close kin relationship with people in Routa who invite them. It results in short-term (temporary) migration at peak labour times. This happens not only in the Bugis community who may come from far away, like Kalimantan or Malaysia, but also in other *suku*, particularly Tolaki who came from places close to Routa such as Lasolo and Asera. People who invite their relatives will usually provide them with daily provisions. The few invited migrants who decide to move permanently receive help from those who invited them to access land. If the migrants come at the invitation of a trader, often they too will receive support for their daily needs after deciding to stay permanently. These relationships may develop to become patron-client relationships.

By contrast, independent migrants come with the intention of being permanent migrants. Those who seek their fortune in Routa are motivated by their own prospects rather than helping others. There are people from Toraja who came independently to Routa and now live in Leperi, a hamlet of Walandawe village (I will discuss this more fully in the next chapter). Not only did they come independently, but they came to an area without any relatives living close by. Some of them told me that they had already sold many of their assets in their homeland. It is evidence of their commitment to change and a motivating factor to achieving success.

Others who come on their own initiative to set up landholdings are initially involved in forest gathering for products, such as resin, timber, rattan or eaglewood, before becoming farmers. They often have some information about Routa and usually have links with relatives or friends who have successfully settled there. A few of the newcomers marry local people and apply for land from their family, friends or the heads of villages. They are mostly farmers but a few who were traders in their place of origin are willing to expand their business to Routa. Many then develop to become traders and patrons over time.

One of my informants, who came from northern Kolaka, initially came to Routa to buy antique goods purloined from graves. He stayed with his aunt in Routa, but he failed to find any antiques. He then married a widow in Routa and established a pepper farm on land that his wife inherited. However, not everyone enjoys the success they envisage;

some have returned to their places of origin because they were not successful in establishing livelihoods in Rota.

Other migrants who achieve success find that their livelihood trajectory has evolved in unexpected ways. A few migrants who live in the remote villages became traders via a different route. Initially, they may simply bring items on request from the market in a spirit of common neighbourliness. Then over time, when they return from taking their harvest to the market, they begin bringing in more everyday goods, so eventually they are buying goods to sell on to more or less the whole community. The selling of harvests also begins in a small way; they take their own produce to market, they take their neighbour's and they eventually become the trading hub of the village. The end result is that they develop into traders and then, with their strong social base, patrons. The journey from trader to patron in a remote village can begin with simple friendship. As social relationships are strengthened, so business attachments develop and the transformation from trader to patron is a logical outcome. Some traders in the remote villages such as Tanggola receive support from their patrons who are in larger centres.

From the mid-1990s, trading activities also gradually increased in Rota. This development was marked by more kiosks, itinerant traders and middlemen who came to many villages (particularly in Parudongka, Tirawonua and Rota). Many of them were Bugis, but a few were Tolaki, particularly in Rota village. The local frontier economy became more dynamic. Bugis in particular established sawmills, supplied by both legal and illegal logging. They also encouraged their families and friends to migrate and most of them then established their own farming enterprises and settled in Rota. I met a young Bugis man at the river when I was washing my motorcycle. He told me that prior to coming to Rota, he worked in Kalimantan, but his uncle, who is a timber trader in Rota village, persuaded him to move to Rota. His uncle relies on him to oversee the timber trade from Rota to Timampu. He took me to the mill located close to the river. About 10 people live there. None were Rota residents; they just came from several places in South Sulawesi. Some still travel back and forth to Rota, but the young Bugis told me that some of them had indicated their willingness to stay in Rota permanently.

The success story of some migrants and the easy access to land has also tempted a few people from surrounding areas to migrate to Rota. Both invited and independent migrations have been the main sources of the fluctuating population in Rota.

A farmer invites more than one person to help, thereby increasing the likelihood that over time, more than one person may choose to migrate permanently. There is no stigma attached if an invited migrant refuses the invitation, or if he decides not to return. There is no break in the chain. It would take a brave person to leave even a meagre livelihood where they are surrounded by established infrastructure to contemplate the pioneering life. The decision to migrate is not to be taken lightly, it is really a leap of faith. This is why migration is slow, and the population remains low. A few people who previously lived in Rوتا have chosen to leave. A local trader Haji<sup>18</sup> Hendra has now moved to Timampu across the lake; Armin the son of Isnain now lives in Bantilang because his wife prefers to stay there; and Pak Ansar has moved to Pondo, a village in North Konawe district, in order to maintain communication with district officials in Konawe district.

Whilst many invited relatives may be able to help for a few days a few times a year, not many will be able to contemplate the vagaries and the difficulties of frontier life as a permanent and preferable situation, so many are only sojourners. Invited migration suggests that one's help is both needed and appreciated. It is in keeping with the notions of *bantu-bantu* and *gotong-royong*, both important values in Indonesian society. The few invited migrants who decide to put down roots will receive support from their extended family members who are already settled.

People in Rوتا talked about the difficulty of access to Rوتا in the New Order era which dissuaded many of their relatives and friends from coming. There was not much infrastructure improvement in Rوتا during the New Order era. It was still very difficult to reach Rوتا from Kendari, because there were no roads from Wiwirano sub-district in North Konawe. There were no roads within the Rوتا region either, only logging tracks that connected the port of Lengkobale to the villages.

Those limiting factors caused migration into Rوتا to progress slowly during the New Order period, but people from areas surrounding Rوتا have continued to arrive of their own volition in small numbers, particularly from the mid-1990s. The comparatively stable situation in the New Order period made it more favourable for traders, particularly from across Lake Towuti. The availability of small boats allowed more frequent travel to and from Rوتا. Similarly, timber traders improved the dirt road that connected villages

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<sup>18</sup> Haji' is the title given to Muslims who have returned from pilgrimage to Mecca.



to Lengkobale, the port on the edge of the lake. Some traders not only went back and forth to Routa but also became residents there. They also persuaded their relatives and friends to migrate to Routa. Although the population is still low, migration to Routa persists with little government encouragement or support.

In the late 1990s, however, some infrastructure improvement took place, particularly with roads in the areas close to the Routa region, both in the Southeast and South Sulawesi provinces. Around 1995, the governor of Southeast Sulawesi and the head of Konawe district visited Routa a few times, using a helicopter to reach the remote frontier. The former village head of Routa told me that a former head of district of Konawe visited the Routa region in the 2000s by walking from the Wataraki River, a probable four-hour trek. At that time, the Routa region comprised four official villages, Parudongka, Tirawonua, Routa and Walandawe, within Asera sub-district administration. The establishment of those villages encouraged further discussion on the development of Routa region as a sub-district. At the same time, there was also a plan to divide Konawe district into three — Konawe, South Konawe and North Konawe — however it was difficult to achieve under the New Order because there was no support from the central government. Only provincial capitals could become new local government areas or cities (Kota Madya) in their own right during that period.

The central government built new sealed roads from Kendari through Kolaka and North Kolaka district to South Sulawesi province (linking them to Palopo, Sorowako and Timampu). These became alternative routes for people who travelled from Routa to Kendari. In South Sulawesi, the progressive growth of Sorowako from the 1970s due to mining allowed traders in Timampu to provide small boats for transportation facilities to cross Towuti Lake. The improvement of transportation facilities surrounding Routa had a small impact on the movement of people from surrounding areas into Routa, however there was still not much infrastructure improvement within Routa sub-district itself, either in terms of physical facilities or institutions. Despite the efforts of provincial and district government to appoint officers, such as teachers and health workers, chronic absenteeism meant that they were still in very limited supply. The frontier situation perpetuated.

Timber entrepreneurs made dirt tracks for their logging trucks within the Routa area. As a result, some people have bought motorbikes. The initial domination of the

buffalo for transportation was slowly replaced throughout the last decade of the New Order era (1990s) with four-wheel-drive vehicles and logging trucks.

Even though in the New Order era government officials were posted to Routa, they stayed in Unaaha or even as far away as Kendari. This allowed Routa to remain largely forgotten and poorly incorporated into the nation-state of Indonesia. This neglect is slowly diminishing with the discovery of resources; the suggestions of national and international investments have even injected interest and speculation in this area. The metamorphosis of the frontier had begun.

### **From village to sub-district (*kecamatan*)**

Significant change in government organisation has taken place since the fall of the New Order in 1998. The enactment of Laws No. 22 and 25 in 1999 concerning regional autonomy subsequently amended by the Laws No. 32 and 33 in 2004 regulated delegation of authority from central to district government. Based on the argument that it would improve the provision of welfare to residents in new areas and reduce disparities between old and new administrative areas, many parts of Indonesia proposed new administrative areas at all levels (provinces, districts, sub-districts and villages). This process is described as *pemekaran* (blossoming). In the Reformation era, political power has therefore become more decentralised.

Southeast Sulawesi, which was initially established with four districts in 1967, by 2007 encompassed 12 districts. In June 2014, another three new districts were gazetted. What looks like exponential growth is more apparent rather than real. The frontier still lacks infrastructure and any real measure of government support.

**Table 1. Sub-district growth as a result of *pemekaran* in three districts**

<b>District name</b>	<b>Officially established</b>	<b>Initial number of sub-districts</b>	<b>Present number of sub-districts</b>	<b>Law</b>
Konawe	1995	12	23	Law No.6, 1995
South Konawe	2003	4	22	Law No. 4, 2003.
North Konawe	2007	3	10	Law No. 13, 2007

The formation of Routa as a sub-district was influenced by the 'blossoming' of Konawe district to become three districts: Konawe, South Konawe (2003) and North Konawe (2007). Before the division, Konawe district consisted of 12 sub-districts. South

Konawe comprised four sub-districts in 2003 and North Konawe comprised three sub-districts in 2007. Discussions regarding the separation of South and North Konawe from Konawe district reduced the number of sub-districts in Konawe district, from 12 to only 5. Based on Government Regulation, No. 78, 2007, Konawe district proposed the establishment of several new sub-districts, including Routa sub-district, thus preserving its district status.

In fact, Routa is geographically closer to North Konawe (see Maps 2 and 4) and its residents (particularly Tolaki) have close kinship ties with people in North Konawe. The head of Walandawe village told me that many residents in Walandawe, Lalomerui and Routa have close ties with people in Asera and Lasolo sub-districts in North Konawe. The head of North Konawe district (who used to be the district secretary of Konawe and was involved in the process of the establishment of North Konawe as a new district) told me that the head of Konawe district insisted on maintaining Routa sub-district within Konawe's jurisdiction. According to my informant, it was very likely related to information about the economically viable nickel deposit in Routa. According to the leaders of PT Sulawesi Cahaya Mineral (a subsidiary of Rio Tinto and Sherritt), which holds a mining concession in Routa today, the Rio Tinto geological team had already undertaken investigation of nickel deposits in Routa in the 1990s. A few people from Routa were involved in the investigation. I was told that around the end of the 1990s, Rio Tinto recruited them in Bahodopi (Bungku district, Central Sulawesi) as guides and geological assistants. The possibility of mining provides a developmental drawcard, a stepping-stone along the journey of metamorphosis.

Notwithstanding the fact that Routa was established as a sub-district, its remoteness and the absence of a road to the capital, Unaaha, has resulted in a lack of government presence and so government neglect persists in Routa to this day, and its frontier character remains. A few new government buildings have been built, such as a sub-district office and a community health centre; Australian aid funding has enabled a junior high school (SMP) to be built; however the continued chronic absenteeism of most government officials results in poor community services. Many government workers such as teachers, nurses and sub-district officials are reluctant to bring their families to Routa. One told me:

Bagaimana saya mau bawa kesini keluarga saya pak, tidak ada sekolah untuk anak saya, dokter tidak ada, pasar tidak ada dan gaji saya juga masih harus saya terima di Unaaha. Saya khawatir kalau saya bawa anak saya kesini, setelah tamat SMP anak saya akan sulit diterima SMA di Unaaha karena kualitas SMP disini sangat rendah. Saya juga takut bawa

mereka kesini, kalau sewaktu-waktu mereka sakit, tidak ada dokter pak. Kalau saya ke Unaaha ambil gaji, biaya hampir setengah dari gaji saya. Jadi kalau saya ke Unaaha ambil gaji, biasanya saya tinggal disana dua sampai tiga bulan, baru kembali lagi kesini (Routa).

How can I bring my family here, there is no school for my son, no doctor, no market and I must travel to Unaaha to collect my salary. I worry that if I bring my son, after he graduates from junior high school here, it would be difficult for him to get into senior high school in Unaaha because of the low quality of education here. I also worry if I bring them and they are sick, it would be difficult without a doctor. If I go to Unaaha to get my salary, it costs almost half of my salary. So if I go to collect my salary in Unaaha, I always stay two or three months before returning here [Routa].

A teacher in Tirawonua.

Other government workers echo this teacher's concern. I heard it repeatedly from people who were posted to take up government positions in Routa.

Reasons for migrants returning to a place of origin need not be of their own making. Many who migrated to Puuwiwirano around 2001 gradually returned to their place of origin. The few new migrants who do remain in Puuwiwirano complain that the absence of a road makes it difficult for them to travel to the market. Their children also need a school, which does not yet exist in their village. They were not given sufficient or appropriate information about their destination. Scott (1998: 2) emphasises that much of the development planning in a frontier and remote places is often based on unreliable and limited information. As a result 'many interventions were often crude and self-defeating'. The problem was compounded by inadequate and biased information given to the prospective migrants. This echoes the experience in Routa.

The delegation of authority from central to local government has given more discretion to local government to establish local regulations. In the last decade, in order to boost local revenue, many local governments, including Southeast Sulawesi, have stipulated their own policies to entice private sector enterprises to invest. As a result, many private companies, notably mining and palm oil, are keen to invest in Southeast Sulawesi. The presence of two such companies in Routa has stimulated a boost in people's expectations regarding the improvement of infrastructure and opportunities to enhance prosperity; this expectation has yet to be realised.

The appearance of the two big investments in Routa may influence a new round of migration into these areas from near and far and which may well be more numerous than ever before. In Lalomerui, the palm oil company has built dirt roads to connect Lalomerui to the north of Konawe. The roads have already stimulated more migrants from more diverse places of origin, such as from North Sumatera. They receive support from the owner of the company who is from North Sumatera. There are also migrants from Java,

East Nusa Tenggara, who are already living in areas of North Konawe following the transmigration program in the 1980s arranged by the central government, and there are refugees from East Timor who were resettled by the New Order government in North Konawe. These migrants are all palm oil company employees. The mining company has also shown interest in establishing a dirt road connecting Lalomerui to Routa. However, this brings risks; Wiriosudarmo (2001: 22-23) notes that conflicts between local people and the labour migrants coming from outside the mining location has occurred in many resource development sites in Indonesia, particularly when a company practices a competitive approach when filling vacancies for unskilled labourers. Robinson (1986) identifies almost the same story from her research in Sorowako, a large nickel mining area close to Routa.

### **Conclusion**

Migration is the main element that determines population growth and distribution in Routa. Many changes in the areas surrounding Routa have influenced the movement of people including endemic wars (headhunting), the imposition of Dutch rule, displacement and resettlement due to violence (DI rebellion) and recent political reform and decentralisation.

The attractiveness of forest products initially enticed fortune seekers and still persuades people to migrate. The abundance of land has attracted farmers. In the last decade, the abundance of land has also tempted not only migrants from the surrounding Routa sub-district but also a national palm oil enterprise to open a new location. More recently, a multi-national mining company has also launched Routa as a new mining site. Initially the rate of migration was a trickle, more recently it has tended to come in small waves.

Rugged terrain and minimal infrastructure still inhibit development. Routa is much less developed than surrounding regions due in part to lack of attention by all levels of government. This lack has provided advantages for particular groups of people and opportunities to reap benefits. Timber traders can tinker with the margins of the law when taking wood from the forest; migrants can also ignore the law by converting areas of protected forest to farmland. Migrants who were marginalised and landless have moved to this frontier to escape poverty in all its forms; many have survived and some have even flourished.

Generally speaking, there are two kinds of chain migration to Routa, invited and independent migration. Every *suku* continues to invite family members and friends to join them to overcome labour shortages, but in most cases only temporarily. The success stories of particular people and the availability of land have tempted people from surrounding areas to voluntarily migrate to this remote place.

Invited migration has many benefits; more benefits than downsides. It boosts the workforce during times of peak labour shortage. The invited migrant has the opportunity to 'test the water' to see whether a permanent move may be advantageous, to see how they could be part of Routa society. By inviting friends and/or family, any who choose to stay have a ready-made social support network. Those who do the inviting often become financial supporters of the invited migrants who choose to stay. Patron-client relationships begin and grow from this base, with mutual benefit. Because the rate of invited migration is slow and the invited migrant is incorporated into a ready-made social network, any social pressure has not yet posed a problem. This is in contrast this with the social pressure that results from the large-scale transient migration (as with the oil palm plantation workers in Lalomerui) which has already posed some problems, to be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Difficulties of access and transportation restrict the numbers of migrants and mitigates against the availability of seasonal workers. This situation has led to continual seasonal labour shortages; so many people can only establish a farm enterprise sufficient to sustain their daily needs. Rudimentary infrastructure has meant that only some migrants choose to stay. Some who come will even choose to return to their place of origin.

The devolution of authority from the central government to the local government has allowed local government to increase their administration status, to change the status of a hamlet to grow into a village, and villages to become a sub-district. Both these situations have occurred in Routa, which has grown from a settlement to a village (1968) to a sub-district (2005), but many of the changes are superficial. The local government has a stated intention to persuade more people to migrate to Routa and make land available through the establishment of new villages. Whilst such an intention is applauded by those who live with labour shortage difficulties, whether the intended action can be realised is problematic. On paper and in law, Routa is now governed, however, in reality, development is largely unchanged and progress proceeds at a snail's pace.

## Chapter Three

### The formation and development of settlements on the margins

#### Introduction

Settlements in Routa have grown from farmland into villages. People who come from similar places of origin generally establish their farms in the Routa area with a family member. The Bugis, Toraja and Tolaki each have differing perspectives and priorities which affect where they choose to live. The characteristics and the location of the eventual settlements therefore have a basis in shared culture (*suku* membership).

All settlements in Routa sub-district have moved several times before becoming established as villages. Many people told me stories of moving from one place to another. Their experience as swidden farmers, the lack of government rule for many years, as well as more than a decade of the DI rebellion and consequent TNI response were all contributing causes for this movement.

Former swidden farmers in Routa village explained to me that they needed to move around the Routa area as far as Lalomerui (around five hours walk away) for many years in order to find fertile land; people still moved residence with their swidden gardens until the 1990s. According to my informants, one of the reasons why there has been no development in Routa is because people always moved —*‘tidak ada pembangunan di Routa karena kita selalu pindah-pindah’*. Residents in villages such as Lalomerui, Walandawe and Routa refer to their former settlements as *kampung tua* (old settlements). Many marked their land and houses in the old settlements with buried things that resist decay, such as bottles or piled stones, so they can recognise the area of their land and house yard when they return. This is also the way local people claim land tenure and retain rights to fallow land.

In this chapter, I will describe the factors that have influenced the formation of settlements or villages in Routa sub-district over time, and how people have come from their places of origin to Routa and established settlements with little government intervention. I explore the government regulations and how they have been liberally interpreted by local and district governments to advantage those other than the residents. Development that appears advantageous on paper is often found wanting in reality.

The decentralisation of Indonesian government authority has been one of the most important reforms since the fall of Soeharto in 1998. Many new administrative regions have been formed during the last 15 years through a process of administrative division known in Indonesian as *pemekaran*<sup>19</sup> ('flowering' or 'proliferation'). McCarthy (2004: 1199) in his research in Central Kalimantan found that 'in the national, district and village levels, *pemekaran* has led to highly volatile socio-legal configurations that create insecurity and heighten resource conflicts'. The patterns of governance inherited from the New Order era when government was more centralised hampers and hinders the creation and execution of good governance through the Reformation era policy of decentralisation.

There are two categories of administrative settlements under sub-district in Indonesia, the village (*desa*) and the urban village (*kelurahan*). The Village (*desa*)<sup>20</sup> is a unit of community with boundaries; it has the authority to regulate and manage the interests of the local community, based on the origin and local customs. This is recognised and respected in the administration system of the Republic of Indonesia (Government Regulation No. 72, 2005). A village (*desa*) usually consists of a few settlements called hamlets (*dusun*)<sup>21</sup>. The number of hamlets in a village is determined through village discussion. Both the head of the village and the head of the hamlet are elected by the local people. An urban village (*kelurahan*) is a village appointed as the capital of a sub-district. The head of a *kelurahan* is a civil servant who is appointed by the head of the district. The subordinate settlement under an urban village (*kelurahan*) is called environment (*lingkungan*).

Routa sub-district consists of one *kelurahan* (also called Routa) as its capital and 10 *desa*. For clarity, I will classify villages in Routa sub-district into three categories.

(1) Settlements established before Routa was officially recognised as a sub-district in 2005. I refer to them as 'first-established villages'. People in Routa call them *desa tua*; they are:

- Parudongka
- Tirawonua
- Routa

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<sup>19</sup> McWilliam (2011:150) uses the term 'blossoming'.

<sup>20</sup> In West Sumatera *desa* is called *nagari*, *gampong* in Aceh, or *kampung* in Papua and East Kalimantan.

<sup>21</sup> In Bali, *dusun* is called *banjar*, and *lorong* in West Sumatera.



- Walandawe.
- (2) Villages established after Routa was established as a sub-district are categorised as 'new villages'. Local people call them *desa baru*; in Routa, they are:
- Tanggola
  - Puuwiwirano
  - Lalomerui.
- (3) 'Villages-in-preparation' are formed in response to *pemekaran* and in anticipation of further development. Many people call these villages *desa persiapan*; in Routa, they comprise:
- Polihe (initially a hamlet of Routa village)
  - Tetenggowuna (initially a hamlet of Walandawe village)
  - Watupali and Mopute (located in the area of Lalomerui village).

One of the stated criteria to form a village is population size, which varies according to the location. In terms of population, none of the new villages nor the villages-in-preparation in Routa meet the criteria in the legislation. Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation No. 28 of 2006, Article 3 states that the formation of a village (*desa*) in Sumatera and Sulawesi requires a minimum population of 1,000 people or 100 households.

Table 2. List of villages (*desa* and *kelurahan*) according to number of households in Routa sub-district.

Names of villages	Number of households	
	ANU (social base-line survey) <sup>*)</sup>	Statistical Bureau (BPS) <sup>**)</sup>
Routa ( <i>kelurahan</i> )	101	120
Tirawonua ( <i>desa</i> )	75	102
Parudongka ( <i>desa</i> )	48	51
Walandawe ( <i>desa</i> )	28	26
Tanggola ( <i>desa</i> )	19	16
Puuwiwirano ( <i>desa</i> )	13	19
Lalomerui ( <i>desa</i> )	15	91

\*) Data collected in 2010

\*\*\*) Data collected in 2012

Based on the information provided by both ANU and the local statistical bureau (BPS), only Routa and Tirawonua (in 2012) meet the population criteria to be considered a

village. Well before 2010, Routa and Tirawonua were declared villages. In 2012, none of the other villages met the population criteria. This calls into question the legitimacy of the sub-district categorisation of Routa. Furthermore, the villages of Mopute and Watupali are villages on paper only; they remain unpopulated.

In addition to the population criteria, government regulations also presuppose that the working area of new villages will have a transportation network sufficient to support the goal of improving services to the community. This requirement is clearly not met in Routa.

Situations like this are not unusual. Brodjonegoro (2012: 2) argues that, in many cases, the formation of new local government areas in Indonesia are more a political consideration and entertain local political interests rather than the idea of enhancing economic prosperity of the community. Furthermore, Brodjonegoro states that 'it is no secret that local elites (are) jockeying for local executive positions through the proposal of new local government formation' (Brodjonegoro, 2012: 2). Brata (2008: 7) examined the Human Development Index (HDI) for Indonesia and compared the welfare of citizens between the new provinces in western<sup>22</sup> and eastern Indonesia<sup>23</sup>. In general, he states that *pemekaran* increased inequality within the new provinces in eastern Indonesia as a result of firstly, 'inefficient administration as per capita costs of government increased sharply', and secondly, *pemekaran* increased the potential of inter-group conflict (Brata, 2008: 7). In addition, Diprose (2008: 393) argues that the creation of new settlements which is 'stimulating changes in population demographics' could well lead to conflict. However, Erawan (2007: 60) states that a process of 'deepening democracy' and 'effective government' has also taken place in parts of Indonesia as a result of the implementation of decentralisation laws. McWilliam (2011: 167) based on his research on remote places in Eastern Indonesia (Routa and Bintuni Gulf) and concludes that the impact of *pemekaran* and decentralisation is slow to be realised because government efforts to increase investment in social services and public infrastructure is sometimes disrupted through corruption, mismanagement and neglect. Importantly, McWilliam (2011) emphasises the need for urgent attention to agendas such as transparency,

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<sup>22</sup> Western Indonesia consists of provinces in the Islands of Sumatera, Java and Bali.

<sup>23</sup> Eastern Indonesia consists of provinces in the Islands of Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Papua, Maluku and Ternate.

accountability and gender equality in the wider public domain to stimulate community participation in *pemekaran*.

The lack of government presence and good governance in Routa has historically been affected by the general opinion of officials that this frontier area was worthless and too remote. There was no formal government representative in Routa until around 1968 when Pak Ansar, a former forestry official who could envisage the area's potential, was eventually inducted as village head.

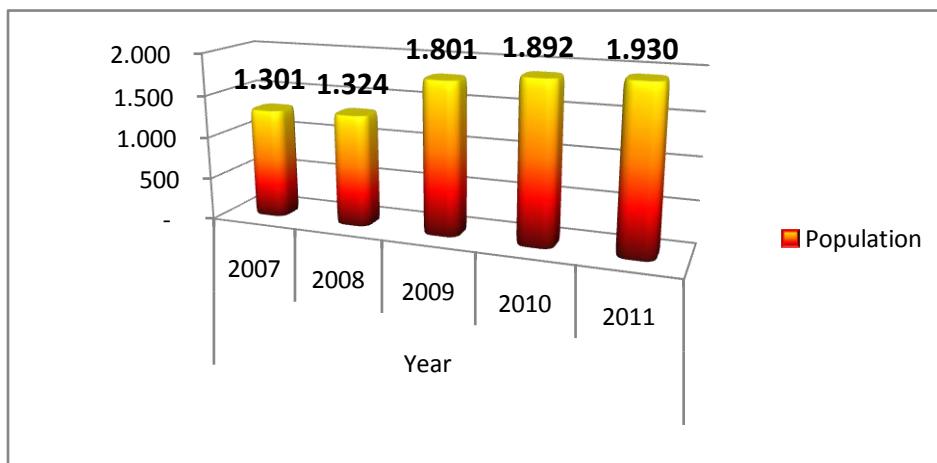
The formation of settlements in the early days of Routa was much more influenced by historical, economic and political factors. People from different cultural-linguistic groups reached Routa in the heyday of dammar resin exploitation in colonial times (see Chapter Two). From the onset of settlement formation in Routa, groups of mostly Tolaki people established settlements that stretched toward North Konawe (Routa, Walandawe and Lalomerui) where their forebears came from. By contrast, most of the early Toraja and Bugis migrants from southern Sulawesi lived in two settlements that stretched toward Lake Towuti in the South Sulawesi province near the contemporary boundary between South and Southeast Sulawesi provinces; the Toraja migrants live in what is now the village of Parudongka and the Bugis settled in what is now Tirawonua. In order to provide sufficient food, both the Bugis and Toraja built rain-fed irrigation systems in Parudongka and Tirawonua and have made both villages the centre of rice production in Routa sub-district.

In terms of livelihood, many Bugis prefer to live close to the transportation routes in the village close to the port of Lengkobale (a trading hub) so they have easy access to the market in Timampu across the lake. Others, who are mostly farmers, tend to concentrate in areas where they can establish farming enterprises on arable land even as far away as Tanggola, a remote village with limited access. A few people who engage in political activities tend to live in Routa, the urban village of Routa sub-district, and Lalomerui, the only village with 'road' access to Unaaha, the district capital of Konawe.

### **Population**

Population density in Routa sub-district (*kecamatan*) is low. Migration contributes to population increases, nevertheless the population is growing slowly and minimally. Based on data from the local bureau of statistics, in the last five years it has grown from only 1,301 inhabitants in 2007 to 1,930 people in 2011, an increase of 32.59%. The number of

households has expanded as a result of migration from 286 in 2007 to 425 in 2011. Rouda sub-district's population density was 0.88/sq km (Rouda sub-district in figure, 2012), sparsely populated compared to the higher densities in Southeast Sulawesi and in Konawe district in 2011, with 60/sq km and 36/sq km respectively. The sparse population in Rouda sub-district results in recurrent peak-time labour shortages which remain a key constraint to development, particularly when opening new land and to expand productive acreage.



Source: Statistical Bureau of Southeast Sulawesi, 2012

Figure 2. **Population growth in Rouda from 2007 to 2011**

Even though population is still low, people who are settled in Rouda come from diverse places of origin. The Tolaki constitute the major group, followed by Bugis and Toraja<sup>24</sup> (Robinson et al., 2010: 7). Many of the Tolaki who dwell in Rouda come from the Lasolo and Asera, in the neighbouring district of North Konawe. Others are from Latoma in Konawe district to the south (see Map 5 in Chapter Two).

Today, the places of origin of the new migrants in Rouda sub-district are diverse. The former head of Rouda explained that many Tolaki from Lasolo and Asera in northern Konawe are related to the Tolaki in Latoma in Konawe district. The head of Hamlet III in Rouda is originally from Latoma. He followed his sister who married a follower of the DI leader, Kahar Muzakkar. New Bugis migrants come not only from the southern Sulawesi region, but also from longstanding Bugis migrant communities in Southeast Sulawesi, particularly from Kolaka and North Kolaka districts<sup>25</sup> (see Map 5, Chapter Two). As well, most of the new Toraja migrants do not come directly from Tana Toraja, but from various

<sup>24</sup> Tolaki comprise 28.5%, followed by Bugis 19.3%, Toraja 16% and other groups such as Luwu, Duri, Bungku and others were below 10% (Robinson et al., 2010: 7).

<sup>25</sup> Some are related to Bugis already in Rouda.

areas in North and East Luwu districts<sup>26</sup>, South Sulawesi, which are closer to Routa sub-district. The Duri people who have migrated from Enrenkang district, also in South Sulawesi, are locally grouped in the same *suku* with Toraja<sup>27</sup>. Other migrants in Routa are the Bungku people from Central Sulawesi but they generally represent themselves as Tolaki<sup>28</sup>.

The political leaders, such as the head of sub-district (*camat*) and the heads of villages (*kepala desa*) and few of political elites who have good connections with government officials in the district (*kabupaten*), continue to propose new villages with the aim of enticing new settlers to increase the area's population. The heads of new villages and the sub-district encourage workers in the oil palm plantations of Lalomerui and people from the periphery of Routa to occupy the new villages. As an incentive, the local government offers households up to 2 h of free land<sup>29</sup>. Migrants do come; some stay but others return to their place of origin, frustrated by the limitations of infrastructure and unmet promises. Many new migrants in Puuwiwirano (a newly declared village) complained that the absence of an access road makes it difficult to transport agricultural needs and harvest yields.

### Settlements

The first villages established are the kernel of Routa sub-district. Apart from Walandawe, the other three villages have tracks that are passable by four-wheel-drive vehicles, but only in the dry season. These rough roads connect the settlements to Lengkobale, the anchorage and logistic port on the eastern shore of Lake Towuti (see Maps 2 and 4). All the staffed and functioning public facilities, such as the community health centre (*puskesmas*), sub-district office (*kantor camat*) and police office (*polsek*), are located on the boundary between Parudongka and Tirawonua village in a place called Salubulili. The first head of Routa sub-district proposed Salubulili as village-in-preparation but because of poor planning it is not conveniently situated and suffers from lack of government

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<sup>26</sup> There were periods of turmoil from 1880 and 1890, when the Bugis kingdom competed with the Luwu kingdom for the control of the coffee trade, as a result many Toraja fled to the areas around Luwu (see Chapter Two).

<sup>27</sup> They use the same language, and although the main basis of distinction between Toraja and Duri has been religion. The Toraja migrants to Routa have converted to Islam, so to equate Duri with Islam and Toraja with Christian is no longer valid.

<sup>28</sup> Many people from Bungku married Tolaki and use the Tolaki language in their daily conversation; the languages are closely related. There are also a few Bungku who married Bugis and Toraja.

<sup>29</sup> Information from village heads of Lalomerui, Walandawe, and people in Tanggola and Puuwiwirano.

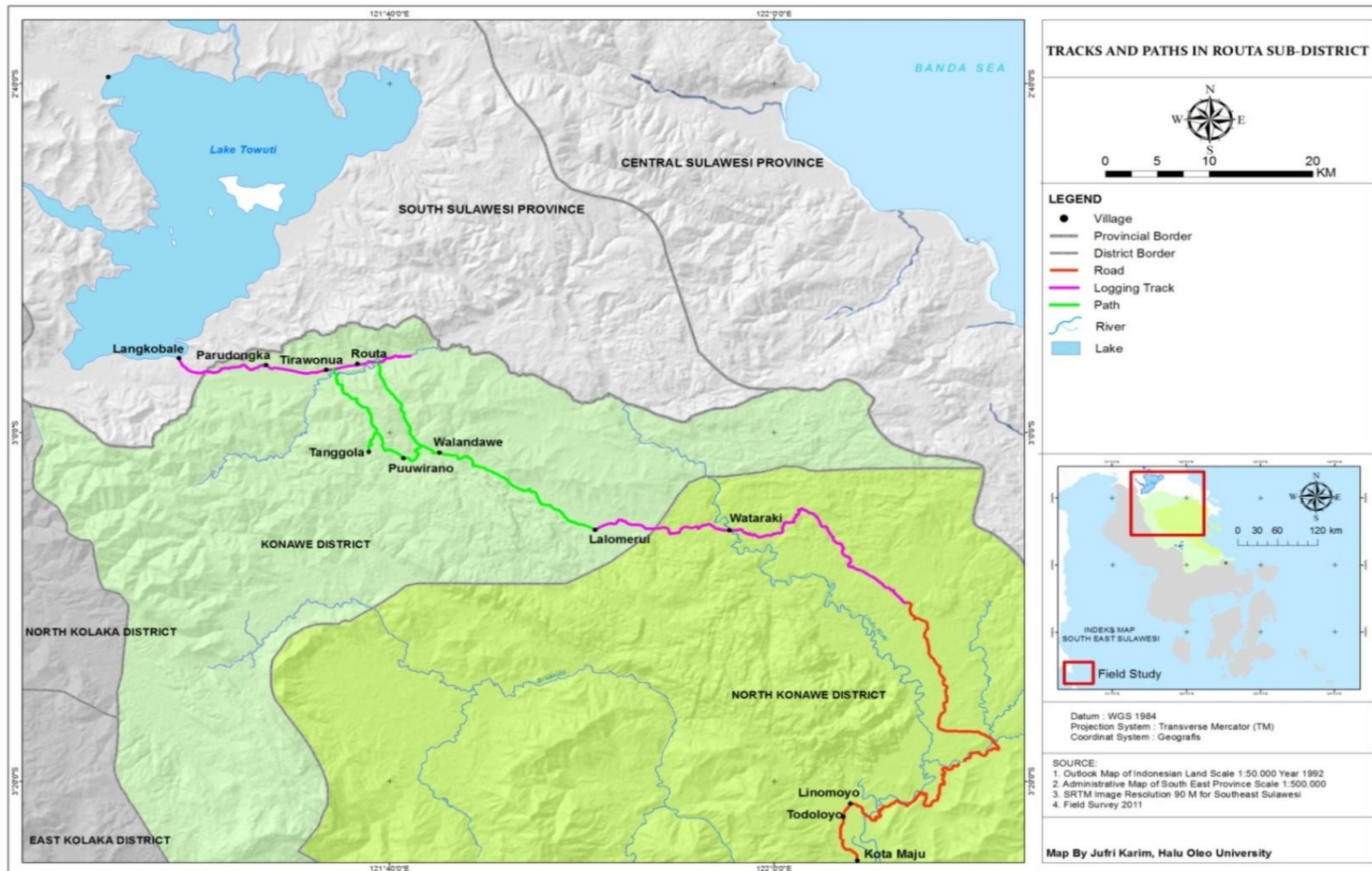
supervision; this means most of the government buildings are not staffed, and as a result today Salubulili has been largely forgotten as a village-in-preparation.

Two of the three new villages, Tanggola and Puuwiwirano, are located in remote places with no road access (see Map 6). They are the most isolated villages in Rوتا sub-district. The other new village is Lalomerui, situated close to North Konawe. Here the development of the oil palm plantation has resulted in improved road access from North Konawe, but connections with other villages in Rوتا remain significantly underdeveloped.

The latest villages-in-preparation (*desa persiapan*) are Polihe, Tetenggowuna, Watupali and Mopute; they were all formerly hamlets (*dusun*). Many of the Rوتا residents understand that this action can only achieve one aim: to support the political elites in Rوتا. The political elites will determine the head of village. In many cases, they will receive land themselves and place their relatives as the residents who will also be given land. They use the establishment of the villages-in-preparation to obtain the forest areas that was previously protected and rezoned as productive forest for farming activities; sometimes they will use that land to negotiate with investors, such as the oil palm plantation.

The use of the term 'in-preparation' implies planning which is intentional and the locals understand that it will advantage a select few. The formulation of such villages on paper is difficult to challenge, although it clearly benefits only certain parties. Watupali and Mopute were originally forest areas within the jurisdiction of Lalomerui village. Some people in Lalomerui, Walandawe and Rوتا (mostly Tolaki) claim that they were the settlements of their forebears that have been abandoned for around four decades, but it is difficult for them to prove it without sufficient evidence; they said they will only receive land allotments given by the authorities there. Mopute and Watupali are villages only in name. These villages-in-preparation are an example of what Brodjonegoro (2012) counsels against; development for development's sake, where only the political elite benefit.

In the case of Salubulili, the local government initially tried to provide public facilities. Despite the fact that facilities, such as a health centre, a police office, the sub-district office and the house for sub-district head, have been built in Salubulili, it has never been enough to persuade people to move there and the buildings are in a state of disrepair.



Map 6. Settlements, tracks and paths in Rوتا sub-district

The only residents of this 'village' are a police officer, the officials of the health centre and some political elites who frequently travel back and forth to Unaaha. The former deputy head of Routa sub-district was given land and has established a pepper plantation there, so he sometimes stays. The secretary of Tirawonua village who lives in a simple house has set up a pepper plantation on land she was given. Almost all the land along the 'road' in Salubulili has been allocated to political elites who have chosen not to live there. All of the better places, including the paddy field area which was built there, have been allocated to local political elites. Other people who may be willing to reside in Salubulili would have to live on the land located less conveniently, behind that of the political elites. This may be one of the reasons why people are reluctant to consider moving to Salubulili. As a result, all the paddy fields in Salubulili have been neglected.

The formation of this settlement was not clearly thought out by the previous local government (*camat*), nor discussed with the appropriate people. The end result is the same; sequestration of resources in the hand of the elites, justified as development.

The village head of Lalomerui has a plan that he will eventually persuade the labourers who work at the oil palm plantation to occupy the villages-in-preparation (Mopute and Watupali) which have proliferated from Lalomerui village. At present, these labourers are housed in company camps (*afdeling*), but it appears that it is not easy for the head of Lalomerui to realise the plan, because many of the labourers leave their families at their homes and commute often, usually every month, to their places of origin.

There are two sawmills in the first villages (one in Parudongka and another in Routa); the owners of these mills helped to establish road facilities in order to connect three of the villages (excepting Walandawe) to Lengkobale. The mill owners use heavy trucks to transport their timber products. People and traders also often pay for the logging trucks to bring their products back and forth from Lengkobale, as transport in this region is limited. Although the road conditions are poor in these villages, many people have bought motorbikes due to their improved prosperity generated by the sale of cacao and, more recently, pepper. They use motorbikes to travel back and forth to Timampu, and even as far as Malili. People also use motorbikes to visit their farms, following the pathways into the hills. This causes many motorbikes in Routa to meet an untimely end.



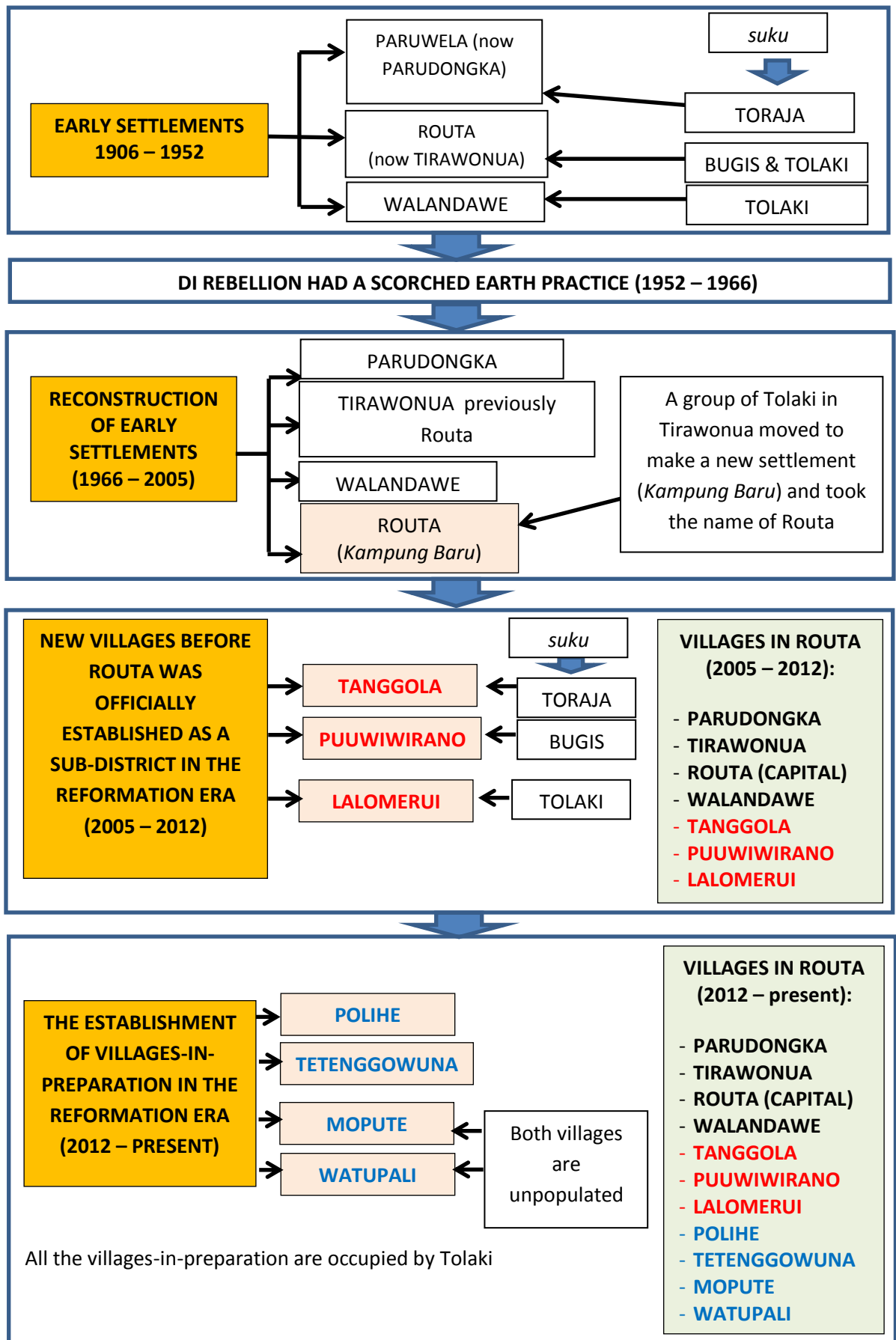


Figure 3. Evolution of the settlements in Ruta sub-district

## Parudongka

The closest village to the port of Lengkobale is Parudongka<sup>30</sup>. It was initially located approximately 5km from the contemporary Parudongka village. At the height of the dammar resin trade, around the 1920s, Parudongka was only a transit place between the various settlements and Lengkobale. Its strategic location close to the port of Lengkobale made it an ideal location where the porters rested and gave fodder to their horses or buffaloes before continuing on their way. It was also a popular place for gambling and carousing<sup>31</sup>. Gambling, such as cockfighting, had been popular in Toraja from before the Dutch era (see Waterson 2000: 66-67). In the 1970s, Torajans, Buginese and Makassarese established settlements close to where a local sawmill operates today<sup>32</sup>. Most of the Toraja and some Bugis live in this village and I was told that the name 'Parudongka' was originally used for the locality of this sawmill.

Muhammad, the son of a Torajan family who came to Parudongka in the 1970s, told me about the first wave of Toraja and Bugis who had heard of the location as an area of abundant forests, where they could secure better livelihoods as dammar collectors and farmers. In the early 1980s, people established rain-fed rice fields which were later upgraded with irrigation after the local people received funding from the district government after Parudongka was officially gazetted in the 1990s. The irrigation is located close to the location of the present-day Parudongka village. People built huts there and called the place Paruwela<sup>33</sup>, while the government adopted the name 'Parudongka'. Some (particularly old people) still use the name 'Paruwela'.

The establishment of an irrigation system marks the transition from swidden farming to sedentary farming, 'hence a farmer need not move from field to field and a number of farmers can live in a concentrated settlement' (Peacock, 1973: 10). The presence of irrigation gradually encouraged people to move and settle. Although currently some Toraja also live in Tirawonua and Routa, Parudongka is still better known as a village of the Torajan people.

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<sup>30</sup> *Paru* means 'sack' and *dongka* means 'taro leaves', so Parudongka means 'sack made from taro leaves'. It was popular as a place for gambling before the DI rebellion in Routa.

<sup>31</sup> In the heyday of dammar resin, they drank alcohol which was commonly produced from sugar palm trees (*aren*), which grow naturally in Tanggola village.

<sup>32</sup> The place is around 5 km from the port of Lengkobale or 10 km before what is now Parudongka village (coming from Lengkobale). Today this place is known as the location of sawmill industry.

<sup>33</sup> Paruwela in local terms (Toraja language) means 'hut within garden'.

Many of the longstanding Toraja residents who were born in Parudongka identify strongly with that village. They built Parudongka together from just a transit point to become a settlement, and finally an official village (see Figure 3). This community effort has promoted a feeling of belonging, of Parudongka as their homeland rather than Toraja; many of the younger generation of Toraja in Parudongka have no information about their forebears in Toraja.

The houses in Parudongka were relocated by the local government to stretch along the dirt road to Lengkobale. This road was established by funding from the government with contribution from a logger. The logger maintains the road in reasonable condition, as it is the main transport route for logging trucks to the port. This means that Parudongka has the best access to the port of Lengkobale and hence to South Sulawesi. This proximity and comparatively easy access to Lengkobale allows Parudongka residents to travel frequently across to Timampu to buy staple goods, rather than buying them from the more expensive local kiosks.

Today there are no more dammar resin trees close to settlements because many of dammar concessions have been sold to the loggers, so many people have had to abandon resin collection. Instead people cultivate staple foods and cash crops, particularly cacao and, more recently, pepper. People tried to cultivate cacao and other cash crops such as cloves in the mid-1980s, but it was not a successful venture then. Pepper initially reached the Routa area around 1995, but after a few years it was abandoned because of low productivity and pests. With no agricultural support, people found they did not understand how to cultivate pepper properly at that time.

Encouraged by the success of neighbouring farmers in Bantilang<sup>34</sup> and motivated by the good pepper prices in 2009, people started to cultivate pepper again. They share knowledge about better modes of cultivation (in the absence of an agricultural extension officer — PPL). The successful growing of pepper vines has given people in Parudongka more hope. The roots of the pepper plant are shallow and so it is suitable for growing on sloping land (Kulkarni & Phalke, 2009: 161-162). The head of Parudongka now owns a 3 ha pepper farm, the largest pepper farm in Routa sub-district.

In addition to pepper farming, there is a sawmill in Parudongka. People who have a chainsaw usually work on a casual basis as wood-cutters, while others work as sawmill

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<sup>34</sup> Bantilang is the name of a village in Towuti sub-district, East Luwu district, South Sulawesi province, from whence many Toraja who live in Routa came (around 15 km from Tirawonua).

operators, sawmill workers and logging truck drivers (I discuss timber trading in Chapter Five). They often invest their wages in opening new land along deforested slopes to establish small holdings in cacao or pepper. There are many new smallholder pepper farms scattered throughout deforested areas between Lengkobale and Parudongka and between Parudongka and Tirawonua.

### Tirawonua

Tirawonua village is between Parudongka and Routa villages. People acknowledge Tirawonua as the former site of Routa village, which Grubauer visited in 1911. The elementary school in Tirawonua still uses the name 'Routa Elementary School' (SD Routa). The settlement was established by Bugis, Toraja and Tolaki who were initially engaged in dammar resin collection and trading. They used buffalo and horses to carry resin to Lengkobale, crossed Lake Towuti by canoe to Timampu, and then travelled by buffalo and horse to Malili on the Gulf of Bone.

Many people who were relocated outside to Linomoyo and Tadoloyo<sup>35</sup> during the DI conflict were motivated to return to Routa once peace was achieved, however some of the returning migrants, particularly the Tolaki, did not return there (today Tirawonua). According to the former village head, he suggested establishing a new village in a more convenient location along the road to Lengkobale. He called the place Kampung Baru (see Figure 3). Around 1990, he renamed it using the old village name; it is generally known as Routa village today. Only Tolaki households followed him to Routa. However, most of the Bugis and Toraja remained in the old village (which they then renamed Tirawonua), close to their irrigated rice fields and established houses. Until recently, Tirawonua and Parudongka have been known as the rice granaries of Routa. Today, Tirawonua has two main irrigated rice-field areas. One is close to the settlement, the other was built by government funding in the 1990s, located about 15 minutes' walk away at a site called Larumbu.

In the Tolaki language, Tirawonua means 'boundary'. It comes from the Tolaki *tepotira'anowonua*; *tira* means 'boundary' and *wonua*<sup>36</sup> means 'place' (see also Tarimana, 1993: 182 & 197). When I talked with Tolaki village elders, they told me that most of the

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<sup>35</sup> Both places are located in North Konawe district, Southeast Sulawesi province.

<sup>36</sup> *Wonua* is evidently an Austronesian cognate with '*banua*' meaning 'place/domain/country/inhabited land, territory supporting the life of community see [http://www.trussel2.com/acd/acd-s\\_p.htm#29870](http://www.trussel2.com/acd/acd-s_p.htm#29870)

Tolaki who consider themselves local people interpret 'Tirawonua' as referring to the boundary between themselves and migrants (Bugis and Toraja)<sup>37</sup>, reflecting its history. Residents in Tirawonua are comprised of 46.7% Bugis, followed by 14.7% Duri, 8.0% Toraja, 5.3% Luwu, 18.7% mixed, 5.3% non specified and only 1.3% Tolaki (Robinson et al., 2010: 90).

Tirawonua residents also began to cultivate cacao in the mid-1980s. Many of their farms are located in the highlands to the north near pathways to Bantilang village of Towuti sub-district, East Luwu district in South Sulawesi. People from Tirawonua and Parudongka still use these tracks to sell their resin or cacao products there, as an alternative to Timampu. From 2009, many started to cultivate pepper because of declining yields of cacao. Some still come occasionally to their largely abandoned cacao farms, but only to collect the small amount of saleable cacao pods. People in Tirawonua combine irrigated rice cultivation, smallholder cacao plantations (currently abandoned) and smallholder pepper vine plantations on the sloping land close to their village. Some people in Tirawonua also work as wage labourers in the sawmill or rice mill or as hand-tractor operators in irrigated rice fields.



Image 4. **Wet rice field and an irrigation channel (located in Larumbu, Tirawonua village)**

Tirawonua is the home of several Bugis traders, most of whom are related. The large Bugis trading families settled in the village and maintain close relationships with Bugis traders in Timampu. Trade relations were established during the resin and rattan

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<sup>37</sup> This was recounted frequently by a few influential elderly Tolaki people in Rوتا.

era around 100 years ago when the Dutch government extended active colonial rule to the hinterlands (around 1906).

Umar is the father of Haji Hendra (the owner of the largest timber company in Rوتا). He is a descendant of Bugis and Toraja who originally worked as a bookkeeper for Hamid, a successful Bugis trader in Lengkobale during the colonial era prior to World War II. People recall that during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945), Umar moved to Tirawonua to open an irrigated rice field. He then also engaged in the dammar resin trade. In the 1980s, the youngest son of Umar, Haji Hendra, expanded his business to rattan and timber trading. Other siblings and relatives of Haji Hendra also act as traders and farmers in Tirawonua. From then until now, the family retains control of a large area of irrigated rice land, as well as the local logging industry. They use their connections with government officials at both provincial and district levels to obtain licences for timber production from the government on behalf of local people.

### Rوتا

Lying about 1 km to the east of Tirawonua, Rوتا encompasses four numbered hamlets (*dusun*)<sup>38</sup>. Many new migrants settle at the boundary of the village with Tirawonua. Tolaki account for 45.5% of heads of households, followed by Bugis, 14.9%; there are other *suku*, including Bungku, Luwu, Toraja and Duri (Robinson et al., 2010: 83). When Rوتا sub-district was formed, Rوتا village was designated as the urban settlement (*kelurahan*). The head of the urban settlement (*lurah*) is not elected by the residents but appointed by the district government in Unaaha. Because the head of an urban settlement is a civil servant, he has more opportunity than other village heads to negotiate development funding from the district government to finance infrastructure projects.

Much government-funded infrastructure has been built in Rوتا, including an irrigation system<sup>39</sup>. This practice has led to the accusation of unfairness in the deployment of government funds by people in Tirawonua and Parudongka. When I visited Tirawonua and Parudongka, I found people complaining that the government had

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<sup>38</sup> *Dusun* is an administration area under a village.

<sup>39</sup> Government officers at both the sub-district and district levels argue for the allocation of more government funding to Rوتا village because it has been appointed as an urban settlement (*kelurahan*) and as the capital of the Rوتا sub-district.

allocated hand-tractors to Rouda although 'no one cultivates wet rice there' (I found only one household who did).

Discontent was also voiced about the placement of a mini-hydroelectric plant in Rouda. The people in Tirawonua believe that the hydroelectric plant in Rouda should also serve their village and they complained because the sub-district government did not invite them to discuss the project.

Today, the hydroelectric machinery in Rouda is broken. Due to mismanagement, it operated for only one week. The system was stretched beyond capacity; people are reluctant to fix it because they consider it belongs to the government. By contrast, since 2011 the people in Tirawonua had themselves raised money and successfully built their own hydroelectric plant, using water from the local river. Almost all households in Tirawonua today can enjoy electricity, even though it is only available for a limited time during the night (6pm to 6am) and provides 220 watts per household. The first irrigation facility in Tirawonua was also built on the initiative of people and is still in use. Public facilities established by community effort in Tirawonua are still used and are well maintained; the government-sponsored projects in Rouda have been much less successful.

There is a new SMP in Rouda village, built by funds from the Australian government and AusAID program in 2009, however many teachers' chronic absenteeism means that many residents in Rouda village continue sending their children to the Islamic school (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) located in Tirawonua village where teacher absenteeism is less of a problem.

Even though considerable government funding was allocated to Rouda, it appears that the development activities there were designed by particular district level elites who had limited prior communication with the community and, as a result, people do not have enough information and are not willing to participate in taking care of the facilities<sup>40</sup>. The development of the hydroelectric plant in Rouda is one such example. Neither the local government nor the contractor provided adequate explanation to users regarding the operation and maintenance of this plant. As a result, some households used electricity beyond the set allocation, leading to damage of the machinery, which quickly became

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<sup>40</sup> Many of my informants in Rouda claimed that the village head rarely discussed development plans with people in Rouda. This is very likely because the village head was largely absent; during my field study, I was aware of his presence in Rouda only once in nine months.

inoperable. With neither operational instructions nor any maintenance plan, it was abandoned for more than five years and at the time research was conducted it was not repaired.

The field staff of the mining company in Rوتا (SCM) organised a few informal discussions in 2012 with a small group of public-spirited individuals, including youth leaders and other community leaders from every hamlet in Rوتا village to restore the hydroelectric plant. After two months or so of informal discussion, the mining company then asked political elites at sub-district level to invite more people for further detailed discussion regarding the refurbishment of the plant. Many people came; some told me that they attended the meeting because of the clarity of information received and the sense of security and certainty gained. Some of them even stated that they did not mind raising money to restore the hydroelectric plant. The next day they joined forces to clean out the dam which fed the plant and I joined them in the exercise. However, until the end of my field work, the hydroelectric plant in Rوتا was still not working. The mining company staff along with local people were still struggling to find a mechanic who could repair it.

There are irrigated rice fields in Rوتا, which were established in 2000 on state land. According to the plan, the land was to be distributed, but today just one household is using it. Some people believe that is because the ownership of the land is unclear. People revealed that only a few villagers own the land within the irrigated area<sup>41</sup>; many of them worry that if they cultivate it, the owners would reclaim it. Other reasons for not using the irrigation were labour shortages and the lack of knowledge about *padi sawah* cultivation.

Due to the absenteeism of the official leadership, non-formal leaders such as religious leaders, traders and the village elders<sup>42</sup> play an important role in shaping local government decision-making and practice. They play a significant role as advisors, mediators and councillors in the community and the government. Such notable groups are the traders and money-lenders who are well established within the community as

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<sup>41</sup> According to the people in Rوتا, most of the paddy fields in Rوتا village have been sold to rich people both in Rوتا village and outside.

<sup>42</sup> Village elders in Rوتا are called *orang tua*, people who are experienced and have mastered a lot of information. Village heads and even sub-district heads always invite them to attend meetings regarding village development activities.



well. They establish their own local patronage networks which involve strong social and religious connections to the community, as some of them act as religious leaders.

As noted above, government facilities such as the sub-district office, the official home for the sub-district head (*rumah jabatan camat*), the community health centre (*puskesmas*) and police office (*polsek*) are not located in Kelurahan Routa but in Salubulili. People in Routa consider this location too far from the settlements for them to use, and the lack of availability of electricity and water causes difficulties for government officials when they reside there. There is no doctor, only some nurses and an orderly staying at the community health centre<sup>43</sup>. Medical supplies are not only very limited but medical knowledge appears rudimentary; many complain that whatever their malady, they are either treated for malaria or typhus by the nurses!

A parallel situation with staffing also happens with teachers in both elementary and junior high school. Teachers in both levels of school mostly live in Unaaha. They never stay long in Routa; they just come for less than one month and then go back to Unaaha to collect their salaries and stay with their families for two or three months, because transportation costs exceed their salaries. Because of this, schools have to rely on local people who graduated from senior high but are not trained to be teachers. This absenteeism of many government officials who mostly live in Unaaha causes government services to be most unsatisfactory for many people in Routa sub-district.

Despite the lack of government services, people continue to pursue their livelihood trajectories. Like those in other villages, since 2012 residents in Routa have opened other land areas in the forest to cultivate pepper because of the potential returns. Generally people receive information regarding the new techniques regarding new products, including using fertilisers, from traders who come from further afield. Based on the success achieved by many farmers in the neighbouring villages in North Kolaka, some traders have tried to persuade people to cultivate patchouli in Routa, so far with limited success.

In addition to cultivating pepper and trying patchouli, a few people in Routa still rely on forest products, particularly dammar resin and eaglewood (*gaharu*). At the end of the dry season they usually go fishing in the small lakes or swamps in the forest to supplement their daily needs.

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<sup>43</sup> Almost all nurses and the orderlies stay in the community health centre accommodation, as most of them don't have houses.

## Walandawe

The last of these villages is Walandawe<sup>44</sup>, located in a very beautiful valley flanked by high mountains with good quality water; the air feels fresher there. Some Bugis traders from Tirawonua and Timampu pay for agistment of their cattle in Walandawe, which has one of the few remaining large grazing areas in the sub-district. There are three hamlets in the village: Tetenggowuna, Walandawe (the centre) and Leperi.

According to a former village head Hanung<sup>45</sup>, Walandawe is an early settlement in the Routa sub-district. From 1919, the current site of Walandawe, formerly called Wiwirano, was the centre of the colonial administrative district (*onderafdeling*<sup>46</sup>). The district covered the Routa region including part of Asera<sup>47</sup>, now in North Konawe district. In the DI rebellion from 1952, almost all the people from Walandawe were displaced by the TNI to Kota Maju<sup>48</sup> in what is now North Konawe. In 1957, DI rebels successfully occupied areas as far as Linomoyo. The rebels then took Walandawe residents from Linomoyo back to Walandawe and built two new settlements. The first was located in the old settlement of Walandawe and another at Tirawonua. The first head of settlement in Walandawe was a man named Soradda (from Toraja), who was then replaced by Teboi<sup>49</sup> (a Tolaki) around the late 1960s. Soradda moved to Paruwela (now Parudongka). Most former Walandawe residents did not return to Walandawe after the DI rebellion had been put down in 1966, but created new settlements in regions around Laronaha and Linomoyo (North Konawe) and gave them the same names as their previous settlements, such as Wiwirano, Mopute, and Lalomerui. Walandawe was officially established as a village in 1998.

Although Walandawe is one of the early settlements, infrastructure there is limited in large part due to its rugged terrain and large rivers which have made it difficult to reach. There are two ways to get there: from Kendari through Lalomerui village; or from

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<sup>44</sup> In local terms *Wa* means *flow* and *Landawe* is the name of the river, so *Walandawe* means *the flow area of Landawe river*. 'Wa' in the *Austronesian Comparative Dictionary* means *there is/there exists*, see [http://www.trussel2.com/acd/acd-s\\_w.htm](http://www.trussel2.com/acd/acd-s_w.htm)

<sup>45</sup> A former head of Walandawe (1998-2009); he is Ansar's nephew as well as his brother-in-law.

<sup>46</sup> According to Robinson et al. (2010), based on a photo collected by Grubauer in 1911, the location of Wiwirano is where Puuwiwirano village is now. As an acknowledged expert on local land matters, Hanung believes Puuwiwirano village was formerly a part of Walandawe village before becoming officially separated in 2005.

<sup>47</sup> According to Hanung, Wiwirano district covers Routa up to Pondo a village in the North Konawe area, around 15 km from Lalomerui village.

<sup>48</sup> Kota Maju today is known as Tadoloyo and Linomoyo villages in North Konawe district.

<sup>49</sup> The uncle of Hanung (the first village head of Walandawe).

South Sulawesi crossing Lake Towuti and passing through Routa village. Both cross steep mountains and rivers without bridges. Although not the designated boundary, the river provides a natural boundary with Routa village. There are no logging companies interested in improving the tracks to Walandawe; presumably, considerable cost would be required to build roads and bridges to this frontier village. The absence of transportation facilities means Walandawe grows slowly compared to other first-established villages.

The Walandawe population is small compared to the other first-established villages. The small number of residents means economic activity is also low, including the level of agricultural production. There are only two households running kiosks there. One is owned by the village head and another is run by Jamil, the son of Pak Ansar, the first village head of Routa. Jamil receives support from his sisters, who are both traders in Routa. The kiosks sell a limited range of goods, such as instant noodles, canned fish, soap, shampoo and detergent. There was another trader in Tetenggowuna hamlet but he moved his kiosk to Lalomerui village near the oil palm accommodation in December 2011.

Many people in Walandawe still rely on gathering forest products, particularly resin and timber. They usually sell their dammar resin to traders in Routa and tend to sell their timber to the sawmill or timber traders in Lalomerui village. The exceptions to this pattern are the residents of Leperi hamlet, who are all new migrants from Toraja. They all cultivate cacao; none of them rely on forest gathering.



**Image 5. Panorama of Walandawe village**

Today there are only 33 households in Walandawe village, which is spread over three hamlets. The first hamlet is Tetenggowuna which lies between a mountain slope to the north and a large meadow to the south in the direction of Lalomerui village some 8

km from the second of the hamlets, Walandawe. The surrounding mountains include many dammar resin trees that are tapped by the hamlet residents. The mountains are also suitable for shifting cultivation (dryrice) and cacao farms. Tetenggowuna hamlet consists of eight households, all of whom are Tolaki who have close kinship ties with people in Lalomerui and Routa. It seems that some people who used to live in Tetenggowuna moved to Lalomerui to marry and to seek their fortune, but most of them do not want to totally abandon their assets, such as land and houses, so they leave their parents or other relatives in Tetenggowuna. Staple goods have to be brought in through Routa and transported through Walandawe or from Lalomerui. This is especially difficult during the wetseason. As a result, household goods such as rice, sugar or cooking oil can be scarce and expensive.

The second hamlet (*dusun*) is Walandawe, at the centre of the village. It lies on a valley floor, surrounded by tall mountains to the south and north. There is a large meadow to the south of the settlement, across the River Matarombeo, running from east to west; it is used for grazing buffalo and cattle belonging to the people in Walandawe and Bugis households in Tirawonua and Timampu. Walandawe hamlet consists of 17 households. Most of the people who reside there are Tolaki; only two households are headed by Bugis and both married Tolaki women from Walandawe. There is also one Torajan household which has moved from Leperi.

Leperi is the third hamlet in Walandawe village, located in the highlands of Walandawe, around 4 km to the southwest. All of the residents (around eight households) are Christian Torajans who migrated, mostly from Rongkong<sup>50</sup> in 2009. Most live in simple huts close to their cacao farms, and they still travel back and forth to Rongkong, to garner financial support from their families. I categorised the Toraja in Leperi as the third wave of Toraja migrants to Routa; whereas the first wave lives in Parudongka, the second wave lives in Tanggola village.

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<sup>50</sup> According to Nooy-Palm (1975: 61-62) Rongkong is one of four language groups in the Toraja and Luwu area; others are Sa'dan, Mamasa and Mangki. Nowadays, Rongkong is administratively under North Luwu regency of South Sulawesi province.



Image 6. Hut of a Torajan resident in Leperi hamlet of Walandawe village

Most of the Tolaki in Walandawe and Tetenggowuna cultivate dry rice for sustenance and to establish their ownership of the land. Over time, they will grow cash crops such as cacao or pepper vines. Usually, a few households organise adjoining fields for cultivating dry rice in one area, 0.5-1 ha per household. People often move temporarily from the settlement (*kampung*) to their staple farm at least twice, during land clearing and planting time, and one month before harvest time. Harvest time is enjoyable for children and other family members; they spend a few days living in the field huts (*pondok*) on the farms. Children help to carry rice, after the adults have harvested it (using the traditional finger knife called *ani-anisee* Image 7)<sup>51</sup>, to a central place for drying rice in the sun using racks. Children sometimes also carry drinking water to the adult workers. Generally, the yield of around 300–600 kg rice for one year will cover household consumption for half a year.

From about 2005, many of the Walandawe residents established cacao farms, but some cacao has suffered fungal attack since around 2010, and this has reduced the yields; as well as declining yields, the price of cacao has also fallen. However, some people can still pick up a limited yield from their cacao farms, probably because Walandawe is quite isolated and far from other villages, so the disease is less of a problem than elsewhere. In the last year a few people in Walandawe have started establishing pepper farms. Toward the end of my field work (July 2012), I found two households had begun planting pepper vines in their house yards.

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<sup>51</sup> It is a traditional finger knife well known in many parts of Indonesia; people in Java also called it *ani-ani*.





**Image 7. Ani-ani, traditional knife used for harvesting rice in Walandawe**

Unlike people in other first-established villages, in Walandawe people subsist; they cultivate dry rice regularly once a year, but it is not sufficient to last them until the next harvest. They combine subsistence from sedentary farming with collecting foods for essential items of food from the forest around the village. Most also rely on traders in Routa village. They use part of their income from cacao and dammar resin to meet their subsistence needs. Others also work as wage labourers in other villages (Routa or Lalomerui), timber fellers and collecting eaglewood. I found a household head who works as a carpenter. He always travels to other villages, particularly to Routa or Lalomerui, to refurbish or to erect houses.



**Image 8. Field hut of Walandawe people during the dry rice harvest**

Except for Walandawe, the basic infrastructure in the first-established villages is better than in other villages. Although very limited, there is one dirt road which connects

the port of Lengkobale with all parts of first-established villages region, except Walandawe. The road is maintained by the owner of the largest sawmill, which is located in Parudongka village. This route is the main access road to the markets in South Sulawesi for selling forest and agricultural products, as well as for people in Routa to buy goods for their daily needs, particularly in the wet season when access to Routa through Lalomerui village is impossible. Livelihoods of people in these villages have been established longer than in other villages, so the largest cacao and pepper farms and a few small rain and gravity-fed irrigated rice fields are located there. The easier access to the market in South Sulawesi results in all larger traders residing in Tirawonua and Routa, so in many instances people in a first-established village will receive a better price for their products. Instead of going to South Sulawesi themselves, people from other villages often visit Routa or Tirawonua to exchange or sell their products and purchase daily needs, which reduces transportation costs.

Most of the agricultural land in the region of these villages has already been occupied. People who own extensive landholdings are mostly Bugis traders who reside in Routa sub-district or Bugis traders who reside close to Routa, such as in Timampu or Luwu. They use the land to expand their cash-crop enterprises (currently pepper) or just leave it fallow, waiting for the price of land or pepper to rise.

There are also Tolaki people who own large tracts of land, mostly because they have inherited it from their forebears, however, there are very few who can prove their land ownership through the certificate issued by the National Land Agency (Badan Pertanahan Nasional). Some people who have bought land only have purchase receipts or 'land deeds' (Surat Keterangan Tanah (SKT)) from village heads. SKT provides a history of the land and is signed by witnesses who acknowledge ownership. On the other hand, much land that has been inherited from forebears is jointly owned by members of a particular family (some of them not living in Routa); their relatives who live in Routa usually ascertain the history of the land and other owners who live elsewhere hand control of the land to them to protect it from encroachment. Often, they also open dry rice fields and build huts to mark the land. In addition to land deeds and land history, Tolaki people also rely on natural boundaries such as rivers, hills and trees to designate their land. They often plant trees or put durable goods such as bottles around their huts as well.

## **New villages**

Political and economic backgrounds provide motivation for people to migrate. Most residents in the new villages, Tanggola, Puuwiwirano and Lalomerui, are migrants. They migrated to the new villages for a variety of reasons. One motivation is to secure the historical connection with their forebears who lived there before the DI rebellion; this is the case of many migrants in Tanggola and Lalomerui. Many claim the land base on the graves of their forebears<sup>52</sup>. Most of them then take advantage of securing the land by establishing farms, thereby using their skills in agriculture. Availability of land in the frontier allows them to extend their land holdings. In the new villages (except in Lalomerui), land was plentiful given the low population density of the region. Access to land for dry field cultivation was limited only by one's ability to clear it. In Lalomerui village, access to land is also easy but people need to walk further, up to two hours outside the oil palm concession. Unlike rural-urban migration where people move to look for work, migration on the frontier is undertaken by people who are in search of land (Shrestha, 1989: 370).

Unlike Tanggola and Lalomerui, migrants in Puuwiwirano did not have a historical connection with the village. All of them were persuaded by local government officials (village and sub-district) to migrate to Puuwiwirano. Eventually many of them returned to their place of origin or have chosen to live in other Rوتا villages.

## **Tanggola**

Tanggola was initially called '*Tanggola-gola*'; '*gola*'<sup>53</sup> means '*sugar*'<sup>54</sup> (*gula merah*) made from sugar palm (*aren*). Up until the end of the 1980s, this sugar was sold to resin gatherers from Parudongka and other villagers who were passing carrying dammar resin to Tirawonua, Parudongka and Lengkobale port. Today, the numbers of people who still make palm sugar in Tanggola are much reduced due to the advanced age of the palm trees and declining production.

Access to Tanggola is difficult, particularly in the wet season. There are two routes: via the logging road from Tirawonua, or via the walking path from Walandawe. Tanggola is surrounded by lush valleys and wide meadows with plenty of water from nearby

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<sup>52</sup> Some of my informants in Tanggola told me that their ancestors had been buried there.

<sup>53</sup> Toraja language.

<sup>54</sup> The sugar is tapped from the sugar palm tree, in local terms *pohon aren*. The water from the sugar palm is then processed to become palm sugar (*gula merah*) and is sold to people in Rوتا.



springs. It was formerly well known for plentiful grazing places; people from Tirawonua and Parudongka brought their cattle to these areas, or left their cattle to be agisted by the residents of Tanggola. Before the DI rebellion, around the 1930s, there were several Torajan residents in Tanggola. During the rebellion, the Indonesian army displaced them to Batusitanduk in Luwu district. From around 1965, the Tanggola area was abandoned until around 2000, when some of the children of the earlier Torajan migrants returned from Batusitanduk to establish cacao farms. I categorised Toraja who live in Tanggola as the second wave of Toraja migrants to Routa. Most were landless or poor labourers. Today, 17 households reside in the village. Most are descendants of the founders of Tanggola, but there are also three Bugis households and one Javanese, initially transmigrants, who had settled in Luwu district for three decades. Most of the residents from Toraja and Bugis are closely related. Lack of education and the low population resulted in the village head employing his wife as the head of Hamlet II (there are three hamlets in Tanggola), and to appoint his younger brother who graduated from a technical high school (STM) as village secretary.

Some of the residents of Tanggola —those who are young or couples who have children of school age — frequently travel back and forth to Batusitanduk, Tirawonua and Parudongka. In order to send their children to school, some also have houses in Tirawonua or Parudongka. The absence of a market requires people to travel regularly to the villages that were established earlier for their daily needs. There is only one small shop (*kios*) in Tanggola, operated since 2012 by a young Torajan from Batusitanduk. Initially, he intended only to provide goods for daily needs, but he has now expanded to facilitating the transport of the cacao harvest into the Timampu market or other villages.

Residents of all villages undertake communal work to overcome labour shortages in opening forest areas, building houses and harvesting their dry rice. There are no irrigated fields in the new villages, so people can cultivate only dry rice (*padi ladang*) as their staple food. Once the field is no longer suitable for rice<sup>55</sup> they will plant cash crops. They also cultivate vegetables; a few people have fish in ponds in their house yards and a few still make their own palm sugar. Recently, a number of young men have started cultivating pepper vines. They have opened up the new land along the paths from Tirawonua to Tanggola.

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<sup>55</sup> Most people only cultivate rice two or three times and then replace it with cacao or pepper, and then find other land to grow rice.

The lack of labour means that the village head's wife had to invite her brother from Duri to help look after and harvest her rice field (her husband was in the district capital, Unaaha dealing with the village budget). She complained about labour shortages which always occur in Tanggola during paddy harvest time.

Usually, people work together in rotation to clear around half a hectare of land using axes, machetes and chainsaws. Sometimes they borrow tools from people in other villages or their relatives and friends from their place of origin. They use the timber they clear to make poles for their pepper vines and for fences to reduce pig attacks. After clearing the land, they will wait until the tree branches dry completely; usually it takes three months or more. They then burn each location individually and wait for one or two weeks of rain. People work together again to plant the rice. After two to three years they will take advantage of land used to grow rice for planting a cash crop.

The lack of roads makes it difficult for people to carry agricultural items, which are generally heavy and voluminous, such as much-needed fertilisers, from Tanggola. Whenever I travelled back from Tanggola to Routa, I felt obliged to accept gifts such as bananas or vegetables, because they said they would rot if I did not take them. There is plenty there, but they cannot get it all to market. Situations like this cause most of the residents to long for road access and other facilities to improve their standard of living.



**Image 9. Tanggola resident with his dry rice yield**

### Puuwiiwirano

The other new village is Puuwiiwirano.<sup>56</sup> Currently, fewer than 10 houses are still inhabited in Puuwiiwirano (although 14 households are officially registered). Some of the few remaining people complain about the absence of transportation. There is only footpath access. Other people are concerned about the routine absence of the village head who more often than not stays in the district capital Unaaha, or even further away in Kendari. According to many Puuwiiwirano residents, the absence of the village head has resulted in the allocation of development assistance to villages other than Puuwiiwirano. Furthermore, his absence has led to the head of the Village Consultative Body (Badan Permusyawaratan Desa), who had settled there in the last three years, to act as village head. Under public pressure, he has proposed a village election to the district government in order to replace the current village head<sup>57</sup>, however it is possible the replacement of the village head will not produce significant change to Puuwiiwirano if government attention remains low. Many people in both Puuwiiwirano and Tanggola villages live for the day when a road will connect their villages to Lengkobale.

When farmers carry their produce on their backs to the traders in Tirawonua, they cannot carry their entire harvest in one trip. Each tiring trip takes days; even if they use a motorbike, people still spend a lot of time and up to half their income on fuel just to sell their crops. It appears that many people try to take up as much land as they can by planting cash crops, like cacao or pepper, while waiting for the road to be built.

### Lalomerui

Lalomerui is located approximately 40 km (but at least five hours travelling) from Routa village. The oil palm plantation company located around this village has built good dirt roads that connect Lalomerui to North Konawe district and to Kendari. Unfortunately, there is still limited access connecting Lalomerui to the other villages in Routa sub-district.

Walandawe is the nearest village to Lalomerui. Most of Lalomerui residents are originally Tolaki and have close kinship ties with the Tolaki in Walandawe and Routa. Panji and Razak, Tolaki elders in Lalomerui, told me that they used to live in Routa but moved to Walandawe and eventually to Lalomerui in order to find arable land (*mencari tanah*

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<sup>56</sup> *Pu'u* in Tolaki languages meant 'trunk' or 'origin' (see Chapter 2).

<sup>57</sup> According to Government Regulation No. 72 in 2005, Article 17, Paragraph 3, the village head may be dismissed based on the proposal of the Village Consultative Body (Badan Permusyawaratan Desa) to the head of district through the head of sub-district.

*subur*) to establish staple food crops. They said that initially they had been swidden farmers (*berkebun pindah-pindah*). Some of their offspring married people from Walandawe and Rوتا. The newly established road from Lalomerui to North Konawe enables people from Walandawe, particularly in Tetenggowuna hamlet, to travel to North Konawe more often to buy daily needs, rather than to Timampu.

Currently, most of the plantation workers' daily needs are provided by traders from outside Lalomerui, mostly Bugis who act as middlemen, supplying goods from Kendari. There are three kiosks in Lalomerui, but only one is owned by a local Lalomerui resident; the other kiosks are owned by a Tolaki migrant who moved from Tetenggowuna (a hamlet in Walandawe village) and a Bugis who migrated from the Bungku district in Central Sulawesi, and others. The Bugis trader who owns the biggest kiosk in Lalomerui has his own vehicle, which he uses to carry items from Kendari to each labour camp (*afdeling*) in the oil palm plantation. Other traders do not yet own such an asset.

Very few Lalomerui residents are involved as labourers in the oil palm plantation. Some of them told me that the wage was very low and most are not used to working regular hours. Long working hours mean they could not continue their practice of livelihood diversification. Instead of recruiting local people, the palm oil company recruits from other districts in Southeast Sulawesi province such South Konawe district and from Wawonii Island in Konawe district. They also recruit transmigrants from around northern Konawe and mobilise people from Flores in East Nusa Tenggara province.



Image 10. *Afdeling* of the oil palm plantation near Lalomerui village.

Instead of working with the palm oil company, people in Lalomerui still rely on dammar and timber gathering combined with cultivating dry rice; because of the expanse of the oil palm plantation, both these activities are now located far from their settlements. People grow vegetables in their house yards, and raise chickens. For other needs, such as clothing, school expenses for their children and rituals, they rely on selling timber from the adjacent forests. People are also taking timber from the forest to refurbish their houses.

A few of the people have tried to cultivate cacao, but the lack of skills, the location of the farms — now far from their settlement — and the problems of labour shortages have tended to hinder the successful establishment of these enterprises.

### **The villages-in-preparation**

The establishment of the new villages was influenced by political motivations to meet the requirement of a minimum of 10 villages in order to become a sub-district<sup>58</sup>. It is no secret that the proliferation of new villages and sub-districts will be considered a success story for a district head, and it will have a positive impact on the incumbent in district-level elections. Likewise, the ‘blossoming’ of new districts is always considered a sign of a successful governor. Local leaders in Routa proposed new villages (Tanggola, Puuwiwirano and Lalomerui) leading up to the district head election, first in 2007, before the district head election in 2008 and then they proposed the latest four new villages-in-preparation (Polihe, Tetenggowuna, Mopute and Watupali) in 2012 before the district head election in 2013.

Importantly, the Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation No. 28 of 2006 states that the aim of the formation of a new village is to provide public services that improve people’s welfare. It appears that the noble aim of the government regulation is a long way from realisation in Routa. In the two most recently established villages, Polihe and Tetenggowuna, to date only the village heads have been appointed<sup>59</sup>, with no supporting office staff. A noteworthy situation can be found in two other villages, Mopute and Watupali. In these two newly established villages, to date only the heads of the villages

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<sup>58</sup> Government Regulation Number 19 *in 2008*, Article 6, and Paragraph 1

<sup>59</sup> All of village heads in the four villages-in-preparation were appointed by the district government to prepare all the requirements to become official villages. The head of village in an official village must be elected by its residents, so the present village heads may not continue in this role once elections are undertaken.

and their families are living there. I met the head of Lalomerui village a few times during my field work before both villages were formally established. Unlike many people in Lalomerui, he graduated from an agricultural senior high school (Sekolah Pertanian Menengah Atas (SPMA)) in Makassar; he is also the son of the former Routa village head and has close ties to some influential people at district government level. He told me that he planned, in cooperation with the oil palm plantation company, to relocate migrant workers to those two villages and he suggested that the candidates for the positions of the village-in-preparation heads should discuss this matter with the leader of the oil palm plantation. The head of Lalomerui showed me a list of labourers from the oil palm plantation who could potentially reside in Mopute or Watupali; many of them may not choose to do so, because they prefer to stay in *afdeling* and commute regularly to South Konawe district and Wawonii Island in Konawe district where their families live. In addition, there is also discussion among political elites in Lalomerui and the head of sub-district (*camat*) about preparing to attract migrants to Mopute and Watupali. Neither of these plans have received community support; neither has any aspect which will improve the welfare of the community. In fact, quite the opposite may be the case. The migrant workers in Lalomerui are far from integrated into the community; neither do the locals want this, as there have been several instances of rape and violence which have been blamed on the migrant workers.

Although the formal requirements for becoming a village in Routa are still in progress, the formation of villages continues and this situation is repeated in many parts of Indonesia. Apparently, lobbying between particular political elites at all levels has more influence on decision-makers than fulfilling the criteria of being a village as mandated by government regulation. Many ordinary people still do not benefit from the difference between being an inhabitant of a hamlet or a village, because they receive no improvement in services after their hamlet is gazetted as a village. I have heard from people in Walandawe and Routa who believe that the formation of villages merely enables local elites in Routa to negotiate the amount of land and forest available to the palm oil company. These elites then receive gratuities from the company in the form of cash, or land compensation. Local leaders also expect that the establishment of the new administrative village would increase budget allocation to each village, so they would be able to use it to improve infrastructure, which may involve their own self-aggrandisement. By contrast, people in Walandawe have united behind the present village head and will not

give up their land to oil palm plantation expansion unless the company is willing to build a road that will improve the connection between Walandawe and Lalomerui.

### Kinship and *suku*

Before Routa was established as a sub-district, all village heads (Tirawonua, Routa, and Walandawe) except those of Parudongka were Tolaki. Interestingly but not coincidentally, these Tolaki village heads are all related (see Figure 4). Pak Ansar was the former first village head of Routa village. Daru was the first village head of Tirawonua village. Daru (also known as Dasran) is Pak Ansar's nephew. Aksan, a son of Dasran, held the position of village head of Puuwiwirano until recently.

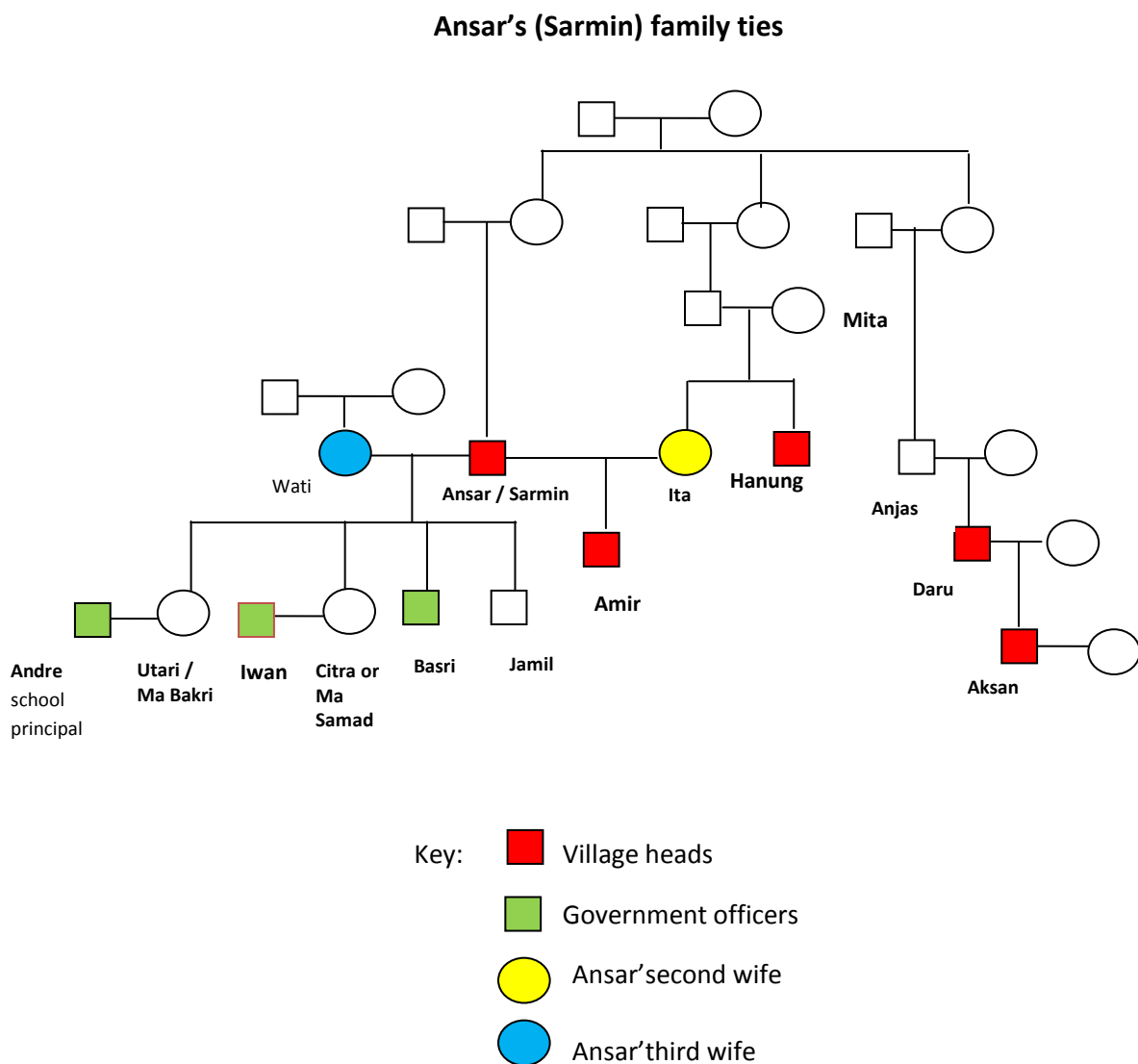


Figure 4: Family influence in Routa sub-district

Hanung was the first head of Walandawe village. He is also Pak Ansar's brother-in-law as well as his nephew. Hanung is a son of Mita who is Pak Ansar's cousin. Ita, the elder sister of Hanung, became Pak Ansar's second wife. Amir (Pak Ansar's son from his second wife, Ita), took over as village head of Routa after Pak Ansar in 1994. He led Routa from 1994-2000. Amir was replaced by Iwan (from 2000-2005), who is married to Pak Ansar's daughter from his third wife (Wati). Amir then moved to become the head of Lalomerui village, and he still holds this position.

After Routa was established as a sub-district in 2005, the status of Routa village was changed to that of an urban village (*kelurahan*); the urban village head must be a civil servant. Iwan was then replaced as a village head by a civil servant appointed by the district government. Iwan was not a civil servant at the time; he became a civil servant and has been working as a statistical officer for Routa sub-district since 2007. This appointee was also Tolaki. From 2005, when Routa was established as a sub-district, there have been only seven villages (*desa* — Parudongka, Tirawonua, Routa, Walandawe, Tanggola, Puuwiwirano and Lalomerui). Except for the heads of Parudongka, Tirawonua and Tanggola, all the other four village heads are Tolaki. Recall that the population of Tirawonua is predominantly Bugis, whilst the dominant group in both Parudongka and Tanggola is Toraja.

There is longstanding Tolaki domination in government positions in Routa. Since the time when Routa was only one village, Tolaki have been leaders in this area, beginning with Pak Ansar, who rose from forestry officer to village head. He established good communication with government officials at the district level. Routa falls administratively under Konawe district, where Tolaki are regarded as the indigenous people. Many officials in the Konawe district government are also Tolaki, and some of them are related to people in Lasolo and Asera in North Konawe. As a result, many of the government positions, such as teachers, health officers, sub-district officers and urban village officers, are held by Tolaki. Some officials are Bugis or Toraja, particularly those serving as police officers or in the army. This is probably because the police and army recruitment process is conducted by the central government in Jakarta.

By contrast, Bugis and Toraja control most of the economic activities in the Routa area. They act as middlemen and money-lenders. Initially they controlled the trading of timber and other forest products, notably dammar resin.



At the time of the cacao era, and more recently pepper, Bugis and Toraja traders stepped in as middlemen. To some extent, the limitation of transportation requires that all products traded from the Routa area can only go to market through Timampu in South Sulawesi. This circumstance allows Bugis and Toraja who come from South Sulawesi to dominate trading activities in Routa. The similarity of language, culture and kinship relations between Bugis in Routa and Bugis in Timampu have facilitated their control of economic activities in Routa.

## **Conclusion**

Settlements in Routa sub-district can be classified into three categories, early, new and villages-in-preparation. The formation of each settlement was based on cultural similarity, family ties and livelihood considerations. Members of the same cultural-linguistic group, who often have family ties as well, set up an initial settlement and they may move several times in order to find the best place to establish secure livelihoods and make a reasonable profit, so kinship plays an ongoing and important role in people's access to farming, trading and many government positions. People who live in the settlements that were formed early feel more at home. Although their settlements were destroyed by the DI rebels, most of the former residents in first-established villages returned and rebuilt their settlements. They have a sense of belonging in and to the settlements they have painstakingly built together. On the other hand, settlements formed on the initiative of local government are not able to engender a feeling of togetherness and a sense of ownership among the residents; as a result many of the residents return to their places of origin or move to other established settlements (an example of this is Puuwiwirano). A sense of belonging can promote a sense of responsibility to maintain and to preserve.

Politically, the formation of settlements in Routa is intended to address the problem of labour shortages; it is hoped that the new villages will attract more people to migrate to Routa. Local leaders are also using the strategic formation of villages (villages-in-preparation) to entice workers in the palm oil company to settle permanently in Routa, as they can receive an allocation of agricultural land. People who came on their own initiative in the early days of settlement tended to stay permanently in Routa, such as those who live in first-established villages, while those who have come on a promise of development that did not eventuate have tended to return, such as those migrants who came to Puuwiwirano.

Economic opportunity on the frontier has influenced the formation of settlements. The abundance of dammar resin provided an economic attraction for groups of Bugis and Toraja. They established temporary settlements (*kampung*) close to the forest which was rich in dammar trees. Toraja preferred to reside close to Lake Towuti (in Parudongka) so they could easily collect and transport dammar resin to the port, where they were also able to continue their traditional leisure pursuit, gambling. Some of them moved further into the forest as far as Tanggola. Bugis who also acted as middlemen and money-lenders tended to live in Lengkobale, and some of them moved further into the forest (Tirawonua) in order to buy more dammar resin from the resin collectors. On the other hand, groups of Tolaki who were originally from Southeast Sulawesi province chose to live in the villages close to access to the district capital in Unaaha. Until recently (2012), more than a half of the village heads under Routa sub-district were Tolaki. Other groups opt to settle in the areas where they can control arable land. Although people from different places of origin have different preferences in terms of settlement and livelihoods, when allowed to develop at their own pace, they create complementary roles.

Even though there was rapid growth of new settlements in Routa in the period of Reformation (1998 – present), it did not generate any significant improvement in social services in these areas. Rather, the facilities built by the government, such as the health centres and other government buildings, not only remain under-utilised but are falling into disrepair. Salubulili could have been considered strategic in terms of its location, but the plan failed because of its exclusive and preferential bias. Even the head of the sub-district (*camat*) is reluctant to stay there.

The fact that the development carried out on the initiative of local people can provide good services, such as the hydroelectric plant in Tirawonua, indicates that people can build and maintain improvements with appropriate support.

Not only is proposed development in Routa sub-district often poorly conceived but it is supported financially by government at all levels. The planners are never required to be accountable for their decisions, nor the execution of them. Government intervention which should benefit all is benefiting only political elites at the expense of ordinary people. Development initiated locally is apparently more effective and appears to have integrity which is so lacking in government planning.

## Chapter Four

### Livelihoods on the margins

#### Introduction

When I arrived in Routain 2011, it was early in the dry season in many parts of Indonesia, but rain was still falling in Routa and surrounding areas. Many people I met in Lengkobale talked about the slippery track to Routa. Some described it more like a continuous puddle of mud than a track. Fortunately a vehicle had already been arranged to meet a mining company official arriving from Kendari, so I was able to travel with him. It is more comfortable and somewhat safer travelling in a four-wheel-drive vehicle than on the back of a logging truck. In a logging truck, you ride on the tray, and if you do not want to be thrown off you rely on your strength to hold onto the thick chain used for holding down timber. It is actually quite dangerous, but for many people it is common place because the only other choice is to walk. At other times when I visited Routa, however, I journeyed on all the types of vehicles commonly used, including the logging trucks and motorcycles, an even more hair-raising alternative, negotiating the muddy and slippery tracks, particularly when climbing steeply and heading downhill.

Food, staple items and many sacks of fertiliser are transported by the tiny boats travelling daily from Timampu to Lengkobale and then by logging trucks to the long-settled villages in Routa sub-district. The staple goods belong to the owners of kiosks and to small traders. The owners of the trucks are the timber traders and a few prominent traders (patrons) in the long-settled villages (Parudongka, Tirawonua and Routa), most of whom are of Bugis origin. The trucks bring timber and boards from the timber mill and cash-crop yield to the port of Lengkobale, and then bring goods and people back to Routa and other villages. Truck owners will give priority to their clients; others must pay if they want to use such 'luxurious' transportation in Routa.

I spent time chatting with people selling staple goods in stalls around the port of Lengkobale and learned that many who began to cultivate cacao in 1995 (at almost the same time they tried unsuccessfully to cultivate pepper) in villages in Routa sub-district have come full circle; they are now cultivating pepper again, but this time more successfully and it now appears to have resulted in a peak time. This chapter will discuss how households on the margins make a living and maintain their livelihoods.

## **General overview of people's livelihoods**

In addition to pepper, some people, particularly traders, have begun to cultivate patchouli (*nilam*), a new crop in 2011, in response to marketing information regarding its increasing price. I found information concerning the price of patchouli on my travels back and forth a few times from Routa to Kendari via north Kolaka. Although the price was generally high, not many people were growing it yet at the time of the research.

The lack of government assistance means there is neither government agricultural support nor representation of any formal agricultural institution that can offer extension services and help people cope with farming problems, such as controlling pests or disease, or teaching them how to undertake more productive farming methods. This has resulted in a general lack of understanding and up-to-date knowledge of good farm management. Most of the innovations that people carry out are based on information of success from their neighbours and market demand, which is often driven by traders.

To some extent, most traders have more assets than other people which allows them to buy labour to establish their own farming enterprises, larger than those of most farmers. They are farmers with traders' mindsets; they see opportunities and capitalise on them. The advantage of travelling back and forth to the markets allows them access to information. This influences their farm management decisions. They are willing to take risks and can do so because their livelihood does not depend on that decision alone. Most of the traders in Parudongka and Tirawonua have large wet rice farms which generate yields excess to personal requirements. They can take the chance to try something new, especially if it appears a good business opportunity based on market information. This means they are at the forefront of innovation and can take advantage of new trends. Like everyone else, most traders also diversify their sources of income, but they do so with a different purpose. Traders diversify livelihood sources to accumulate assets.

Unlike traders, many people in Routa need to give priority to providing for household subsistence by growing staple foods. They do not have the ability, as traders do, to use the opportunity of the markets because they are comparatively isolated from such information and from capital.

In order to secure their basic needs, each member of a household regardless of age or gender plays an important economic role in generating income and minimising cash crises. In addition, most households have to diversify; they have to supplement their livelihoods with various on-farm and off-farm activities.

There is a range of part-time jobs which are usually undertaken by household members to increase household income. People can work independently and show entrepreneurial skill, or they can work as wage labourers on a casual basis. Besides being farmers, a few combine a farming enterprise with being a civil servant<sup>60</sup>; many others combine farming with being wage labourers, logging truck drivers and more physically demanding tasks such as *kondektur* of logging trucks and timber fellers.

### **Assets**

Many scholars, such as Rakodi (1999), Krantz (2001), Haan and Zoomers (2005), Hussein and Nelson (1998: 3), Scoones (2009) and global development institutions that have been using the livelihood approach when addressing poverty such as the UNDP, CARE, DFID and IDS emphasise the importance of assets in constructing people's livelihoods. They assert that assets can encourage empowerment and change people's lives. Bebbington maintains that:

A person's assets, such as land, are not merely means with which he or she makes a living: they also give meaning to that person's world. Assets are not simply resources that people use in building livelihoods: they are assets that give them the capability to be and to act. Assets should not be understood only as things that allow survival, adaptation and poverty alleviation: they are also the basis of agents' power to act and to reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources (1999: 2022).

In terms of human assets, seasonal labour shortage is one of the main restrictions on developing livelihoods in Rouda. The households who are facing difficulty in attracting people from outside are forced to use casual wage labourers within the villages. The low population density means that people in Rouda sub-district carry out reciprocal labour for their private farming, for planting and harvesting. Formal education is not necessary for their occupations. People learn through experience and observation to enhance their skills, their capacity to manage and to expand their livelihoods. Households who own a particular asset can capitalise on this; those who own a chainsaw can work to provide poles for pepper vines or as a timber feller, those who own a motorcycle can work as a taxi (*ojek*), and those who have skill in driving logging trucks can work as drivers.

The abundance of natural resources, such as land, water and a range of products from the forest, advantage people in this remote place. As long as people are prepared to

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<sup>60</sup> In Indonesia, a civil servant's salary is low, barely enough to support a couple, let alone a family.

live a more isolated existence, they can take up land a little way into the forest; land yet to be cleared is free for every migrant. Products are available in the forest to support the establishment of livelihoods and commodities can be exchanged for initial capital to develop livelihoods. Forest products such as eaglewood belong to no one; people can collect it from the jungle and if they are lucky it will not only be sufficient for daily needs, but may also serve as a financial asset. Most of the natural assets such as land and water are plentiful in Routa; people can obtain them freely, albeit with effort.

The absence of a formal financial institution has caused people to rely on their patron for financial assets. In addition to acquiring a patron, many people diversify their livelihoods, not only for survival, but also often to increase financial resources. Some people may have yields in excess of requirements, such as from eaglewood if they are lucky, and the present boom in pepper may increase the possibility for more people to expand their financial assets. A few who have had success with pepper have considered buying gold that they can sell again in a time of crisis.

The arrival of both the oil palm and mining companies has improved physical assets, particularly roads, which has increased mobility both within the Routa area and outside the sub-district. This has enabled new information regarding agricultural techniques and markets to spread to villages within the sub-district.

### **Staple foods**

Just a few people (mostly Tolaki) still occasionally harvest vegetables and catch fish from the jungle around their settlements to provide additional protein. The number and variety of staple foods from the forest, however, have been continually diminishing with the population pressures, timber trading and cash crop expansion. For this reason, people now rely on rice, both from upland fields and from irrigated fields. Many settlers, particularly the Bugis in Tirawonua and the Toraja in Parudongka, tend to favour irrigated paddy fields, while many Tolaki in Walandawe, Lalomerui and a few households in Routa remain engaged in upland dry rice cultivation practices; they clear secondary forest areas to cultivate dry rice fields in the manner of their forebears before establishing cash crops.

Tolaki households establish dry rice fields to secure food supplies for the household. The local tradition of seed varieties, planting techniques and timing developed by trial and error produce relatively stable and reasonable yields given the circumstances. Where in the past dry rice cultivation was most common, it is now grown for rituals, food

security and for seed. They use the yield from dry rice fields (*pae galu/padi ladang*) to serve household members and guests on important days such as the feast of Eid. From my observations, I found that many people used the yield from their dry rice fields as their food security. People rarely sell the yield from *padi ladang*, but prefer to use their income from cash crops to buy rice from *padi sawah* for daily consumption. They tend to keep *padi ladang* as insurance against hard times. Another use of *padi ladang* is for seed production. They can readily identify which seed to keep for future sowings.

Scott asserts that 'subsistence-oriented peasants normally preferred to avoid economic disaster rather than take risks to maximize their average income' (1976: vii). Furthermore, he argues that 'typically the peasant cultivator tends to avoid the failure that will ruin him rather than attempting speculation or risk'; this is a 'safety first' approach (the term is borrowed from Roumasset (1971 cited in Scott, 1976: 15), which takes account of the fact that of necessity, peasants give priority to producing sustenance rather than goods to sell. This is especially true for Tolaki.

Irrigated rice is a main staple food for the villages of Tirawonua and Parudongka. There are two harvests a year in the sub-district, around May and October. Both these settlements have long-established productive irrigated fields that cover self-provisioning and sometimes provide a surplus that is sold to settlements that do not have well-established rice production. However, more often than not, much of the rice required to fulfill the demand for staple food is imported from outside Rوتا, particularly from areas in southern Sulawesi.

### **Addressing labour shortages**

In Rوتا, there is abundant land. From my observation, due to the labour shortage problems, households can effectively maintain around only 1 ha of cash crops and less than 1 ha for staple foods. There are some people with more than 2 ha of land, but much of it is poorly maintained or left fallow. Households have to optimise available labour inputs in their agricultural enterprises, with some division of labour by gender and also age; children are included in the pool of available labour.

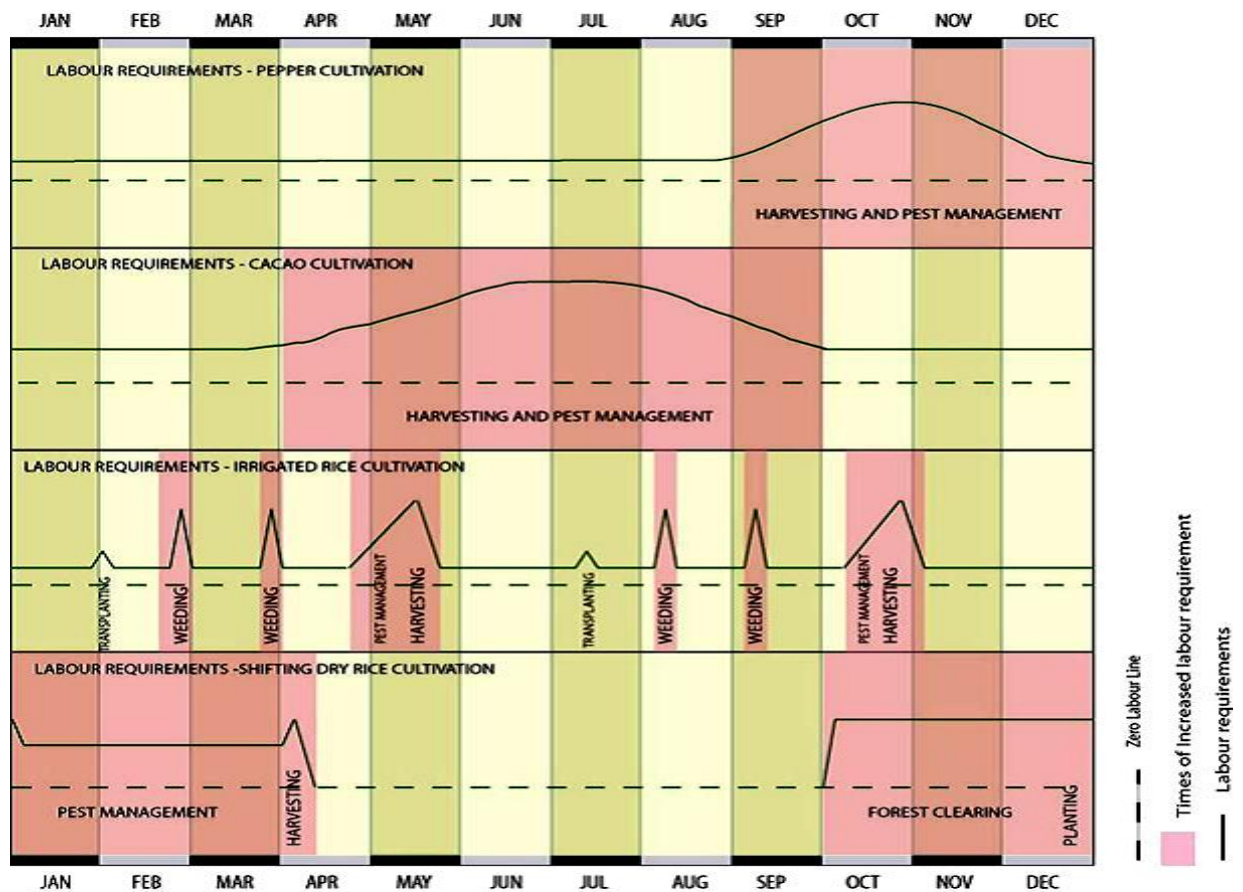


Figure 5. **Seasonal labour requirements for the four main agricultural activities in Routa sub-district** (cited in Robinson et al., 2010: 15).

During my field work in 2011, I found that the pattern of development of labour in Figure 5 (for 2008) has changed, mainly because many households have reduced their labour allocation to their cacao enterprises. So many households concentrate on establishing pepper that they use their labour to clear land, fell trees for poles, cultivate pepper vines and spread organic fertiliser around their plants. As a result, labour that was used to harvest and undertake pest management in cacao fields from May to August has shifted to establishing pepper acreages. They then wait for rain before starting to plant the vine cuttings, usually from September to December. People also usually spread organic fertiliser in January, before harvesting their pepper from March. People carry out weeding activities and pest management in May and June, and by June and July they can harvest again.



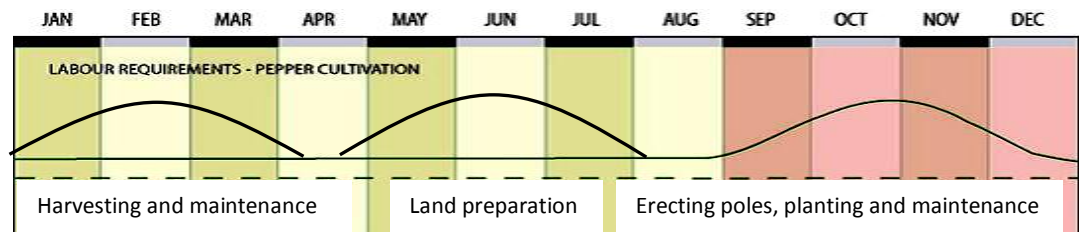


Figure 6. Annual allocation of labour to grow pepper

Chronic labour shortage is a major issue for many people in Routa, restricting the expansion of their farming enterprises as well as adversely affecting the operation of their main form of livelihood. With the partial exceptions of Java and Central Thailand in relatively modern times, Reid (1983 cited in Acciaioli 1989: 168) states that 'the key of Southeast Asia's social system was the control of men' rather than the control of land. This was because of the abundance of land in many parts of Southeast Asia. The accumulation of followers and control over manpower were the keys to wealth and political advance. Individual chiefs strove to gather manpower by offering security and goods. The Routa region is no exception; power is predicated on the accumulation of followers who are the source of labour as well as being clients in patron-client relationships.

Lack of manpower enhances the role of a patron-client relationship; a patron will always try to encourage more migrants, adding to his list of clients and binding them while overcoming his seasonal labour shortage problem. Timber traders, both in Parudongka and Routa, also rely on invited migration as well as independent migration to fill labour requirements to run their timber mills. I met some of the migrants in the sawmill close to Routa village. A few had come from Borneo; others had come from areas surrounding Routa. Most have family ties to the sawmill owner. They also told me of their plans to establish cash-crop farms in Routa with the support of their mentor. Many households in Routa sub-district use their far-flung kinship networks to overcome labour shortage problems.

Generally landowners (patrons) persuade members of their extended family who live near Routa to migrate there. I observed that most Bugis people prefer to seek the involvement of their relatives in establishing and expanding cash-crop enterprises and timber-trading activities. Prior to coming to Routa, a young man who had dropped out of the engineering faculty at a university in Makassar tried to find a job in Makassar, however, after a few years, he was still unsuccessful. On one occasion in 2010, he visited

his home in Palopo and heard from his older brother who had moved from Palopo to Routa. In 2010, he visited Routa at the invitation of his older brother who had been successful in establishing a good pepper plantation and a shop. He came to help his brother pick pepper because his brother did not have enough workers. His brother then promised to give him some of his vacant land, so that in time he could establish his own pepper farm.

Guntur, one of the prominent traders in Routa, has also brought two of his nieces from Palopo in South Sulawesi to Routa. One of them graduated from Hasanuddin University in Makassar; she now works as a bookkeeper in his kiosk.

It is not only patrons who overcome labour shortages through invited migration, households who are not traders in villages such as Walandawe also rely on invited migration. Hanung is a farmer in Walandawe village. As the former long-term village head he had access to information about land and its availability. The low population in this village compared to the land available meant that he was able to take up land in secondary forest<sup>61</sup> areas located within walking distance of the settlement.

Opening new arable land requires additional labour, so in order to help, people like Hanung engage people in their extended family to overcome labour shortages, which are particularly acute not only when opening new land but also in times of harvest and planting. By inviting more of his relatives from northern Konawe to join him, Hanung could open more new land compared to other villagers. Hanung told me that after harvest in around five months' time, he would be able to distribute the yield to all his family members who were involved in establishing this rice field. After harvesting, Hanung would also divide and distribute the land where he initially grew rice for cash crops. Each household can then use the land to grow their own cash crops and take responsibility for it. Dove (1983: 85) argues that in his research site in Kalimantan swidden agriculturalists do not possess land communally, but land is typically owned by individual households. It is established by household labour forces and/or by reciprocal labour but not communal work groups. The yields are owned and consumed privately and individually by each household.

Some of the invited labourers eventually become migrants; they initially travel back and forth several times to help with peak labour needs at clearing, planting and

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<sup>61</sup> 'Secondary forest' means that the millable timber has already been removed.

harvesting. They receive rice in payment. Some prefer to stay because they have been less successful in their places of origin; others find a mate in Routa and look for land to establish a livelihood as a farmer. Others who have married in their places of origin find they can live better in Routa and eventually will move their family there; newlyweds come to seek their fortune, following their dreams of success.

After growing cash crops people can use their free time to open new land to start growing more rice. This is the pattern of expansion of farming enterprises in Routa. Initially they may farm rice using invited labour but when they follow rice with cash crops, each household must take primary responsibility for a particular area, so they still use invited migration when necessary, as described by Hanung above. Every person must oversee their own farm to protect it from the ravages of wild animals, but the degree of work demanded depends on the farm's proximity to the jungle.



Image 11. **Traditional communal pestle, optimising child labour to de-husk rice in Lalomerui village**

Reciprocal labour arrangements are used for wet rice field (*padi sawah*) cultivation. In terms of harvesting rice, each person involved will receive a certain amount of rice as payment; people who come to help at harvest time receive one bundle out of every eight cut. In wet rice situation, both in Parudongka and Tirawonua, people use hand tractors to maintain their rice fields. The hand-tractor operator will receive Rp 450,000 (AUD 45) for every hectare he ploughs, but he has to pay to the owner of the tractor Rp 200,000 (AUD 20) and spend around Rp 50,000 (AUD 5) for fuel, so he will received Rp 200,000 (AUD 20)

per hectare. If the land is quite soft he can manage to work up to 2 ha a day. Labour shortages are partly resolved using agricultural mechanisation, and then only to cultivate the field; planting and harvesting require a workforce. There were around five hand tractors in Tirawonua and three in Parudongka.

People who own tractors usually establish share-cropping arrangements with surrounding rice farmers, receiving up to one-third of the crop for use of their land. The owners of tractors in Tirawonua village also own the rice mill, so they can receive an additional income from it. For every 8 kg of rice produced, the owner of the rice mill gets 1 kg and the owner of the paddy receives 7 kg. Many people come to mill their rice, including a few who cultivate dry rice. Others still use a traditional communal pestle to release the husk from the grain, followed by winnowing. Generally, the owner of tractors and rice mills are also traders who act as *bos*. The ownership of strategic assets allows them to bind their followers to them.

The owners of tractors and rice mills are able to allocate more of their time to taking care of their cash crops or maintaining their trading businesses. By contrast, a worker who does not have the benefit of mechanisation has only time enough for his cash crops after he has finished cultivating his rice and undertaken other activities that sustain his subsistence. From these circumstances, it seems that the rich can freely allocate their time to lucrative activities while the poor must allocate more of their time to fulfil their subsistence first; also the rich can exchange their excess assets for labour.

In the case of establishing a pepper farm, setting up the support poles for pepper vines is a pivotal task for men. Farmers must find good quality wood in the forest, such as *kayu besi* or *Kumea*, chosen for its durability; sometimes they use off cuts from sawmills. For poles, farmers go to the forest and cut timber (men usually use a chainsaw), and then split them into lengths of about 4 m using a chainsaw or an axe. The prepared pepper poles then need to be hauled to their farm, which usually takes more than one week (depending on how far away it is).

All household members including the women and children are involved in planting the vines. Later, the entire household will be involved in harvesting the pepper, but if there is a shortfall in the workforce, they often invite wage labourers (commonly women in the village) to pick the pepper fruit. Women and children always carry out the processing with a little help from menfolk, spreading the green peppercorns out in the sun to dry until they are ready for sale.



Image 12. **Pepper poles and newly planted vines**

How close farmers live to the farm will determine how much time is allocated to it. Pa Andi who lives across the road from his farm took one month to establish around 100 poles, while Isnain who lives around 1km from his farm needed more than two months to establish the same number. Maintaining the pepper vine after planting is also important for high productivity. After a three-month period, the farmer will layer<sup>62</sup> branches in order to make the pepper vine grow more lushly and produce more fruiting branches. Most households fertilise with purchased organic fertiliser<sup>63</sup> in order to stimulate faster growth during these first three months (see the explanation below).

Pa Andi comes routinely to his almost 1 ha pepper farm. His farm is far cleaner than Isnain's. Many new migrants who arrived in the last five years do not have a house in the village so they live in huts (*pondok*) on their farm. This includes Toraja people who settled in Leperi (a hamlet in Walandawe village) as well as new Bugis migrants in the area close to Routa village called Bininti, many of whom are from Bantilang and Palopo (South Sulawesi).

Living on site allows them to allocate more time to taking care of their pepper farms. On one occasion when I travelled from Puuwiwirano village to Tanggola village I met two families, one Bugis and one Toraja, who chose to stay on their farms; they

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<sup>62</sup> 'Layering' is a horticultural term which involves choosing the most vigorous branches, bending the pliable branches down to the ground and covering them with soil so they will grow roots and the make the vine more dense, thus allowing more fruiting branches to form.

<sup>63</sup> Organic fertiliser consists of chicken faeces mixed with other composted plant matter.



explained that they monitor their plantation for one or two years if they plant cacao but for pepper, they think that they need to stay longer. Pepper is more vulnerable to pest attack and periods of water shortage than cacao, and there are special treatments they need to undertake for the young pepper plants in order to stimulate growth and promote faster fruiting such as weeding, layering branches and watering them if necessary.



Image 13. **Women wage labourers as pepper pickers in Routa**

Another strategy used to overcome labour shortages is the rate of establishment of a new farm. Many establish their pepper plantations in a piecemeal fashion. Initially they setup around 100–300 pepper poles; it depends on the number of household members and invited labourers who can participate. They maintain around 0.1–0.3 ha of their pepper poles until it grows well; that usually takes three to six months. After three months, farmers gradually add more poles but often fewer than the initial number, usually about 100–150 poles because they need time to maintain the previous poles as well. Farmers tend to reduce labour allocation to each pole as their pepper plants become older and then they focus more on expanding their pepper plantations.

Pa Andi can concentrate on taking care of his new pepper farms. He initially established less than 0.5 ha of his pepper farm (around 300 pepper vines). Now he goes to his new pepper farm almost every day starting from around 6 am, until 5 or 6 pm. He usually takes a rest for lunch for 2–2.5 hours, incorporating a siesta. On the other hand, Isnain (who lives next door to Pa Andi) has three farm locations; cacao and pepper which are located around 1 km from his house and wet rice at the back of his house. Even though Isnain receives help from his son Arsal (who lives in an adjacent house) and

another son Armin (who lives in Bantilang but always comes to Routa to help), they still cannot maintain their pepper farms as well as Pa Andi can. In fact, we could argue that from an economic point of view, given the shortage of labour, it would be more valuable for them to concentrate on growing cash crops that they could exchange for staple foods. Pa Andi did it this way from the outset, however most like the longstanding settlers choose to avoid risk by spreading their assets across staple foods and several cash crops.

### **Improving welfare through cash crops**

From around the 1990s, many households in Routa sub-district including the Tolaki began to grow cash crops. When the rice crop fails they can rely more heavily on their cash crops (cacao or pepper) to meet their daily needs. On the other hand when the price of cash crops falls, farmers can still rely on their rice fields (Dove, 1983: 95).

Today, many people in Routa have profited from the fruit of their pepper vines. There are people, particularly the Bugis, who rely solely on cash crops (cacao or pepper) for their livelihood; they obtain rice and other daily needs from their patrons, the cost of which eventually will be deducted from the value of their cash crops. In frontier places agriculture will transform from subsistence to partly commercial crops, which anticipates commercialisation (Norton, 1977: 463).

People who live in Parudongka and Tirawonua began cultivating pepper earlier than other villages. Some commented that many people, such as those in Walandawe and some in Routa village, take a 'wait-and-see' attitude until others have success. They have just started cultivating pepper after they saw that many in Parudongka and Tirawonua were enjoying success with this cash crop.

One month before my field work ended in 2012 when I took my last trip to every village, I found almost all households in Routa sub-district were cultivating pepper or are in the process of establishing their own pepper plantations. They were excited talking about cash crops. Most of them have great hopes with pepper as the market price is high; it is around Rp 60,000–Rp 75,000/kg (AUD 6.0–7.5) high compared to cacao, which is only around Rp 15,000–25,000/kg (AUD 1.5–2.5). A few can achieve up to 500 kg of pepper per hectare per year, harvesting about half a kilogram per pole. The hilly landscape<sup>64</sup> and sloping land is an ideal place for the development of pepper plantations. People consider

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<sup>64</sup> Local people call the hilly land 'red soil' or in local terms, *tanah merah*.

that in the flat lands, pepper will suffer from root rot as rainfall is slightly higher in Rouda. Most of the knowledge they have is based on their everyday experience or shared experience from their neighbours. I found that many of them do not really know what is needed to establish a good pepper plantation such as selecting good seeds, the right dose of and the timing to spread fertiliser or to undertake pruning, which are required to increase production. Unfortunately the local government does not provide agriculture or tree crop extension services.

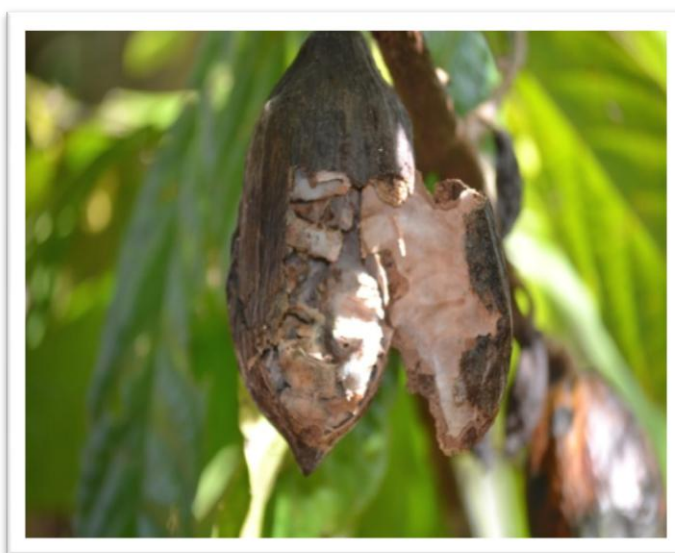


Image 14. **Cacao disease**

Generally, when establishing cash crops, people do not use good quality seeds. Most do not buy seeds; they rely on a supply from their neighbour who may have established their cash crop earlier or they seek assistance from their patrons. In the case of a cacao crop, the poor selection of quality seed combined with the homogeneity of species has made most cacao trees vulnerable to die-back. My informant told me that people in Rouda obtain their cacao seeds from family or friends in North Kolaka or Maili. I took this as evidence that they lack understanding that the seed quality and variety matter. He made no mention of this.

Nevertheless, many are generally aware that the use of fertiliser will enrich the soil and improve productivity. In order to meet the demand of fertiliser, people rely on farmyard manure, which is always provided by their patron. Only a few mix organic fertiliser with chemical fertilisers. Some people stated that ignorance of the type and dose is the reason many are reluctant to use chemical fertilisers. The price of chemical



fertilisers in any event is still relatively high which reduces farmers' interest in it. By way of comparison, the price of one sack of organic fertiliser is Rp 40,000 (AUD 4), while the price of one sack of urea fertiliser is Rp 120,000 (AUD 12), rendering it three times more costly. Again, the absence of any agricultural institution also creates more difficulty for people do not have enough knowledge regarding fertilisers.

Actually, there are a lot of raw materials that could produce an alternate fertiliser in Rota. There was a huge amount of wood residue/sawdust at the timber mill located in Rota village that could be processed into fertiliser by mixing it with water-buffalo or cattle dung, which is also available. According to the government data (Rota in Figures, Kecamatan Rota dalam Angka, 2012) there were 21 cattle and 64 water buffalo spread across almost all the villages in Rota (except Puuwiwirano and Tanggola). According to Robinson et al. (2010) all the villages in Rota sub-district own some form of livestock.

Table 3. **Households who own livestock in Rota sub-district\***

Type of livestock	Households owning livestock, by village						
	Parudongka	Tirawonua	Rota	Walandawe	Tanggola	Puu wiwirano	Lalomerui
Water buffalo	41	58	69	19	18	12	12
Cattle	4	8	24	6	1	1	3
Both buffalo and cattle	2	6	5	1			
Total	47	72	98	26	19	13	15

\*Adapted from Robinson et al. (2010).

Many people stated that most of them had never tried to procure wood residue from the timber mill because they do not know how to make use of it. Some indicated that they worried about using fertiliser from other sources such as sawdust from the timber mill; they fear it will have a negative impact on their pepper vines, because no one has ever tried it. It might also be a labour problem to collect dung, because none of the buffalo or cattle are tethered, they are ranging freely for food.

Pa Andi, a farmer who migrated from North Kolaka to Rota, revealed that the cost of fertiliser was his largest outlay for his small pepper plantation. According to him, this is probably because all the organic fertiliser is imported from Timampu. His *bos* (patron), Pa Khaidir, argued that the difficulty of transportation from Timampu to Rota and other villages in Rota sub-district makes it expensive. Pa Khaidir explained that up to half of the organic fertilisers' price is intended to cover the cost of transportation from Timampu

to Routa. In Routa, the price of a sack (around 50 kg) of this fertiliser was Rp 40,000 (AUD 4), while in Timampu it was only Rp 25,000 (AUD 2.5).

Not only migrants are competing to set up pepper farms; local people in Routa are also establishing their own plantations. Prior to this, most local people also had cacao and rice (*padi ladang*) farms in what was secondary forest. Time allocation is a problem for long-time settlers; low crop productivity (cacao) is better than no crop at all. In the midst of labour shortage problems, a few local people still have to allocate their labour and time to collect the small yield from their old cacao farms where productivity has declined significantly and can no longer support their income. This situation has meant that many local people have to spread their time and energy to maintain their pepper farms.

Some people who have planted pepper in Routa, Tirawonua and Parudongka sub-district have harvested almost one tonne per hectare a year, producing a significant income. Taking a lesson from Pa Andi, people in Routa are able to improve their livelihoods, but in the process almost all of them become indebted to their *bos*. Many farmers need initial capital to provide poles and fertilisers. When they start to grow pepper they have to abandon other livelihoods which are sources of income for a while. This situation often exacerbates their debt. Generally they have little hope of breaking the cycle of indebtedness and they dare not hope to do so. It needs extra motivation, energy and a good deal of luck to become independent. The current situation in Routa, with no market and limited transportation facilities, has further added to the difficulty for people extricating themselves from dependency on the traders (*bos*) who dominate access to the market and transportation.

### **Trading activities**

The Bugis in Routa are known as a group who seek economic opportunity. Many of producers and entrepreneurs in Routa are individuals and family groups of Bugis migrants. Such entrepreneurship was evident to Acciaioli (1998: 82-83) in his research on Bugis migrants in the Lore Lindu region of Central Sulawesi. Their endeavours covered various fields including an itinerant dentist, gill-net fishermen, fish marketers, wet-rice farmers and kiosk operators. Bugis migrants have shown similar initiative in Routa. Migrants from South Sulawesi came to seek their fortune in Routa, many gradually developing from dammar gathering to timber traders or from itinerant traders to become patrons. The domination of Bugis in economic activities persists to this day.

As Acciaioli (1989: vi) notes that Bugis migrants always make 'efforts to achieve a position of economic control and exploit untapped resources'. In the beginning, Bugis in Routa came to buy dammar resin and at the same time also they sold staple goods to dammar resin gatherers in Lengkobale — the small port on Lake Towuti. Thereafter, some of them also began to gather other forest products, particularly rattan and timber, to open new farms and to cultivate staple foods and cash crops. There are some influential Bugis and Torajan traders in Routa, for example Haji Hendra who started life in Routa as a dammar gatherer and then grew to become the most successful timber trader there, notably in the 1980s until the beginning of 2000s.

In Routa, traders are usually farmers and the leaders in agricultural innovation. On one occasion when I attended the erection of a house of a resident in Routa village, I chatted with traders Guntur, Pa Anis and Pa Samad. They discussed the development of pepper plantings in Routa and revealed that Guntur had established around 4 ha, Pa Anis about 3 ha and Pa Samad about 3 ha. By contrast, on average most people in Routa sub-district can manage less than 2 ha. Those who are able to develop larger pepper gardens in Routa can do so because they have more assets; they can buy the labour they need.

The availability of assets makes traders (patrons) more willing and able to afford to make calculated risks in trying new things, such as fertilisers and farm machinery. Guntur has bought a machine for processing oil from the patchouli leaf. Although there is a risk, because patchouli is a new plant for people in Routa, there is also a possibility that he will be successful in his venture. He explained that he can bear the cost if he makes a loss with the machine but there is an opportunity for him to gain an advantage in the patchouli trade in Routa at least for a time, because other traders are not yet prepared. Traders most commonly are the pioneers, those who try new things, like new seed varieties or up-to-date agricultural practices, so most of traders are also achieving notable and obvious success in their farms. To some extent, this is influenced by their mobility, their being able to travel back and forth to the market outside Routa, which may give them easier access to the latest information. People can have power in Routa that is determined not only by the ownership of the means of production but also as a function of market power.

Currently, most of the traders' holdings are larger than 2 ha of pepper plantation or on average more than 2,000 pepper vines. Most of the traders are Bugis who establish businesses in Routa through hard work. Some initially were forest gatherers and farmers. Gradually, they act as a bridge to connect residents to the market. Acciaioli (1989: 53-55)

states that as a response to the demand from the industrialising West, from the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century many Bugis people from lower rank *pasompe*<sup>65</sup> became openers of the land (*pembuka lahan*) in new regions being settled by Bugis in response to the new economic demands. The successful *pasompe* always recruit and finance people both from their homeland and locally. In many cases, the successful *pasompe* pick the best fields for themselves, those close to the major water sources and allocate to their clients the more distant lands to cultivate their staple foods. This adds to the disparity in wealth.

Traders sometimes also encourage their clients to follow their example. They often bring knowledge regarding a brand new crop or machine. It could be a strategy for the traders to increase local production, important to fulfil market demand. Traders usually attract their relatives through their obvious success and descriptions of the arable land and easy land acquisition in Routa. They also promise to support them in establishing their own plantations.

I identified four categories of traders in Routa. These categories are dynamic. Anyone can grow from farmer to become a trader or even a patron, depending on the opportunity, their efforts and luck.

The first category refers to traders who originally came as forest gatherers or farmers. They did not initially plan to be traders. They explained to me that the limited transportation facilities and infrastructure meant that many goods were very expensive. Some saw this opportunity to become suppliers of everyday goods for people in Routa. The forest collectors and farmers then became traders. For others living in remote villages their own neighbours' desire for easier access to goods drove them to become traders.

The second type of trader is those who came to Routa with the intention to trade. They were able to establish businesses relatively quickly compared to the first group. Generally, they had already been merchants in their place of origin, so they had experience and capital and their own ready-made patron-client networks. Most of them are Bugis who come from South Sulawesi. Most traders from these first two categories also grow to become patrons (*bos*).

The third category is the local people who have long been petty traders in Routa, but are not able to develop their trading businesses because of limited capital and information. A few have been able to expand their businesses after receiving support

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<sup>65</sup> *Pasompe* is a Bugis term which indicates people who are often wanderers seeking good fortune outside their places of origin. *Sompe* means 'wander'.

from traders in regions of southern Sulawesi, such as Ma Bakri and Ma Samad who became patrons with the support of Haji Hendra and Pa Alan who lives in Timampu and also from a local trader, Guntur. However, only some of this trader category will grow to become patrons; only those who can receive financial support and are able to create good relationships with their supporting traders and the local people, then they can entice the latter to be their clients and maybe they can grow to become patrons. Others can only establish a kiosk and continue to sell staple goods in their stalls.

The last category is comprised of petty traders; they are also itinerant traders. They travel back and forth to Routa supplying basic needs, more frequently leading up to important celebrations days such as Eid; some of them also sell clothes. I found only two itinerant traders living in Routa; almost every day they make the journey from Lengkobale to Parudongka, Tirawonua and Routa villages. The lack of markets encourages a few people in almost every village to establish kiosks; they capitalise on the variability of the market prices to enhance their profit margins. None of the traders in this category are patrons.

An example of the first category is Pa Anis, who originally came to Routa in early 1992 to collect eaglewood (*kayu gaharu*), resinous heartwood from an *Aquilaria* species (Takemoto et.al., 2007: 41). He bought land from a Tolaki and built a hut in 1993. Infrastructure was very limited in Routa; this inflated the price of all goods almost three-fold compared to prices in Timampu. Initially, Pa Anis only sold the excess of his food inventory such as sugar, coffee, and rice. After travelling back and forth a few times from Bantilang to Routa, he then found an opportunity to supply everyday needs to people in Routa, with a significantly increased profit.

Pa Anis then grew cacao which was favoured among farmers in Sulawesi, but at that time transportation facilities were very limited in Routa. Pa Anis always took his cacao harvest to sell at Bantilang on Lake Towuti and at the same time he and his wife sold everyday staples to people in Routa. Pa Anis and his wife had to carry their cacao harvest and their merchandise on their backs, climbing the mountains to and from Bantilang, because at that time there were no roads, nor were there powerboats (*katinting*) to cross Towuti Lake. The powerboat service, which began running in 1997, made a considerable difference to their lives. Based on his experience trading in Bantilang, he then provided goods to other people in Routa. His business grew with the coming of an oil palm

plantation in Rوتا in 1995 (pre-dating the palm oil company currently operating in Lalomerui village, this company closed in 1997).

Initially, Pa Anis supplied minor consumables for the oil palm workers, but as time went on, he built up one of the larger kiosks in Rوتا and it now provides a range of items for daily use and also agricultural equipment and supplies. His success story has motivated many of his relatives and friends from Bantilang to move to Rوتا. Pa Anis also provides consumer goods to them on credit, buys their crops and sometimes lends them money.

To date, Pa Anis has not only successfully brought his younger brother, brother-in-law and some of his friends from Bantilang and Palopo, but also his far-flung relatives from places further away in southern Sulawesi. Most of the migrants he has attracted have now settled in Rوتا; many have become his clients and receive support from his shop in Rوتا. This is a clear example of how 'invited migration' turns into patron-client relationships. Clearly, while the labour shortage may initially be a disadvantage to a farmer, over time a positive outcome may be achieved through the development of patron-client relationships.

The case of Kacong in Tanggola is an example of someone who became a trader because of an opportunity conferred by remoteness. He is a young Toraja trader in Tanggola village. Initially, Kacong came to Rوتا to establish a cacao plantation. He did not have any plan to be a trader; however people in Tanggola encouraged him to do so because he had a motorcycle and often travelled back and forth to his place of origin, Batusitanduk in South Sulawesi province. When he went to Palopo, people always asked him to help transport their cacao and sell it to traders in Rوتا or Timampu. They also ordered their daily needs from Kacong to be brought back from Palopo. Gradually, Kacong realised that the limited transportation facilities gave him an opportunity to establish a trading business along with his cacao farm. People said it was not easy to carry two or three sacks of cacao along the slippery forest trail, so those in Tanggola tolerate the considerable price difference between Tanggola and Palopo due to Kacong's efforts.

Guntur is an example of a trader in the second category. He became familiar with Rوتا when he worked as a teacher in the Islamic junior high school (Tsanawiyah) in Timampu, following his graduation from the Islamic senior high school (*Aliyah*) in Makassar in 1990. After he graduated from Islamic State University (IAIN) Alauddin in Makassar in 1997, he became an itinerant cloth trader in Makassar and sometimes also

sold cloth in Timampu and Routa. His father passed away and was buried in Routa in the mid-1990s; in 2000, after divorcing his wife in Makassar, Guntur chose to settle in Routa because he needed to care for his mother who lives permanently in Routa. In addition to selling cloth, he began to buy cacao there and established a farm.

Utari, who is also known as Ma Bakri and Citra, and well-known Ma Samad are examples of the third category. Both are now prominent as women traders in Routa. They run kiosks that provide everyday needs and they buy forest and agricultural products, particularly from people in Routa and their relatives in Walandawe. Ma Samad initially took over a small kiosk from her mother who established it in Routa and she left it to Ma Samad when she moved to North Konawe. Ma Bakri also established a small kiosk with the assistance of her husband who works as a teacher in the elementary school (SD Polihe) in Routa. As a civil servant, Ma Bakri's husband was able to get credit from a bank. Ma Bakri used the credit as capital to increase the number of her clients.

In addition, as independent traders, they bought dammar resin from their Tolaki relatives in Routa. Ma Bakri told me that initially she sold dammar resin in Routa only to the timber trader who lives in Timampu. Sometimes she brought dammar resin to Timampu but still sold it to the same buyer. Later, at least since the beginning of 2000, she found other buyers in Timampu and eventually found a good buyer who offered her a decent price, and as a result she can compete with other dammar resin buyers in Routa with a better purchase price. She also received capital from Guntur to buy cacao. Ma Bakri also shared the information with her younger sister, Ma Samad, and both derived benefit through their association with Guntur. Both Ma Samad and Ma Bakri are also timber collectors and act as agents for a local businessman in Timampu, Haji Hendra. This allows them to get logging trucks from Haji Hendra that they paid for by instalments deducted from timber sales, but during my field work I found that both of those trucks were not working well. These series of efforts have allowed Ma Bakri and Ma Samad to develop from just being traders to becoming patrons as well.

The last category of traders in Routa represents petty traders, none of whom are patrons. Although some do have a few regular customers, they do not have the responsibility to provide goods and money to their customers as patrons usually have. Most are established; they sell fish and sometimes rice and other staple goods. There are also itinerant traders. I found only two itinerant traders living in Routa, Ma Dahlia who settled in Parudongka village, and Sawal, who resides in Routa village. Both have small

shops which they use as their base. Ma Dahlia regularly travels to the first-established villages (Tirawonua and Routa) to sell household goods. There are others, particularly itinerant fish traders, but they do not live in Routa.

Sawal is a young itinerant trader. He has a wife who works as a teacher in Routa middle school. They have been blessed with one child. Sawal pursued the occupation of itinerant trader in Palopo and Timampu before he decided to settle in Routa around five years ago. Sawal's father is also a trader who lives in Palopo, but almost every week he travels back and forth to Routa. From his father, he learned not only about trading but also about Routa. Currently, almost everyday Sawal hawks fresh fish (if it is available in Timampu) from Malili to people in all the long-established villages which stretch from the lake to Routa village. On many occasions, Sawal also offers his services to people who want to buy luxury goods such as televisions. Sometimes, he lends them money or buys their cash crops. Actually, Sawal, while he is establishing his pepper plantation, undertakes any trading activities that he considers beneficial. He seems to be following the pattern established by Guntur, who acted as a petty trader of fabrics before he became established as a buyer of cash crops. In 2014 when I visited Routa, I found that Sawal had purchased a four-wheel-drive vehicle, the only one in Routa. He may be already on the way to becoming a patron. He has the potential and opportunity to do so.

Other petty traders are Bugis purveyors of apparel from Sengkang and Palopo (South Sulawesi province). I met some from Sengkang in Lalomerui village. They told me that before we met they had spent a few days in Parudongka, Tirawonua and Routa. They were interested to come to Lalomerui because there was a oil palm plantation there. They expected labourers from the oil palm plantation with plenty of disposable income would buy their goods, not only for themselves but for their families back in their villages of origin. They sometimes spent one week in Lalomerui. I found that there was an exchange of information between these itinerant traders and people in Routa. The sellers commonly brought information about the developments in their homeland and this news often contained new agricultural information, such as popular products on the market and their prices, and even information regarding cultivation technology and post-harvest treatment of new crops. On the other hand, the village people provided information regarding potential customers within their village and neighbouring villages, as well as their preference for the type of goods and prices.



Even though the occupation of trader can be lucrative, only a few people in Rوتا are able to undertake it. The limitation of financial and social assets may hamper people who dream of becoming traders. There are no formal financial institutions in Rوتا. This makes it difficult for people to raise initial capital to set up a trading business. Some people have argued that start-up capital is important; however some people who have good social relationships with large traders in the south received support in terms of providing goods or buying cash crops from people in Rوتا.

Pa Anis, Guntur, Ma Bakri, Ma Samad and Sawal are examples of people who have more than just a dream, they have a goal. They are proof that hard work and focus are important, maybe more important than capital.

### **Patron-client relationships**

In Rوتا, people call patrons *bos* or less commonly, *punggawa*, who provide basic needs on credit and lend people money. Clients expect to receive help financially, especially in times of harvest failure and for major expenditure like wedding ceremonies.

Pelras (2000: 395) explains that the terms 'patronage' and 'clients' originated from a model of social relationships that existed in ancient Rome. A *patronus* was a nobleman who had a number of citizens of inferior rank, called *clientes*, as followers. These clients were officially free but were not truly independent. The relationship between patrons and clients in ancient Rome was established on the basis of reciprocity of rights and duties. The patron protected their clients from enemies, legal prosecution and provided land for them for sustenance, and in return, the client had to support his patron in terms of reparation and contribute to the dowry of his patron's daughter upon marriage.

The patron-client relationship in Rوتا is not identical to the relationship between *patronus* and *clientes* in ancient Rome. A patron-client relationship in Bugis society, as observed in Rوتا, is voluntary and can be terminated by either party at any time. The patron can abolish the connection with his clients if they are not loyal or do not fulfil their obligations. In turn, a client may move to another patron if he consider she does not receive protection. The meaning of protection can be quite broad. In the case of Rوتا, some clients have moved to another patron in order to receive a better price for their cash crops and for support, while others moved because they had too much debt that they could not afford to pay. This also means that a client in Rوتا can have more than one patron.

In 2007, Pa Andi borrowed money for fertiliser from Guntur. Then in 2009, for some reason, Pa Andi changed patrons and borrowed money from another trader, Pa Anis. From that time, Pa Anis constantly provided materials to Pa Andi, particularly fertiliser, and conversely Pa Andi regularly sold part of his pepper production to Pa Anis, and another part to Pak Guntur in order to pay his remaining debt. In 2010, trading relations between Pa Andi and Pa Anis broke down. It came about over a request for money. Pa Andi wanted to borrow Rp 1,000,000 (AUD 100) from Pa Anis to repair his motorbike, but Pa Anis could not provide the money at that time. Pa Andi then went to Pa Khaidir, another trader in Tirawonua village, and Pa Anis was angry with Pa Andi for being disloyal and asked Pa Andi to pay off all his debt as soon as possible. Khaidir then helped Pa Andi pay off his debt to Pa Anis. Protection can be construed as support; Pa Anis could not support Pa Andi's needs, so he changed his patron. Nevertheless, Pa Andi's debt problem still exists; he simply complicated his situation by moving from one patron to another. He said that from the end of 2010 to 2011, he had harvested around 600 of his pepper vines with a total production of around 1,000 kg. The average price of his pepper was Rp 50,000 (AUD 5.00) per kilogram, in total, he had earned Rp 50,000,000 (AUD 5,000), however he revealed that most of his income had been used to pay off his debt to Guntur, and he still has to pay off a remaining debt to Pak Khaidir, of about Rp 7,000,000 (AUD 700).

On one occasion when I was chatting with Pa Andi, Pa Khaidir came to pick up Pa Andi's pepper (around 60 kg). At that time, Pa Khaidir tried to entice Pa Andi to buy a brand new TV; he also suggested that Pa Andi buy a new motorbike, but Pa Andi subtly and respectfully rejected these offers. After Pa Khaidir left, Pa Andi told me that in fact he wanted to free himself from all his debts and he decided to pay off all his debt to Pa Khaidir first. It seems that Pa Andi would be able to pay out his current debt with fruit from around 1,000 pepper vines; he probably could produce around 1,500 kg a year or even more, but not many people have as high a yield as Pa Andi does.

A patron-client is a relationship between a super-ordinate and a sub-ordinate. This relationship involves an exchange or an instrumental friendship between two individuals of different status in which the patron uses his own influence and resources to provide for the protection and material welfare of his lower status client and his family who, for their part, reciprocate by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron (Scott & Kerkvliet, 1977: 439 cited in Acciaioli, 1989: 170). Also:

Although commoners or clients found it imperative to seek the protection of a leader, the relation with any particular leader is a voluntary one. The leaders can disrupt connection with their followers because of disobedience, failure to fulfil obligation, or betrayal with other leaders. On the other hand, followers or clients can leave their leaders or patron if they feel they are no longer sufficiently protected (Kooreman, 1883 cited in Acciaioli, 1989: 168).

Patrons are playing a significant role when they collect small yields of cash crops from households. This practice enables households with limited amount of yields to receive cash or provisions to fulfil their immediate needs rather than having to bring their harvest to the market across the lake, using transport which reduces their incomes from sales. In addition, traders will act as consultants who provide information regarding new cash crops and innovation to increase productivity. The relationship between traders (patron) and clients is not limited only to an economic one (trading and loan), but also and possibly more importantly, it encompasses social relationships. A patron has economic power and therefore the power to exploit, but this power is usually exercised subtly. The patron-client relationship is enticing, strong and influential in many aspects of life. The roles of patron-client relationship between patrons and their clients are contributing factors to the establishment and maintenance of both livelihoods.

Before I came to Routa, every time I visited the forestry offices at both district and provincial levels, I heard the name of Haji Hendra, the timber trader who controls almost all economic activities in Routa. He invited people to become suppliers in his business by providing not only the goods/services/income required to meet their daily needs but even luxury goods, such as televisions and motorbikes. He was able to do so because he controlled transportation between Routa to Timampu. In the 1980s, he had no competitor and monopolised the import and export of all products. Because there was no alternative for people in Routa wishing to sell their forest products, they knew only one price for all their products — just the price from Haji Hendra. He also engaged his family, both in Routa and in Timampu, in his business. Bugis control trading activities in Routa.

Leader-follower relationships appear to constitute a unitary hierarchical structure whose apex is the ruler of economic activities within each domain (after Acciaioli, 1989: 180-181). In Routa, the most obvious domain is the timber industry. Through patron-client relationships, Haji Hendra extends his influence and controls the economy of Routa. Since the heyday of dammar resin, he already controlled the vital transportation line on

Towuti Lake. Initially, he set up his business in both ports — Lengkobale on the Rوتا side and Timampu on the other — as a wholesaler of dammar resin and as a main supplier of goods to meet the everyday needs of people in Rوتا. Haji Hendra relied on family relationships in setting up his business; he then established a timber industry as his main business, where he could then generate a high income and accumulate plentiful assets and support the businesses of his families. Haji Hendra supported his older brother Haji Aris to become the owner of a rice mill and a hand tractor in Tirawonua village. Now Haji Aris has extensive paddy fields, cacao and pepper. Haji Hendra also helped his elder sister, who is now well known as a significant trader in Rوتا. He also supported his other older brother who owns a large area of dammar resin in Rوتا sub-district. In short, this family controls the buying of forest products, particularly timber, and controls the supply of staple goods to Rوتا. As a result, they dominate the economic activity in the sub-district; they can constrain pivotal market information, such as price and products, as well as influencing the new traders who want to get involved in trade activities in Rوتا.

From the end of the 1990s, there were two traders, Haji Hendra and another wholesaler in Timampu, who expanded their transportation businesses by providing small outboard motor boats to facilitate people commuting from Rوتا northward. The appearance of the small boats (*katinting*) triggered more people and traders to travel back and forth to Rوتا. In the early 2000s, new traders came to Rوتا. Some established their businesses in Timampu, Palopo or even in Makassar before expanding to Rوتا.



Image 15. A women trader, a patron in her kiosk in Rوتا

Guntur is one of the traders who initially only travelled back and forth to Rوتا. He told me that he expanded his business by encouraging community leaders and influential

people in almost every village to be his agents. Malik (a former Routa village head) who lives in Parudongka, and Ma Bakri, a trader in Routa village in Routa, were two of his agents. Guntur lent them money to buy cash crops from people in their villages; he also supported their kiosks. Guntur gives a higher purchase price to his agents, however unlike most traders, Guntur does not advantage clients who deal directly with him; his policy is to match the price offered by his agents, not to undercut them.

The patron-client system can be creatively developed. It has been given a new business model by Guntur who added a middle layer (agents) through whom most of his clients deal; these agents also have clients of their own. Through the implementation of this strategy, Guntur became a popular patron and has rapidly increased the number of his clients in almost every village. He is successful and well known in Routa; his agents have been successful in encouraging clients because they are also community leaders. Many agents believe that Guntur always provides them a way out in a difficult situation including providing them with basic goods for their kiosks or lending them money to make their agents more competitive. Most Bugis traders deal directly with their clients but Guntur has refined his business strategy to include a middle stratum of agents, to make it a 'patron-agents-clients' strategy. Guntur's system is complex and far-reaching, conferring benefit to many who return the favour either directly or indirectly and both economically and socially to him.

As a result of Guntur's hard work and that of his agents over several years, he now has a large brick house with a tiled floor and luxurious furniture. One of Guntur's former agents, Ma Bakri, a Tolaki woman, has a business which has grown so she is now a patron in her own right and has become an independent trader and patron. In Routa village, there are two Tolaki women engaged in trade and both were formerly agents of Guntur. Malik, Guntur's agent in Parudongka, was the first to own a satellite phone in Routa. A decrease in production of cacao in all parts of Routa provided a problem for these local buyers. It caused some of Guntur's agents to close their businesses; at the same time, some of Guntur's agents such as Ma Bakri and Ma Samad also tried to become independent. The business of trading provides many challenges as well as opportunities.

'Client' and 'patron' are terms which designate relative roles rather than being fixed and easily distinguishable. In Routa, many traders are patrons, but as soon as they arrive in Timampu they become clients of the traders there. They in turn are clients of the exporters in Makassar. Some of these patterns have existed since before the Dutch

colonial era<sup>66</sup>. The class of clients cannot then simply be a matter of assets or a matter of debt, because traders incur debts far larger than any of their individual clients. Because they change roles, from superordinate (patron) to subordinate (client), these are classifications rather than indicating class.

### **Livelihood strategies**

Farming is the main livelihood in Routa and, as noted above, many people engage in cultivating more than one crop. In summary, people combine the growing of staple foods (wet or dry rice and vegetables) with the farming of cash crops. There are irrigated fields in Parudongka and Tirawonua so people in those villages rely on wet rice fields for their staple food (rice). There are also irrigated fields in Routa, but the lack of clarity regarding land ownership<sup>67</sup> has resulted only one household cultivating wet rice there. Pepper and cacao are the main cash crops cultivated, particularly in the three villages established earlier.

On the other hand, there are no irrigation facilities in the new villages, so people have to rely on dry land rice (*padi ladang*) for staple food and often go into the forest around their village to forage for wild vegetables and fish. Just in the last year, some of those villagers have also started to clear land to grow pepper, but it has not yet come into production. As a result, many of them are still working as timber fellers and dammar resin gatherers (Lalomerui), or they sometimes travel to old villages or even outside Routa to their places of origin to work as wage labourers (Puuwiwirano and Tanggola). Many of their relatives who they left behind in the village sometimes try their luck with the very small amount of cacao remaining on their farm, initially cultivated around a decade ago. Although the yield from cacao may be very low, smallholder farmers must use each and every opportunity to meet their subsistence needs.

As a sideline to establishing their pepper farms, many people look for extra jobs as casual wage labourers, weeding the garden of their 'bos', neighbours, families or friends; some people, particularly women and children, work as cacao and pepper pickers. From my observation, job opportunities are more readily available in the first-established

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<sup>66</sup> This information was told to me by the dammar resin trader in Timampu, who inherited dammar resin networks from his parents. He also told me that the places he now sells dammar resin in Palopo or Makassar are the same places his parents used to sell their dammar resin.

<sup>67</sup> A developer applied for and received government funding to build irrigation in Routa (see Chapter Three). When the development was finished, he sold portions to various parties, although the irrigated lands were not actually his to sell.

villages (Parudongka, Tirawonua and Routa) than in the new villages (Tanggola and Puuwiwirano). Some farmers live in the first-established villages have extensive farms which need more labour to maintain. In addition to work as wage labourers, some in old established villages work as motorcycle taxi drivers to the port of Lengkobale.

Safar, a Routa resident, has six children. He and his five sons established a cacao, and a pepper farm and occasionally also cultivate dry rice. Safar sometimes goes to the forest to collect dammar resin or search for eaglewood with his sons or others in Routa. Two of his older sons work to contribute to the family income. During my field work, I found they were mostly working in the sawmill industry, or sometimes as wage labourers on farms.

There are also a few families living together in their parents' house. Gafar, Gafur and their younger sister Hasni, all of whom have married, still live in the same house. They all worked together in reciprocal labour relationships to establish their pepper farms and maintain their earlier cacao farms. Their elderly widowed mother established a small kiosk. Gafar, who married Harni from Mopute village in North Konawe, is also working as a civil servant and a secretary of Routa village, while Hasni (who married a young entrepreneur who works in Kendari) is working as a midwife in Routa. Gafar assisted Gafur in the heavy tasks of preparing<sup>68</sup> pepper poles from the forest. In everyday life, they rely on regular income from Gafar and Hasni, who both receive a salary from the government as civil servants; they do not rely on dry rice for their staple food, but they mostly buy rice that they can purchase from the many kiosks in Routa or Timampu. Norton (1977: 463) explains that people in the frontier always diversify first, and then this diversification is replaced by comparative specialisation.

In a house just across from the house of Gafar, Gafur and Hasni, widow Maharani, originally from Bungku, lives with her daughter and son. Reputedly, Maharani's husband was a successful Bugis farmer and trader. Maharani inherited a cacao farm and a few dammar resin concessions. Her son Amirullah works as a logging truck driver and her daughter Liana is working as a part-time teacher in the elementary school in Routa (SD Polihe). They rely on several sources of income. Sometimes Maharani asks people to collect dammar resin from her concessions and share the yield. She also has people to harvest her cacao and share the yield.

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<sup>68</sup> It consists of felling trees in the jungle, cutting them, transporting them to the farm and erecting them as pepper poles.

There is another widow who lives just next to Maharani's house. Her name is Evi. She lives with her daughter Saskia and her son-in-law Untan. Evi established a small kiosk and is cultivating around 0.25 ha of the land next to her house with vegetables, such as eggplants, snake beans, pumpkin, chilli and tomatoes. Her daughter Saskia works as a permanent teacher at SD Polihe, while Untan hopes to become a civil servant at a government office in Wanggudu (the capital of North Konawe regency).

With the success from pepper people may soon come to have money surplus to their basic needs. Not only ordinary farmers but also most of the traders could make good use of a formal financial institution. The absence of any such institution means people cannot manage any surplus production. Gafur had success finding eaglewood, which gave him significant additional income. Because he could not save the money in a formal financial institution he 'invested' it, building a brick house and buying a car. In order to build a brick house he destroyed a new wooden dwelling in which he had never lived. The roads are still not suitable for the car he has bought, so he has garaged it in Tadoloyo village around 100 km away. Having no financial institution encourages investment in a limited form, often in non-productive cash or in consumption.

### **Links to the wider world**

Even though Routa is located in the frontier and is a remote area, it does not mean it does not have links with the outside world as far as the global market is concerned — especially with the market for dammar from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is not an isolated and insular economy, cut off from the rest of the world. The truth is that as soon as practicable, people will plant not only their subsistence food crops, but also market-oriented cash crops (see Dove, 1983: 85). The general improvement in livelihoods has influenced the transition from shifting cultivation towards more permanent land use practices. It happens by means of adaptation and diversification in both agricultural practices and livelihood activities which are influenced by rapid changing market conditions and policies (Grogan et al., 2013: 77).

In addition to farmers, traders play an important role in linking Routa with the wider world. Both traders who are living in Routa and traders who are living within the area around Routa provide transport for imported and exported goods. They act as a bridge to introduce Routa to the wider realm of capitalism. Leading by example, they introduce luxury goods; they introduce and promote the practice of spending money on things



people do not really need. The number of traders in Routa is increasing along with the improved transportation facilities. In fact, it is true that Haji Hendra controlled the economy of Routa for around one and a half decades (between the middle of the 1980s to the end of the 1990s). At that time, Routa relied mostly on forest products, especially timber. However, from the beginning of the 2000s, people in Routa started to harvest their own cacao crops, which attracted more traders who came to seek their fortune in Routa.

The appearance of new traders provided competition and benefits to people in Routa in terms of an increased price for their cash crops and a decreased price of staple goods. Even so, this competition generally appears to be temporary. Usually when new traders in Routa set up their businesses, they increase the price of a cash crop to the sellers and reduce the price of staple goods to the buyers. After they gain sufficient clients, they tend to restore the price level to be the same as other traders in Routa. It seems that the new traders can control the price because many of them have the same buyer in Timampu or other places, such as Luwu, Palopo and Malili.

Pa Alan is a wholesaler of staple goods in Timampu. He supported some traders who act as *bos*/patrons in Routa. He told me that there are a few traders like him in Timampu and other places in Malili and Palopo; they have the same buyer in Makassar. They have cooperated with a few particular buyers over a long time. Pa Alan gave the example of dammar resin trading. He inherited the dammar resin business from his parents-in-law who bought dammar resin from Routa. He always sold to the same buyer in Makassar, or to one in Palopo who was also an agent of his buyer from Makassar. The pattern was established before the Dutch colonial era. He said that sometimes the same pattern also applied to cash crops and there were some substantial traders engaged in the trade of forest products as well as agricultural products from Routa. Some older buyers still exist, or are survived by their offspring. Actually, the price of products from Routa has been controlled by a few substantial traders in Makassar for a long time; many of them come from trading families who migrated to the area long ago.

To some extent, it seems that the domination of traders within the economy of Routa covers only a limited area; for many traders from Routa the district is as far as they can reach. At the provincial level, some incumbents such as the early trading families still control the trade routes, which they have done since the colonial era.

The coming of the oil palm plantation and mining company is likely to bring significant changes to the economic structure and also the infrastructure. Already micro finance has been initiated by the mining company, and the palm oil company has already built a road. The improvement of transportation facilities from both South and Southeast Sulawesi makes it possible for the price of staple goods to become more affordable. However, the experience in Sorowako, located close to Routa, was actually the opposite; the cost of living increased with the coming of the mining company (Robinson, 1986: 166). The changing situation may occur faster with the appearance of both large investments, which could be likely to introduce a new variable in the already complex business world of Routa.

### **Conclusion**

Since the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, residents in Routa sub-district have had to shift from relying on agriculture and forest products to diversifying their livelihoods. This diversification involves rice as the staple food and commercial crops such as cacao and pepper. People have had to diversify their livelihoods because to date there has been no single livelihood sufficient for subsistence. Every household optimises each and every livelihood opportunity to enhance their income and secure subsistence. People such as traders who have moved beyond subsistence choose to diversify livelihood activities to accumulate assets.

The existence of traders has become pivotal in this community. The absence of government has meant the traders have stepped into many roles; they have filled the vacuum left by the government. People are happy to cooperate with traders to solve the problems of limited infrastructure in this frontier. Traders have also been pivotal in the development of informal financial institutions through a patron-client system which performs an important social as well as economic function. Because of their high profile and the way they conduct themselves and participate in all aspects of everyday life, traders often become community leaders, especially in the matter of religion, which is important to all *suku*.

The analysis of livelihood strategies, societal roles and institutions provide a vehicle for examining this frontier, both past and present. The directions of change over time may suggest trends and trajectories for the future of Routa's development.

## Chapter Five

### Resources from a frontier forest

#### Introduction

Forests have played an important role providing food and livelihood support for people in Routa. Like many remote areas in Indonesia, the frontier area of Routa sub-district has huge tracts of jungle and it has been known as a source of a number of forest products. Numerous kinds of timber are harvested from the forest areas in Routa. During my field work, whether I travelled via Towuti Lake or North Konawe, I found out through observation and interviews that a considerable amount of timber had already been taken from the forest. Although many people have moved from gathering forest products and harvesting timber to cultivating cash crops, a range of products from the forest are still important to support everyday life.

In addition to timber there is a range of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) in Routa such as dammar resin, rattan and *gaharu* (eaglewood). Today, a few people still rely on collecting the NTFPs and selling them to traders as their main income, but many only collect them occasionally to deal with unforeseen needs. In addition to income, many people still rely on the forest to support their everyday life such as wood for fuel, medicinal plants and staple foods, such as vegetables as well as fish from the lakes and rivers.

Other products can be harvested from the forest such as palm sugar. There are species of palm in the rainforest in Indonesia which can produce sugar sap; in addition to the sugar palm (*Arenga pinnata*), there is the lontar palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) (Mogea et al., 1991: 111-112). Currently, both species can be found in the forests around some of the settlements in Routa. As well as making palm sugar, people make it into a beverage and often in times of famine, they process the trunk of the sugar palm to produce a starchy sago-like powder to fulfil their need for carbohydrates.

There are also many fast-flowing rivers in the jungles of this frontier. In the past, some were used as corridors for transportation, but today they are mainly used as a source of water to support everyday life, farming activities and as a source of electricity, such as in Tirawonua village.

Three decades ago, animals such as *anoa*<sup>69</sup> and deer<sup>70</sup> could be found in the forests around Routa, but deforestation and illegal hunting have reduced the numbers and they are now endangered. On one occasion, I chatted with policemen who practised deer hunting. They said that it was difficult to find deer in Routa because of the decimation of their habitat and also their population numbers. When I talked with Haji Aris, he said that only 40 years before the deer was so prevalent that they could be found close to settlements and people augmented their protein with this meat, which was then easily procured.

In this chapter, I will examine a range of forest products as a contemporary source of income and assets which support people's livelihoods in Routa. Vedelt et al., (2007: 111-112) undertook research of 51 cases in 17 countries, categorising three different functions of forest areas: 'safety nets; support of current consumption and a pathway out of poverty'. Lynch and Talbott (1995 cited in Byron & Arnold, 1999: 789-790) estimated the number of people living in or near forests that rely on them directly or indirectly at 500–600 million in Asia alone.

Almost half of the forest area of Southeast Asia is located in Indonesia. The forest cover of Indonesia changes at an alarming rate: between 1.3 million and 1.8 million ha were lost in the year 2000. Even if one uses the conservative estimate, the area covered by forests diminishes at a rate of 1.2% a year (Ebesberger, 2002: 4). It appears that most deforestation in Routa to date has been achieved by the rapid expansion of logging activities as well as the oil palm plantations in Lalomerui village. In addition, the situation in the frontier, with an absence of information and control from local and central governments, has resulted in wide-ranging lack of understanding about conservation and the boundaries between protected forests and forest that can be converted into agricultural land or used for public facilities. According to a forest officer at the provincial level, in the current era of regional autonomy, many controls and permit tasks have been devolved to district level without sufficient or appropriate support for forestry officials, continuing the lack of good governance and practices of corruption and manipulation which occurred in the New Order era.

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<sup>69</sup> Anoa is a dwarf buffalo; two species exist — the lowland anoa (*Bubalus depressicornis*) and mountain anoa (*Bubalus quarlesi*). Both are native to the island of Sulawesi, Indonesia (Burton, Hedges & Mustari, 2005: 25-50). They tend to be aggressive.

<sup>70</sup> The deer are known as *jonga*.

People who are disengaged from forest products in Routa can be divided into two categories: firstly, individuals who are involved in the sawn timber industry; and secondly, people who are engaged in collection of NTFPs, such as dammar resin, eaglewood, palm sugar and other less valuable but nonetheless important products from the forest, because some still rely on them for medicine or food. Observation of the current situation shows that assets from the forests are critically important to people in Routa; they can derive their main income directly from the forest, or they can also use the money from forest products generated as needed as an income buffer to overcome unforeseen circumstances.

In the case of logging, people use only chainsaws to fell the timber. Men and buffalo are the only ways of hauling logs from the forest to the logging-truck tracks. Logs will be taken by those trucks to a sawmill to be milled into boards or beams of various sizes before transporting them by truck to the port of Lengkobale and then to Timampu using a motorised raft. A logging truck is the main mechanised vehicle in Routa. Almost every day logging trucks can be found travelling back and forth, transporting timber out and bringing supplies in; indeed the people themselves use the logging trucks as an important mode of transport — the only alternatives are riding pillion on a motorbike (*ojek*) or a long hike. I had to use all of these in my field work.

In the process of obtaining a timber permit, there is a stage where the forest officer must be involved, but a sawmill owner revealed to me that there has never been a visit from such an official from the district capital to carry out the required data collection before issuing permits (I will discuss timber permits in a later section). Usually the forestry officer just receives the information he needs to provide the required documentation from the applicants, who obviously will give figures to their advantage. As a result, the amount of timber written in the permit always exceeds the reality, so to fill their quota, most of them use timber cut illegally in protected forest. Illegal logging is a complex problem not easily solved in this remote place.

For the purpose of non-timber forest collection, people use axes and machetes (*parang*). Men and buffalo are the modes of transport for carrying dammar resin from forests to villages or to the logging-truck tracks. The buffalo used to haul logs, *pajekka*, can also carry dammar resin, *patekke*.

In addition to the production of timber and non-timber products, forest areas are the source of land which when cleared allows people to establish their farm enterprises

and settlements. A shortage of labour and the lack of any mechanisation cause people to slash and burn to convert the jungle to agricultural land as well as settlements. Some who have lived in Routa for more than a decade inherited land from their forebears; they continue to carry out slashing and burning practices when they want to enlarge their holdings. The size of land that people can acquire from the forest depends on the number of productive labourers in their household.

### **Timber licences**

The timber agent who owns the timber mill in Lalomerui is the village headman; he told me that you must have a licence to be a legal timber trader. The type of timber licence that they need is a 'permit for the utilization of forest timber rights' (Izin Pemanfaatan Kayu Hutan Hak/IPKHH). This permit is given to the people who want to process timber from their own land. Although it is not necessarily true, timber suppliers will often use this authentication certificate for timber sourced well outside their own concession. This practice is not unusual in Indonesia, especially when quotas exceed what a concession can produce.

In Indonesia, people who own land are allowed to use any timber it contains. The ownership of land usually has to be proven by a land certificate published by the national land agency (Badan Pertanahan Nasional). However in remote places like Routa, a 'local land certificate', issued by the village head (SKT) is considered sufficient. To obtain a licence, an applicant has to write a letter that goes together with the SKT to the district head (Bupati), with a copy to the Head of Forestry at the district level. The official from the forestry office is then supposed to visit the site to calculate the amount of timber and identify the species growing in the area in question. The forestry official should then write a letter that includes a report detailing his calculations, to be included with a map of the location. Based on these calculations, a forestry office team will give technical consideration to the application. With this hurdle over, the Bupati will issue a IPKHH licence.

However, due to Routa's remoteness, for most applications, forestry officers do not actually visit the location to calculate the amount and identify the timber. The timber quota will be determined by the amount of money the applicant can provide rather than the amount of timber in the concession. If the concession is too small to provide the

stated volume of timber, they will find some elsewhere, more often than not, illegally. This is but one of many corrupt practices in the timber industry.

After receiving the licence, but before any felling can begin, the applicant has to pay an upfront tax, known as ‘provision for forest resource/reforestation funds’ (*provisi sumberdaya hutan / dana reboisasi* or PSDH/DR). The amount of tax that should be paid is based on the volume of timber provided by the applicant. They will use proof of this tax payment to obtain certification of the validity of timber (Surat Keterangan Sahnya Kayu Bulat or SKSKB) from the district forest officer. After receiving that document, the timber agents can commence their business. A few additional documents, however are still required when they transport timber, incurring additional costs.

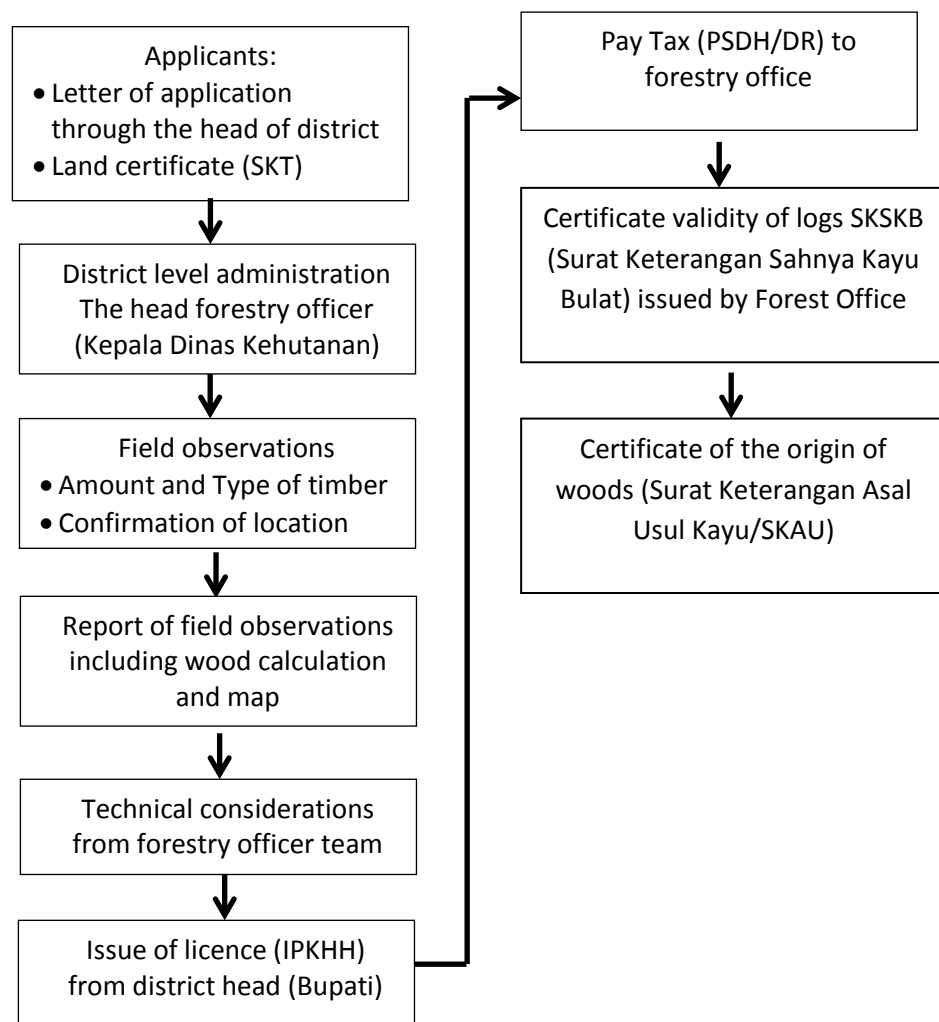


Figure 7. The sequence of activities undertaken to obtain a timber licence

Before transporting the timber to the wholesaler, timber agents need to provide an additional document concerning the origin of the wood. According to the Ministry of Forestry Regulation No P.51/Menhut-II/2006, a local person of standing, such as the

village head, has the right to issue the certificate of the origin of wood (Surat Keterangan Asal Usul Kayu/SKAU); for this reason, a wholesaler will support a local village head in pursuit of a licence as his timber agent, such as happened in Lalomerui.

Every cubic metre of timber will require Rp. 100,000 (AUD 10). Given that most agents in Routa have a quota larger than 1,000m<sup>3</sup>, at approximately Rp 100,000,000 (AUD 10,000) an applicant needs to provide a huge amount of money upfront. This is the reason that agents in a frontier area like this always need financial backing from a timber wholesaler outside Routa. So the economics of the patron-client chain begins in the timber industry.

At the outset, a potential owner of a sawmill in Routa needs to act just as a supplier for a timber wholesaler, either in Kendari or in Timampu; he will mill the timber himself until the supply can be guaranteed. Regular supply will encourage the wholesaler to provide financial support so that the suppliers (timber agents) can also become mill owners.

Other than Lalomerui, there are two other timber agents who own sawmills, one in Routa and the other in Parudongka; they established their sawmills prior to the one owned by the head of Lalomerui. Both the owners are the Bugis migrants. Even though they obtained permits from the Southeast Sulawesi government at Unaaha, they carry out timber trading through Timampu in South Sulawesi rather than through Southeast Sulawesi. This is largely due to easier transportation and stronger business ties with wholesalers in South Sulawesi. The owner of the sawmill in Routa relies on the wholesaler in Timampu who has controlled timber trading in Routa for a long time (Haji Hendra).

The timber agent who owns the sawmill in Parudongka is Pa Jufri, a young man who managed to break away from his dependence on Haji Hendra. He started his business working as a logging truck driver for Haji Hendra in Routa sub-district. He then worked at transporting timber from Timampu to Malili or even as far as Makassar, around 700 km from Timampu. While he travelled back and forth from Timampu to Makassar, he became acquainted with a buyer in Makassar who was willing to support him. He then established a new trading channel with this timber wholesaler. Pa Jufri's situation was helped by the fact that in 2010, Haji Hendra was arrested for illegal logging by police from the district capital and imprisoned for around three months. There was a rumour that Haji Hendra was just unfortunate because the head of police department at district level was replaced, others said that he had simply run out of luck (*sudah waktunya mi juga*



*ditangkap*) because he had been undertaking trading in illegal timber for more than a decade. This provided a window of opportunity for Pa Jufri. Now he has become a prominent timber trader in Routa, a significant player competing against the traders who previously dominated the timber business in Routa. He has two excavators, which he is using to improve the track from Routa to Lengkobale. Many people respect his considerable efforts to improve this route. In addition to organising his sawmill, he organises his chainsaw operators in Routa and persuades other people to work for him as wood-cutters or timber suppliers, following the usual patron-client pattern.

### **Timber wholesalers**

A timber wholesaler is positioned near the apex of the timber export industry; a timber wholesaler acts as patron and their timber agents/sawmill owners act as their clients. Both timber agents and sawmill owners function as timber collectors.

A timber wholesaler is a prominent figure in the timber industry. None currently live in Routa. Haji Hendra, who previously owned the sawmill in Routa, is the most longstanding timber wholesaler in the sub-district; now he lives in Timampu and controls the timber trading from there. Even though he does not have a sawmill in Routa now, he supports Nurman who does, and who married into his family (see Chapter Four). In addition to Nurman, he also supports his local timber agents who are also traders in Routa such as Ma Samad and Ma Bakri; Haji Hendra provided them with logging trucks and chainsaws on credit. He supported the issuing of timber processing permits for Nurman, Ma Samad and Ma Bakri and his older brother, Haji Aris (according to information from an official from the Forestry Department at the provincial level).

After obtaining legal permission from the district government, timber agents such as Ma Bakri or Ma Samad recruit local people to be their workers and chainsaw operators; most of them are already their clients. This business model shares the burden of recruitment across agents. Most of the logs from the collectors in Routa are milled into boards and beams at Nurman's sawmill, supervised by the Haji Hendra family. The volume of timber is used to pay off debts, which will eventually benefit Haji Hendra, although these debts are actually incurred further down the serial patron-client chain.

### **Agents in the timber industry**

Agents of the timber industry in Rouda can be divided into two categories: those who own sawmills and those who do not. Timber agents are very well known in Rouda. This is influenced by their history. At a time when not many cash crops were grown and people still relied on forest products, agents played a pivotal role as patrons. With the support of the wholesaler, the timber agents provide not only staple foods to people in Rouda but also additional materials to meet their needs, such as materials for building houses, a motorcycle or a television bought on credit from the agents. People also acknowledge that timber agents, particularly those who own a sawmill, have contributed to the development of roads. Although they initially develop only tracks for their logging trucks, gradually these tracks become the main access route. Many people in Rouda then regard the timber agents as praise worthy for building a useful road. The timber agents act as clients in relation to the wholesalers who live outside Rouda, but they become a patron for residents in Rouda sub-district.

Timber agents in Rouda have become rich and have plenty of assets because of profiting from timber, both legal and illegal. This allows them a considerable measure of social and economic control, so they manage and facilitate most of the economic activities in the sub-district. Although many advantages can accrue from such activity in the timber industry, not many people can profit legally in this business.

### **The assets of timber agents and the owner of a sawmill**

In general, the mill owners have more assets than the timber agents do, but both have significantly more assets than most. In terms of human assets, they establish patron-client relationships with many people in Rouda, using their clients as workers. Two of the three mill owners have graduated from senior high school or its equivalent (many people in Rouda only graduated from elementary school at best); only one of the sawmill owners graduated from elementary school, but he has owned his mill in Rouda longer than the others, so his comparatively low level of formal education is compensated for by his experience and skill in sawmill management. Currently, he is preparing his son, who graduated from technical high school (Sekolah Teknik Menengah/STM), to take over the mill.

The sawmill owners have contributed to invited migration. They invite people from outside Rouda to work in their sawmill or as timber-fellers. I found that people who

stayed in the sawmill camps in Routa and Parudongka are Bugis from South Sulawesi and Malaysia; some stated their desire to migrate to Routa. They also told me about their relatives and friends who had begun working in the sawmill before they decided to settle permanently in Routa.

In terms of social assets, both sawmill owners and timber agents have extensive connections within Routa; their clients include community leaders. Compared to other people, they also have wider connections outside Routa with their buyers and with some government officials. This circumstance bodes favourably for the sawmill owner and agents, because it allows them to obtain logging licences more easily. Sometimes local government officials ask them to help if there are official visits from district and provincial levels. People of such standing always participate and give contributions to the celebration of important days in Routa organised by the local government.

All the timber agents lend people money and those who cannot afford to pay their debts, even when they include their labour, have to repay it with their dammar resin concession or with their land. The agents then simply use the dammar trees for timber. This means that most of the timber agents have acquired more land than other people, so in terms of physical assets, the timber agents and the sawmill owners are in front. In Lalomerui, the timber agent has one logging truck; the owner of the sawmill in Routa has two. The owner of the sawmill in Parudongka has received support from his buyer in Makassar in the form of two logging trucks plus two excavators to build logging tracks.

Owners of the sawmills in Routa sub-district are all descendants of traditional community leaders as well as leading businessmen. This helps them to establish both social and economic relationships through many patron-client relationships.

It may be that the mill in Parudongka is better managed in terms of productivity and the quality of timber produced than those in Lalomerui and Routa. It may just be because the sawmill owner in Parudongka often sends his operators to receive informal training in Makassar. Some wood-cutters told me that Pa Jufri in Parudongka village has more integrity and offers a better price for their efforts than the mill owner in Routa village does. As a result, many wood-cutters in Routa prefer to sell their timber to the mill in Parudongka rather than the one in Routa. The sawmill in Parudongka is close to the port of Lengkobale, which enables them to reduce transportation costs. Distance in a frontier area such as Routa is important because of limited road and transport facilities.

### **The organisation of timber trading**

Prominent figures in timber trading are the wholesalers or buyers, also known as *bos besar* (big bosses). All reside outside Rوتا, in Southeast Sulawesi (Kendari and North Konawe) and in South Sulawesi (Timampu, Malili or even Makassar). They support the owners of sawmills and timber agents in Rوتا by buying the timber, financing the licences and lending them money, and providing technical assistance.

The owners of mills in Rوتا recruit people to operate their sawmill, as wood-cutters (chainsaw operators), logging truck drivers and manual workers to supply logs to their sawmills. In addition, these owners and timber agents may persuade local people to employ a team of wood-cutters on a casual basis to increase their timber takings. Most of the workers in the sawmill industry are relatives of the owner. For the sawmill industries located in Rوتا and Parudongka villages, the owners bring their relatives from South Sulawesi to work as sawmill operators and also encourage them to work and establish themselves in the region. This is also the strategy of the sawmill owner in Lalomerui, but because of easier access to Southeast Sulawesi, he relies on his relatives in Rوتا and Tolaki from North Konawe to work as logging truck drivers, chainsaw operators and manual workers.

As a sawmill owner employs a team to operate the mill. The head of the team is called *kepala meja* (head of the table). They have specific skills to operate sawmill machinery, which are tasks usually restricted to only two or three people. They are assisted by a few men who measure the wood, and a bookkeeper; when manual workers are included, there can be up to 12 people working in a sawmill. The logging truck drivers are assisted by one or two people (*kondektur*).

In addition to those who are recruited by the sawmill owners; there are other local timber agents who supply a mill with logs. A timber agent works under an informal unwritten agreement with the wholesaler to provide a particular amount of timber. Generally, they are well known as local traders in Rوتا sub-district who have clients and are willing to expand their enterprises to become timber collectors. They use some of their clients who have the skill and willingness to work as chainsaw operators, manual workers and buffalo drivers for *pajekka*.

Both the owners of sawmills and timber agents have wood-cutters (chainsaw operators) who have skills to not only to cut down a tree but, if necessary, they can carve a large beam in the forest using just a chainsaw. The wood-cutters are often assisted by

one or two labourers who are in charge of cleaning up the areas around the trees to be felled and also of preparing food. On one occasion, I found that one of the labourers was also the wood-cutter's wife.

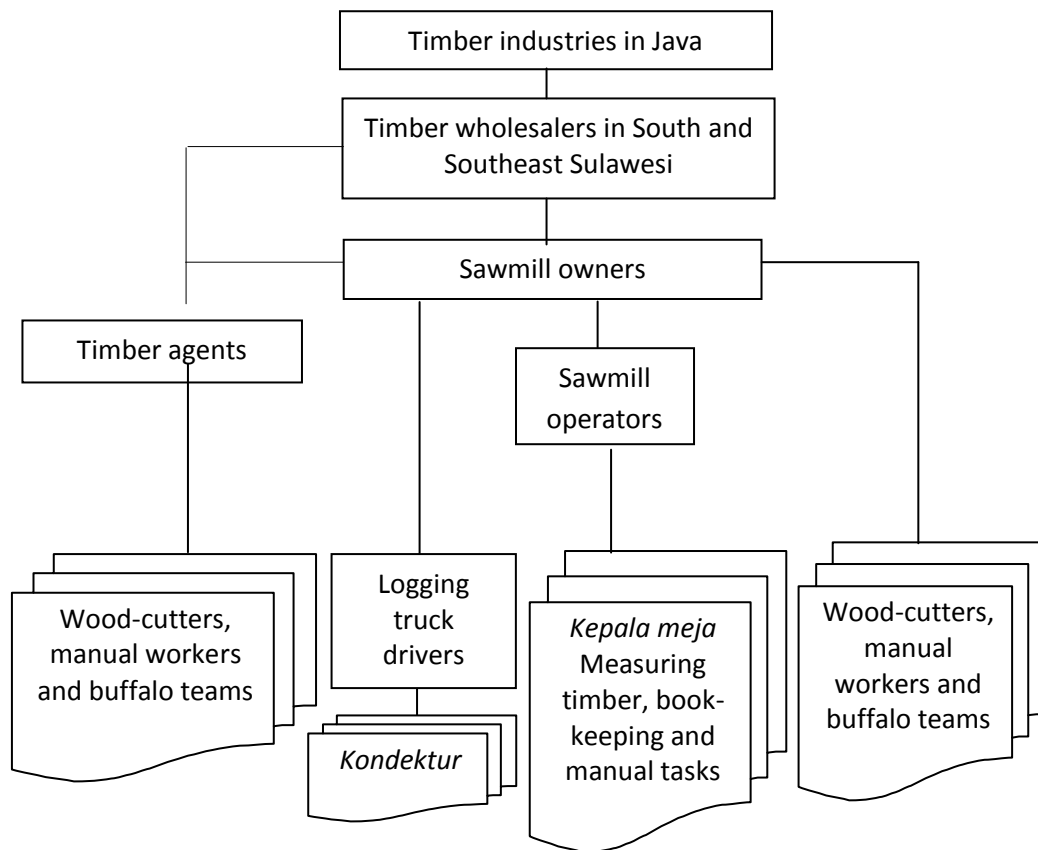


Figure 8. The organisation of a timber business

In addition to human labour, the timber collectors also rely on buffalo (animal labour). Buffaloes are trained to haul timber from the forest. Not all people can drive the buffalo to do this. Generally, the owners of a sawmill and their local collectors own more buffalo than all the other people working in their business. Often a buffalo driver will need to hire beasts from his patron.

### **Economic considerations for a logging enterprise**

#### The owners of the sawmill

In a frontier like Rوتا, business expansion in the timber industry is only possible through economic and networking sponsorship. In Lalomerui, the sawmill owner received sponsorship for his mill, his licence and his logging truck from the wholesaler who has a timber outlet in Kendari and also carries out inter-island trade as far as Surabaya, East

Java. In a certain period, usually each month, the sawmill owner must send a predetermined amount of timber to Kendari, or sometimes the timber wholesaler has orders to send timber to given places in North Konawe. On average Rahman sends around 10 m<sup>3</sup> per day; usually he can work for only three months a year because the wet season prevents access and the drying out period for the tracks takes months.

According to Rahman, he received initial capital support from the timber wholesaler in Kendari of around Rp 500,000,000 (AUD 50,000). He used the money to buy saws and machinery to build his sawmill. He also bought a few chainsaws and rented a second-hand logging truck. His 'big bos' in Kendari placed his representative in the sawmill to help with its operation, teaching Rahman how to identify the types of wood, maintain quality control and interpret a timber order from his superior in Kendari.

Rahman told me that he spent more than Rp 60,000,000 (AUD 6,000) obtaining his timber permit; first, he needed an initial payment of Rp 8,000,000 (AUD 800) to get sub-district approval. Then he used around Rp 35,000,000 (AUD 3,500) to get permission from the Forestry Department at the district level. In addition, he paid around Rp 16,000,000 (AUD 1,600) to the district government. He also has to pay Rp 150,000 (AUD 15) per cubic metre and Rp 1,000,000 (AUD 100) each and every time he uses a logging truck for transport to North Konawe or Kendari. The licence stipulates how many cubic metres of timber he can take from the forest over a one year, a quota which is inflated due to the application process.

When I spoke with him in 2011, he explained that although he had invested a lot of money to get the logging permit, the timber business was the most profitable activity that he could undertake in Rounta. He revealed that after less than three years' effort in the timber industry, he has paid off almost all his debt to the wholesaler. What remained was less than Rp 100,000,000 (AUD 10,000). He recounted that his assets now (sawmill, logging truck, chainsaws) are worth more than Rp 200,000,000 (AUD 20,000) and he still has more than 4,000 m<sup>3</sup> remaining in his annual timber quota; it seems that quota serves to encourage exploitation of this resource. He can afford to send his daughter to study at a famous Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) in East Java. However, when I met him again in 2013 in Kendari, he griped about the dwindling amount of timber of sizes that are saleable; now his wood-cutters have to go further into the forest to find timber to harvest. He told me about his plan to cease timber trading and become a member of the House of Representatives at the district level (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah/DPRD).

Based on the information from Rahman, it is clear that support from a wholesaler 'big bos' is pivotal for timber traders in a frontier like Rوتا, mainly because they control markets, not only within the province but outside the province. Information I found in Kendari shows that most of the good quality timber from Southeast Sulawesi province is sent to timber industries in Java.

Of all three sawmills in Rوتا sub-district, the sawmill business in Parudongka owned by Pa Jufri is growing more rapidly and is bigger than the others. The volume of wood processed in Parudongka is much more than that milled in the sawmills at Rوتا village and Lalomerui put together. This is probably because there are more sawmill workers and wood-cutters in Parudongka than in Rوتا. Pa Jufri relies on his own wood-cutters from southern Sulawesi who have good skills rather than on local wood-cutters in Rوتا. Most importantly, the sawmill in Parudongka is located closer to the warehouse established in Timampu by his superior, consequently he can minimise transportation costs. By comparison, Rahman in Lalomerui must transport his timber to Wanggudu, around six hours' travel over bad tracks which are sometimes impassable, while Pa Jufri only needs around one hour from his sawmill to Lengkobale and it takes around two hours for the motorised raft to reach Timampu. Jufri's cost for transport is half Rahman's. Along with the improvement of the track from Rوتا to Lengkobale, the costs of maintenance for logging trucks in Lengkobale are also low compared to those in Lalomerui.

### Timber agents

Timber agents process their timber in the local mill, however, in Rوتا village, some sell their timber directly to the wholesaler in Timampu. In Rوتا, Nurman the sawmill owner is a relative of Haji Hendra, a timber wholesaler in Timampu. Haji Hendra can require that a timber agent's quota be processed through Nurman's mill; the timber volume is calculated in order to pay timber agents' debts to Haji Hendra.

For the types of wood such as *Meranti* (*Shorea spp*) and *Nyato* (*Palaquium*), local timber collectors in Rوتا usually spend around Rp 590,000 (AUD 59) to produce one cubic metre which sells for Rp 800,000 (AUD 80) per cubic metre of beams or boards. Transportation and milling costs are the largest expenditure. The timber collector will receive Rp 210,000 (AUD 21) per cubic metre. The local timber collectors regularly sell around 30–40 m<sup>3</sup> of timber per month, so they can obtain a profit of Rp 6,300,000–Rp

8,400,000 (AUD 630 – AUD 840) per month from this kind of timber. This is a high income for a remote place like Rota.



Image 16. Timber agents in Rota sub-district

Another type of timber called *kumea* is the most valuable of the hardwoods. The local timber collectors have to spend around Rp 1,000,000 (AUD 100) to produce one cubic metre of beams or boards from *kumea*, but it sells for a much higher price, more than double that of other types of wood in Rota. This kind of wood is comparatively scarce; the local timber collectors can sell on average only around 10–15 m<sup>3</sup> per month, so they are able to make between Rp 5,000,000–Rp 7,500,000 (AUD 500 – 750) per month.

From information received, I estimate that on average, local timber collectors are able to earn about Rp 10,000,000 (AUD 1,000) every month from selling 10 m<sup>3</sup> of *kumea* and 30 m<sup>3</sup> of any other timber. The high income they receive enables them to maintain other businesses and to increase their business as patrons, for example enlarging their kiosks to provide goods to their chainsaw operators and their men.

I talked with Pa Jafar, a timber-getter, who formerly lived in Tetenggowuna hamlet. He began as a timber-feller for Rahman's sawmill in Lalomerui in around 2009. After buying supplies from his patron (Rahman), he sold on all the necessary provisions to his team of wood-cutters and manual workers before they went to the jungle. He opened a small kiosk in Tetenggowuna; currently he has moved to Lalomerui and has now established a kiosk there as well, not only to supply his wood-cutters but also the wage workers in the oil palm plantation. A client now has become a patron.



The calculation of timber trading of one of the local timber collectors can be seen in detail below.

Table 4. **The calculation of the profit from 1 m<sup>3</sup> of timber trading for *Kumea (Manilkara merrilliana H.J.L.)* from local timber collectors in Routa to wholesaler in Timampu in 2011.**

1 AUD = Rp10,000

Activities	Cost and Income	
	Rp	AUD
The cost of <i>Kumea</i> bought within the forests (1 m <sup>3</sup> )	350,000	35
Transport logs from within the forest to the tracks	100,000	10
Transport from tracks to sawmill	100,000	10
Cost of milling	200,000	20
Transportation from sawmill to the port of Lengkobale	150,000	15
Boat transportation from Lengkobale to the port of Timampu	100,000	10
Total cost (A)	1,000,000	100
Selling price in Timampu (B)	1,500,000	150
Net Income (B – A)	500,000	50

Source: data from field work, approximate calculation only, 2012

#### Timber-fellers (chainsaw operators)

Timber-fellers or chainsaw operators can usually fell up to five trees a day, depending on the density of the tree population that is economically feasible to harvest. They receive Rp 50,000 (AUD 5) for each tree taken. On average, they will earn the equivalent of around Rp 300,000 (AUD 30) a day. After taking into account the need to repay the cost of supplies — rice, instant noodles, dried fish, coffee and sugar, cigarettes, as well as fuel, spare-parts and lubricant for operating the chainsaw — there may be little money left; it depends on the debt. Because of the nature of this job, which largely depends on physical strength, people can only undertake it for two weeks every month and must then take a break or undertake a light job such as taking care of their own cash crops. On average, a tree-feller or his clients may earn up to Rp 3,000,000 (AUD 300) a month, which he should share with his helper. Although the amount of money they can earn from this heavy task is not much, it is still a mainstay for people in Routa, allowing them to meet short-term acute needs.



Image 17. **Wood in the port of Lengkobale, ready to ship to Timampu**

A declining number of people now rely on work as a wood-cutter for casual income because of the decreasing number of trees. This requires them to venture further into the forest, and they are paid on what they cut, not the time taken to cut it. Nevertheless, some still consider the job of tree-feller as important, particularly as a short-term income-earning strategy. Some people undertake this work to supplement their main source of income while waiting for the harvest of their cash crops; to some extent this is also a strategy of people to spread risk.

### **Patron-client relationships in the timber industry**

The economic characteristics of a patron-client relationship in the timber industry are somewhat different to the relationship between farmers and suppliers. Although patrons or timber agents provide supplies and if necessary also provide money to chainsaw operators and manual workers before they go to the forest, generally all the debt will be repaid after the two or three weeks they spend in the jungle. The debt situation for farmers is far more prolonged; for farmers the repayment must wait until the pepper or cacao harvest which, hopefully, is successful. For farmers, debt is generally longterm, for timber workers, debts are more likely to be episodic.

The provisions are quite similar for every trip: rice, cigarettes, dried fish, instant noodles, coffee, sugar and sometimes they are provided with money or supplies for their families who they leave behind. By contrast, the kinds of goods the patron often provides

for those who are not timber collectors or forest gatherers may vary from day to day according to their needs. However, some engaged in timber collection are also farmers who engage in timber gathering in order to pay their debts. Sometimes also the patron will tie their clients further by offering them more to ensure that they will still work with them. This latter arrangement is mainly influenced by the labour shortage situation in Routa.

To date, not much cash has circulated in Routa sub-district, probably because there is neither a market nor any formal financial institution and the systems of exchange do not require money. Most of people's needs are provided by their patrons who exchange goods for labour or for forest products. From the first time they appeared in Routa, the sawmill owners and the timber wholesalers have acted as a market hub; they buy all the supplies to provide people with the goods for their daily needs on credit, and they can act as a *de facto* financial institution lending people money if necessary. Workers still have a hand-to-mouth existence, but now it is one of indebtedness.

The patron-client relationship is important, because many people in Routa sub-district do not have savings, so they need patronage to cope with unforeseen and unusual needs such as harvest failure, education fees, the cost of wedding, medical expenses, rituals and for the celebration of the end of the *Muslim* fasting month (Eid).

### **The sequence of patronage in the frontier timber industry**

The wholesalers both in Timampu and in Kendari act as *big bos* (patrons) for the owners of sawmills in the sub-district who are their clients. Further, in Routa, the owners of sawmills become patrons and local timber-getters are their clients. Furthermore, local timber-getters are the patrons for chainsaw operators who in turn become patrons for their men. This is a chain of patron-client relationships, where a series of clients in turn becomes a series of patrons, so indebtedness is a part of life for most people in this frontier. The serial patron-client relationships require every client in the chain to accept what ever price is offered by their patron. Wholesalers dictate market access and therefore profit margins; this is facilitated by the industry bottleneck created in Lengkobale by Lake Towuti. Rahman explained the situation happens mainly because the timber wholesaler controls all the transportation between Routa to the market in Timampu, particularly across Towuti Lake. The situation allows them to block all market

information regarding prices, types and volume of timber that buyers in Makassar or Malili require<sup>71</sup>.

### **Non-timber industries**

In addition to various types of timber, the forests in Routa also provide a wide range of products that supports people's needs. Heubach et al., (2011: 1991) define NTFPs as 'any product or service other than timber that is produced in forests; [they] comprise fruits and nuts, vegetables, fish, medicinal plants, resins, essences and a range of barks and fibres such as bamboo, rattans and a host of other palms and grasses'. They also include timber products used for wood carving and fuel. In many cases the NTFPs have provided a safety net in times of crises due, for example to harvest failure and income shortage, some may serve as a regular source of cash income.

For some in Routa village and many in Walandawe and Lalomerui villages, NTFPs play an important role providing regular cash income, particularly in the case of dammar resin collection. Food such as bamboo sprouts and fish as well as medicinal plants are collected for the villagers' own consumption. There are some small lakes (*tapparang*)<sup>72</sup> where people come to harvest fish once a year in the dry season. They will sell some of their catch to the village residents or to the kiosks, but usually not much cash can be generated from this activity. They use the pocket money from selling the excess fish for buying just small items such as kitchen spices, coffee or the odd single cigarette.

### Dammar resin

Dammar is the product of one of many *Dipterocarps* trees which produce resin. Important varieties are *damar mata kucing* from *Hopea micrantha*, *damar penak* from *Neobalanocarpus heimii* and *damar temak* from *Shorea crassifolia* (Blair & Byron, 1926 cited in Shiva & Jantan, 1998: 188-189). According to Mantell et al. (1935: 1370) much of the hard resin from *Dipterocarpaceae* is found in the Celebes (the islands of Sulawesi). Marwah (2012: 276-279), during her research in an area around Konawe watershed, Southeast Sulawesi, found another species of dammar, *Shorea Lamellata*.

Hard resin has been used traditionally in this region for making flame-torches, handicrafts, incense, medicine, and for cremations. Since the industrial revolution,

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<sup>71</sup> This situation may change as roads improve.

<sup>72</sup> Toraja term.

dammar resin has been used to produce shoepolish, carbon paper, typewriter ribbon, inferior grades of paints and varnishes for indoor and decorative work, and for mounting microscopic specimens. In recent times, dammar has been used in the manufacture of paints, *batik* dyes, printing ink, varnishes and cosmetics.

#### *The location and the ownership of dammar trees*

There are no dammar trees left growing near Parudongka, Tirawonua or Rوتا villages. The dammar tappers must go further into the areas around Walandawe and Lalomerui villages. Loggers, both legal and illegal, have been actively cutting dammar for more than two decades in Rوتا; when settlers slash and burn; it totally replaces all the native vegetation. Farmers planting new cash crops and staple foods do the same. This practice has also resulted in dammar trees disappearing from the three villages in Rوتا sub-district. The appearance of the oil palm plantation in Lalomerui village has significantly reduced the population of dammar trees around this village as well.

In the Dutch colonial era, metal plates, '*patok pening*', were acquired from the local government to show ownership of the dammar trees, but a few years after Indonesian independence (according to local people, around 1957), the iron plate was no longer used. Recently, the ownership of dammar trees is marked by scars on the trees (in local terms *paktodongi* from the Toraja language) and there are other signs of tapping activities such as footpaths and the condition of the forest around the dammar trees, which is usually cleaner than locations that have never been tapped. The people and the local government (village) agree that the dammar locations that have pioneered can be used.

There is no physical boundary such as a fence for a dammar resin location. Concessions of dammar trees are naturally bordered by topographical features such as rivers, valleys or river basins, hills and such like. Apart from those natural signs, information regarding the location of dammar trees can be obtained from local tappers.



Image. 18a.

The pathway to a dammar resin concession in Laloulaho Walandawe village



Image 18b.

People mark their dammar location by slashing saplings and bushes on the boundary

There are at least four types of dammar ownership understood by most people in Routa sub-district. The first type is 'use rights'<sup>73</sup> (*hak pakai*); the people who were the first to tap the dammar trees in a given location are entitled to the use rights. The second category refers to acquiring a dammar use rights through inheritance. The third category is use rights acquired by purchase. The last category refers to the transference of the right of ownership through leasing the location of dammar trees. The holders of use rights have the right to further sub-let all or part of their dammar location to tappers. This generally occurs because the possessors of use rights do not have enough labour to gather dammar resin themselves; in such cases they are generally widows, widowers or elderly people. They then share in the yield (*bagi hasil*) or income from the dammar gathering. A use rights owner maybe either a client or a patron; a patron who owns use rights employs clients as their tappers to harvest their dammar trees and the tappers are then obliged to sell the dammar resin to those patrons (*bos*). A use rights owner is not necessarily rich; they may be in debt themselves and may reduce the debt by allowing the profit from their dammar concession to be enjoyed by the patron.

The holders of use rights sell their rights to dammar trees for various reasons. Some fall into debt to their *bos* who are mostly traders. Dammar collectors typically borrow before they go to the forest, but often they cannot collect as much dammar resin as they need to repay their debt. As time goes on, their debt to the *bos* increases and they still

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<sup>73</sup> 'Use rights' is a legal term meaning 'the right to use and enjoy the profits and advantages of something belonging to another as long as the property is not damaged or altered in any way'.

cannot afford to repay it. They then sell their dammar tree concession to the *bos*, generally for Rp 3,000,000 per location regardless of the size, because they use natural boundaries such as rivers, creeks and hills, according to an old man who sold his dammar resin location in 2011. Some of the *bos* are also loggers. They fell the dammar trees and mill them to become saleable timber. The news of a mining operation coming has made some of the traders and the people move to maintain their dammar trees. They believe that if their dammar trees are included in mining areas, they will be entitled to receive significant compensation. Some have even tried to legitimise their holdings by obtaining a land certificate (SKT) of their dammar location, issued by the heads of villages. However, according to some people in Routa, many of the SKT owners are not sure about the validity of their SKT because many of the dammar concessions are located in protected forest areas.

#### *Harvesting resin*

Generally dammar tappers build a hut in their dammar location as a place to rest, or stay at for least a week during harvest. Buffalo and men are used to transport dammar resin, so collectors always build their huts in a location that can be reached by buffalo.

A machete (*parang*) and *pa'tiba* are the main tools for harvesting dammar. A *parang* is used to clear a pathway to the dammar location and to clear areas around the hut and dammar trees, while *pa'tiba* is used to make the cut on the dammar trees. They commonly get *parang* and *pa'tiba* from Timampu. Villagers tap the resin by making a cut about 20–50 cm wide and 15 cm deep into the trunk to stimulate resin flow. According to Torquiebiau (1984: 118) and Shiva (1998: 188), a dammar tree is ready to be tapped when it is about 20 years old, and continues producing for 30 years, after which production declines. On average, a mature tree can produce around 50 kg of resin each year. All dammar trees in Routa grow naturally in the forest, so there is no record of how old they are. Some tappers said that on average they can collect about 20–30 kg from each tree.





Dammar resin tree showing three cuts

*Pa'tiba* tool for tapping dammar resin tree

*Basu* for collecting resin (1m deep)

Image 19. **Dammar resin tree, tapping and gathering tools**

Other tools are also used. *Tambo-tambo* (Tolaki language) is used to facilitate the flow of resin in a certain direction. It is made from either a sago stem or a pandan leaf. A *basu* (Tolaki language) is a carrying basket made from sago bark and is used for gathering and carrying dammar resin. A sack made from plastic (*karung*) can also be used to carry dammar resin. Recently many dammar tappers are using a sack instead of *basu* because it is easier to carry (lighter) and will accommodate more resin, although a *basu* is more durable.

The tappers spend at least one week on location slashing the dammar trees; generally they bring provisions such as rice, salt fish, cigarettes, sugar, coffee and sometimes also milk, and after one week they go back to the village. They will come again after three months to collect the resin yield. They usually stay longer this time, usually two weeks during the collection. Then they bring more provisions, almost double what they carried at the time of tapping. Most dammar collectors obtain their provisions on credit from their *bos*, who also owns a kiosk.

Transporting resin from the forest is the most difficult job for tappers in Rوتا. Currently, the location of dammar trees is around one day's walk from their settlements. The tappers frequently rent a buffalo from their *bos*, but buffalo in Rوتا are often busy carrying logs from the forest; this means that more often than not, the dammar tappers have to shoulder their own resin from the forest to the nearest tracks. The *bos* will often



provide logging trucks to carry the resin from there to their houses, weigh it and repack it if necessary.

### *Economic considerations of dammar resin*

Unlike the situation three decades or more ago, today dammar resin is not the main source of income for most people in Routa sub-district. Many only use income from collecting dammar resin as a 'top-up' or to pay back borrowed money incurred by harvest failure or for unforeseen needs.

The decreasing number of dammar trees close at hand has forced the dammar tappers to go further into the forest, but this is a diminishing and finite resource. In one location they can now sometimes find only 50 dammar trees compared to around a few decades ago when it was easy for them to find 100 dammar trees not far from their settlements. This has forced many dammar-resin tappers to engage more of their household members to work as wage labourers.

The appearance of cash crops such as cacao and pepper has attracted many people to change their livelihood from gathering forest products such as dammar resin to becoming sedentary farmers. During my research, I found only two households in Routa village who rely on gathering dammar resin as their main livelihood.

The economic calculation of the dammar-resin gathering of one person is provided below. Bio is a dammar tapper who lives in Routa. Although he has a small cacao farm, which he inherited from his parents-in-law, and he has started to cultivate pepper in his house yard, he relies on collecting dammar resin as his main source of income. Bio usually spends around one week to slash the trees and spends another two weeks collecting and transporting dammar resin to his *bos*. On average he can collect between 500–1,000 kg every three months; with the price at Rp 5,000 (AUD 0.5) per kilogram, he can receive around Rp 2,500,000 –Rp 5,000,000 (AUD 250–500) per trip or around Rp 800,000 – 1,600,000 (AUD 80 – 160) per month. He has to pay his operational costs, both during the cutting of the dammar trees and then when collecting the resin. Usually, he borrows between Rp 500,000 –Rp 1,000,000 (AUD 50–100) both in cash and provisions for each trip, which he also uses to provide daily needs for his family who he leaves behind. He calculated that he can earn around Rp 500,000 – Rp 1,000,000 (AUD 50–100) per month. It is far from enough for him, as he has five children and he also has to pay instalments for a motorcycle bought on credit from his *bos*. Although he has his own use rights, the yield

is insufficient for his needs. In order to overcome his financial shortfall, Bio usually taps the dammar trees of his *bos* as well. His *bos* will then provide all operational costs but, because of this Bio, has to share the yield 50–50 with him. For additional income, his wife and children sometimes go to work as pepper pickers or day labourers for his *bos* or on a neighbouring farm.



Image 20. **Hard dammar resin in a sack**

From day to day, the needs of people in Routa are growing and changing. The improved tracks from Lengkobale to Routa have made it possible for them to travel by motorcycle. This situation has encouraged them to buy motorcycles. Many people combine gathering dammar with other products from the forest such as timber, rattan and eaglewood (*gaharu*), but the forests still cannot produce enough to meet their needs. Their increasing needs coupled with better transportation have significantly improved people's access to perceived necessities. Small-scale cash cropping has become essential. This diversification is also necessitated by the decline in the population of dammar trees and increased new consumer demands as noted above. In the foreseeable future, dammar gathering may become a thing of the past.

#### *The buyers of dammar resin: bos*

According to the head of Lalomerui village, who formerly acted as a *bos* when he officiated as a head of Routa village, there is a huge difference in the dammar resin price between that in Routa and Makassar. He told me that in the 1980s, the price of dammar resin in Routa was only Rp 2,500 (AUD 0.25) per kilogram, while in Makassar it was Rp 10,000 (AUD 1) per kilogram. A dammar resin buyer in Timampu, however, will justify the

price because he must spend a lot of money to transport dammar resin from Routa to Timampu and Makassar, arguing that there are many unofficial charges in the course of such transport. He also has to wait a bit longer (around three months) to accumulate sufficient dammar resin to make delivery to Makassar worthwhile. During the waiting time, he must bear the risk of falling prices. As well, he is required to pay a levy to the local government (*retribusi*).

### Rattan

Many forest areas on Sulawesi Island, including those in Southeast Sulawesi, have long been known as rattan-producing regions. The symbol of unity for Tolaki — the largest *suku* in the mainland of Southeast Sulawesi — is made from rattan (*kalo*). In wedding ceremonies of Tolaki, according to Tarimana (1993:205), they always use *kalo sara mbendulu*<sup>74</sup> which is made from rattan twisted into a circle, a symbol of strong family relationships. Even now, Tolaki use *kalo* to invite important people to a marriage ceremony, funeral and official ceremonies. In resolving conflict within the community, Tolaki people in many villages present *kalo* before starting any negotiation. Rattan in Routa is not only used symbolically but also as food, medicine and for trading. Many people in Routa will often consume the young shoots of rattan as a vegetable (*tinira*). They believe it can protect them from or provide resistance to malaria.

The first village head of Routa told me that rattan trading had been undertaken in Routa from before the coming of the DI troops. After the DI rebellion had been put down, some of the Indonesian army who were assigned to Routa tried to re-establish rattan collection as *bos*, but still on a small scale, due to limited transportation facilities (particularly crossing Towuti Lake). Rattan trade experienced a golden age in Routa between 1980 and the 1990s. At that time it was relatively abundant. According to a former forestry officer, there are several types of rattan in Routa: *Calamus ecojolis* Becc (*jarmasin*), *Calamus inops* Becc (*tohiti*), and *Daemonorops robustus* Warp (*batang*). He was one of the more prominent rattan collectors in Routa. He organised people to collect rattan from the surrounding forests and to bring it to traders in North Konawe. Some of these traders came from Wanci Island (one of the islands in Wakatobi district close to the Banda Sea), others were Chinese from Surabaya (the capital of East Java). The traders

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<sup>74</sup> *Kalo sara* means customary marriage; *mbendulu* means together or united.

from Wanci Island then took all the rattan they bought from North Konawe to Singapore and traded it for second-hand goods, which are difficult to buy in many towns in Southeast Sulawesi. As a result, they successfully took control of most of the rattan trading, mostly because they sold rattan to traders in Singapore for a higher price than their competitors in North Konawe, who sold most of their rattan to the furniture industry in East and West Java.



Image 21. *Kalo* used in a wedding ceremony

Bugis traders in Rounta sold their rattan to large traders in Timampu who then brought it to Makassar, and thence to Java. Most of them used the existing dammar-resin and timber-trade routes.

Both the decreasing availability of rattan in Rounta and the prohibition of the export of raw and semi-finished rattan have significantly reduced rattan trading in Rounta. During my field work in 2011-2012, I did not see anyone in Rounta processing or selling rattan. There is probably still much rattan in Rounta, but people have to go further into the forest to harvest/find it, so currently most of them cannot afford the time it takes to gather rattan.

#### Eaglewood (*gaharu*)

Researchers dealing with *gaharu* (eaglewood), also known as agarwood or aloeswood, explain that it is resinous, fragrant and highly aromatic heartwood generated from genus *Aquilaria* and *Gyrinops* (Robert, 2006: 1; Barden et al., 2000: v). The dark resinous heartwood forms when the trees become infected by a type of mould. Prior to infection,

the heartwood is relatively light and pale; the tree produces dark aromatic resin as a response to the mould attack. It is used for incense and perfumes in Middle Eastern countries, Japan, Taiwan and China (Barden et al., 2000: vi).

*Gaharu* is known to be a valuable wood by many people in Routa sub-district. Based on my own experience, when I was working on a rubber plantation in Bahodopi village<sup>75</sup> in Bungku district in 1992, I found many people from Routa travelling through this area on their journey to collect *gaharu*. Many are fascinated by *gaharu* because the price of this wood is so very high. People have even received tens of millions of rupiah per kilo for it.

The popularity of *gaharu* in Routa has attracted not only the young or poor people, but in the 1990s also traders who acted as collectors going into the forest to search for *gaharu*. It is surrounded by mythology; even people who have no experience searching for *gaharu* can be lucky enough to find more than experienced gatherers can. There are many stories in Routa that sometimes people have passed a certain area without finding any *gaharu* but those who followed have been able to find it in that very place. The head of Lalomerui village, who was formerly head of Routa village, was famous as one of the *gaharu* collectors there. He recounted that he not only bought *gaharu* but also went into the forest with others to seek *gaharu* himself.

In the 1990s, the *gaharu* buyers were Chinese and Arabic; many of them came from Surabaya (East Java). They stayed in places around Timampu such as Wawondula, Wasuponda and Sorowako. Usually *gaharu* seekers in Routa sold their *gaharu* to buyers in Routa village. The buyers from Routa then sold it on to the buyers outside Routa. Only a very few *gaharu* seekers in Routa dealt directly with buyers in Wawondula, Wasuponda or Sorowako, mainly those who were lucky enough to find a significant amount of good quality *gaharu* (*gubal gaharu*).

Several factors govern the price that gatherers may receive. One factor that prevents people selling their *gaharu* directly to a buyer in a neighbouring district is that many of them are indebted to local buyers to whom they must sell. Another factor limiting their income from *gaharu* is lack of skill in identifying the different types. One type of *gaharu* is worth more than gold (*gubal gaharu*). Generally, the darker the colour the more valuable, but it is not easy to tell. Many people in Routa lack confidence and competence in identification, so they rely on the integrity of local buyers who they know

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<sup>75</sup> The village is located around 60 km to the northwest of Routa, administratively it is under Central Sulawesi province.

and trust to give a good price. Usually *gaharu* seekers in Rوتا find only a small amount, so they will sell it to a local buyer rather than take it to a buyer outside Rوتا. Local buyers, however, do tend to pay less than larger concerns outside Rوتا.

#### Food and medicinal plants

Many people in Rوتا eat fish from Towuti Lake or other small seasonal lakes located in the mountains about 10 km from Rوتا. Some fish are caught at a popular fishing spot called Hiu-hiuka (*hiu* in Indonesian means 'shark'). The fish caught there are similar in form to a shark, but not as big as a marine shark. In the dry season, when water in the lake is low, people from Rوتا always go to fish there. People told me that the water there exits through a hole in the middle of the lake and makes a sound like the beat of music. After collecting fish, people often join in a dance (*lulo*) to that beat. According to some elderly people in Rوتا, this traditional Tolaki dance originated in this area. There are other small lakes or swamps where people collect fish, such as the one close to Walandawe village.

People state that until about two decades ago, the meat for celebrations such as wedding ceremonies, circumcisions or other celebrations could be supplied by hunting *jonga* from the forests around Rوتا. Currently, people have to buy cattle with prices reaching Rp 7,000,000 (AUD 700) to Rp 8,000,000 (AUD 800) per head, or undertake such celebrations without meat.

People in Rوتا also use the forest to find vegetables. In addition to *tinira* or young rattan shoots, there are a number of vegetables such as bamboo shoots (*rebung*), leaves of *Gnetum Gnemon* (*daun melinjo*) and a number of types of mushrooms growing on logs. Although some mushrooms contain poison, the people are able to distinguish edible varieties by the colour.

Sago is a traditional food for Tolaki and in Palopo; it also comes from the forest and has been the main source of carbohydrate for many people in Rوتا. Currently not many rely on sago because the number of sago palms has significantly decreased with land clearing, and so many now cultivate dry and wet rice. During the DI rebellion, however, when people could not easily cultivate rice, many people relied even more than usual on sago and the sugar palm.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> In times of famine in places where there are limited sago trees; people process the trunks of the sugar palm to make a powder like sago.

On the frontier with limited access and infrastructure, such as health facilities, many people in Routa depend on medicinal plants, which were once widely available in the forest. People use guava leaves or black turmeric to treat diarrhoea; for stomach ache they use leaves from the *molambu*<sup>77</sup> shrub; for chest pain they often use *tumbu donipu*<sup>78</sup> which local people also call 'forest rope' (*tali hutan*). There are also medicines to counteract poisons, stop bleeding and ones often given to women who have just given birth.

Even though many in Routa have reduced their reliance on forest products, they continue to rely on the forest for certain things like traditional cures. It is knowledge passed down from their forebears and enhanced because of the remoteness of Routa and the difficulty in obtaining medicines.

### **Forest as a land resource**

Forests in Routa not only provide a variety of products that sustain the locals' income and daily needs, but are also a source of land for farming. At first, much of the forest clearing was undertaken for settlements, tracks and small farming. According to many, in the last two decades, since the forest can no longer sustain people's incomes, many in Routa sub-district have begun cultivating cash crops such as cacao and pepper. The appearance of cash crops such as these has encouraged the conversion of the forest around their settlements to agricultural land for both cash crops and staple foods.

The establishment of the oil palm plantation in Lalomerui village has also converted much of the forest around this village. Reportedly, mining activities scheduled to begin operating in 2014, will also be located in the forest areas of Routa. It seems that forest conversion in Routa will continue at an ever-increasing pace along with the increasing palm oil activity and the commencement of mining. The price of land in the first-established villages (Parudongka, Tirawonua, Routa and Walandawe) has increased. Some people told me that the news of the mining activities in Routa has contributed to these rising prices in this sub-district. They said that practices of the past can no longer be continued; in the future probably the head of village will no longer be able to give every new migrant new land for free, even in the new villages (Tanggola, Puuwiwirano).

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<sup>77</sup> The term *molambu* is originally Tolaki language; it means 'wild plant'.

<sup>78</sup> A Tolaki word for the shoot of *Donipu* plant.

## **Conclusion**

Over the previous decade, pressure on the forest has increased in Rouda. Both rampant illegal logging and clearing for farms have reduced many sources of income, such as dammar resin and rattan, which the people in Rouda could previously rely on for their livelihoods, at least in part, notwithstanding their diminishing value.

The establishment of Rouda as a sub-district, which was followed by the development of new villages, has further increased the pressure on forest resources. The arrival of large agro-industrial investments such as the oil palm plantation has changed the landscape of Rouda areas, particularly Lalomerui village, from a forest once rich with various types of plants and now reduced to a depleted monoculture.

Rouda will never look the same. The landscape changes once effected cannot easily be reversed. Even though people's activities in establishing their farms or settlements are not on the same scale as that of the oil palm plantation, they do contribute to the landscape changes. The jungle once cleared will never be able to share its secrets and we may never know what possibilities have been destroyed by 'progress'.



## Chapter Six

### Social relations in the frontier: Acquiring honoured status

#### Introduction

In September 2011, when I travelled from Kendari to Rounta through North Konawe, I stopped by the house of Pak Ansar (the first village head of Rounta) in Pondo, North Konawe. After taking a rest and a bath, I then chatted with him. As night fell he invited me to attend the wedding of his nephew. When we arrived at the ceremony, the relatives of the bridegroom ushered us to the front row to sit on the 'VIP' chairs along with other local community leaders seated under an awning in front of the bride's house. On other occasions, I attended meetings in villages, where I discovered that people always show respect to older people, although in the discussions some of the elders did not raise any questions or give comments or feedback.

After attending a number of rituals, wedding ceremonies and such celebrations, I found that in addition to their elders, people in Rounta treat others whom they consider to have some kind of distinction with extreme respect. Middle-aged or elderly people who were affluent or well-educated, Islamic preachers, or people who hold government positions were usually seated in a place of honour, in the front on the best seats or in the best places.

Rounta has no hereditary classes and no local traditional polity with hereditary leadership. All residents were originally commoners in their places of origin. This chapter will discuss the genesis of social status in Rounta. Although they began as commoners and were poor in their places of origin, some residents have been able to rise in power and status over time through their own economic and political efforts. They achieve such positions in the community through long-term endeavours, while others have not succeeded or have not aspired to do so. We can see the emergence of inequality and incipient social stratification. In everyday life, evidence of social differentiation can be seen in many rituals, trading practices and government activities.

Saunders (1990: 1-2) explains that the term 'stratification' originally came from geologists. They used it to describe the layers or strata of rock which form the earth's crust. Many scholars have used the concept of social stratification to describe the different layers of status groups in various human societies, but there are limitations to

the analogy. Rock strata are comparatively stable rather than dynamic; they do not interact with one another. Different layers of rock cannot change places relative to one another, whereas in human societies such change is possible. In many cases, there are people who own more economic assets than others, or may be held in higher esteem. In every community there are politically powerful elites and comparatively powerless groups; groups which are economically dominant and those relatively less so. When a particular group dominates others because of their position in the state, it is evidence of *political power* (Weber, 1968 cited in Saunders, 1990: 20-23; Gerth & Mills, 1946: 180-195).



Image 22. A *puutobu* in Parudongka village

From my observations in Rوتا, status is subject to competition in everyday life of older and younger community members. Individuals and their families are able to attain social recognition through their length of residence there, the size of their immediate and extended families, success in economic endeavours, the tenure of formal positions in the government or scholarly accomplishments in education. The subsequent generations of people in Rوتا will probably benefit from the hard work of their parents today, but if they are not good patrons or do not work hard and maintain good social relationships, their inheritance will dissipate.

### **Elders (*orang tua*) and *puutobu***

Acciaioli (2009: 66-67) indicates that a person's position may be set by birth, an inherent status fixed unalterably by the position of father and mother in the rank system. Although there have never been people with formally inherited noble status from South and Southeast Sulawesi living in Routa, the community there does have an identifiable hierarchy. Davis (1942: 309) defines status as 'a position in the general institution system recognized and supported by the entire society rooted in the folkways and mores'.

In examining social stratification and how people earn distinguished status in a remote place like Routa, there are evident dichotomies, such as between older and younger. As with most cultures in Indonesia, respect is always given to their elders by the younger members of the community (see Fox, 2009a: 1-7). Some people who are elderly have achieved the status of village elder. This is earned not only by age but also by their social or economic contributions to the formation of their village.



Image 23. ***Orang tua*** in Routa

Generally before embarking on an activity, such as wedding ceremonies, erecting houses, going to collect eaglewood or opening new land, people in Routa turn to village elders, Islamic preachers or people whom they regard as wise. Local people will always ask such people to propose an auspicious day (*menentukan hari baik*) for the activity. Often, people rely on older people in their family, such as their father, uncle or someone in their extended family, whom they regard as having the capability to give sage advice.

In every village in Routa, there is a particular group of people who are accorded higher distinction than others; those who are known as the founding fathers of the

village. Some of them are also known as *puutobu*. *Puu* (see Chapter Three) in Tolaki language is 'trunk' or 'pole', while *tobu* means 'of a particular area'. Tolaki in Kendari told me that *puutobu* is a customary leader. At wedding ceremonies, the headman always asks the *puutobu* whether all the requirements for the ceremony are in order before commencing proceedings. Officially, there is a *puutobu* in every village in Routa sub-district who deals with customary matters. They are appointed by the head of sub-district (*camat*). Nowadays, the position of *puutobu* has been formalised through a decree from the House of Representatives at the village level called BPD (Badan Permusyawaratan Desa). This is an annual appointment, but the appointee can be reappointed. In village organisation, a *puutobu* is positioned parallel to the head of the village. Most are elders who are considered wise and they are always included in solving problems in the community. In addition to *puutobu*, people may rely on their older relatives in a similar way.



Image 24. ***Orang tua* and *puutobu* in Routa**

Even though the term *puutobu* is originally from the Tolaki language, in some villages in Routa, *puutobu* are not Tolaki. In Parudongka, the *puutobu* is an elder from the Duri group, in Tirawonua he is a Bugis. In Tanggola the *puutobu* is Toraja and in Puuwiwirano he is Bugis. The term *puutobu* is used by all *suku* in Routa although the groups are culturally different. This is an example of adaptation of in-migration groups to local custom. In every village a *puutobu* is also regarded as *orang tua*, but not all *orang tua* are *puutobu* because whilst there is only one *puutobu* in every village, there can be more than one *orang tua* in a village.

There is a Tolaki figure who is a *puutobu* and he is highly respected as an *orang tua* in Routa village. Rahim was formerly the headmaster of the elementary school in Parudongka for around a decade. He is a Tolaki from Latoma. Some Tolaki, particularly those from Latoma, always come to him for advice to solve household problems. I also found that in many rituals people showed him respect by giving him pride of place. Rahim's daughter now also works as the principal of the elementary school in Parudongka, but it seems she cannot maintain the same level of honoured status as her father, perhaps because she married Indra, whom some consider idle. Indeed, many people consider him arrogant. Rahim has tried to promote Indra by appointing him as his replacement as the Registrar of Marriage, Divorce and Reconciliation (P3NTR-Pembantu Pegawai Pencatat Nikah, Talak, Cerai dan Rujuk), but not many people respect Indra like they do Rahim.

Other elders in Routa village include Galessong and Nurman. Galessong is a former Kahar Muzakkar soldier. Many people consider him as brave and as contributing to the formation of Routa, first as a settlement and then a village. He married a Tolaki woman from Latoma and encouraged many of his wife's relatives to move to Routa. Almost all of his children have married local people, so his family is spread throughout the Routa area. Nurman is also one of the long-term residents of Routa. He was born in a refugee camp in Tadoloyo in the DI rebellion era. Now with the support of Haji Hendra, he has the only sawmill in Routa village.

There is another prominent figure who is not a *puutobu*. Ansar is an *orang tua* not only in Routa village but also in other villages, such as Walandawe and Lalomerui. Pak Ansar led Routain the midst of the difficult situation during the DI rebellion and as the first village head; now he is considered the 'grand father' of Routa. For over almost 25 years (1968-1993) he travelled to Kendari and Unaaha for government matters. He told me proudly that he had succeeded in making all his sons-in-law civil servants. He spearheaded the formation of new villages, such as Tirawonua, Parudongka and Walandawe. He was pivotal in the election of his family members, Dasran<sup>79</sup> as first village head of Tirawonua, and Hanung as the first village head of Walandawe.

I found another Tolaki figure respected as both *orang tua* and *puutobu* in Walandawe village. Hanung is the foremost figure in Walandawe; he was the head there

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<sup>79</sup> Dasran is a son of Anjas who is one of Ansar's cousin. Anjas is the grandchild of Piae (Ansar's aunt), see Chapter Three.

for more than a decade (1998-2009). Many people acknowledge him as a wise leader and still rely on him to carry out rituals and wedding ceremonies. People typically ask him about issues regarding land ownership there.

Razak and Panji are both longstanding residents in Lalomerui village. Their offspring dominate the population and both are regarded as village elders. Razak and Panji are the only people there who still can speak Waru, the language of Lalomerui. At many village meetings, the village head always invites them to explain the situation in Lalomerui village. Both were involved in the land negotiations with the oil palm plantation because people recognise their knowledge of the history of land ownership.

Saad lives in Parudongka. He is a *puutobu* there. People accord him honoured status not only because he is *puutobu*, but also because he is considered one of the village founders; people view him as clever and wise, so the local government always invites him to village meetings. When I asked people about the history of Parudongka, most suggested I meet Saad, however people also said that he was always busy with his farm. The only chance I had to chat with him was in the Parudongka mosque after the early Morning Prayer. Saad is also known as a religious leader and he often leads prayers.

In addition to Saad as *puutobu* in Parudongka, there are people such as Malik who is respected as an *orang tua*. He was the former village head of Routa between 1969-1970. Although he replaced Ansar for only one year, many people regard him as having made significant contribution to the formation of Parudongka as a village. People also know Malik as a religious leader.

### **The role of kin**

All of the *puutobu* and *orang tua* receive more respect because they are older and have lived longer in Routa than others; they have progeny who live in many villages and these progeny pay tribute to their forebears and, most importantly, to those who are still alive.

Saad is an example of a *puutobu* who has family members spread across many villages in Routa sub-district. One of his grandchildren who lives in Routa worked as a geologist's assistant in the mining company. Saad's extended family respect him as an *orang tua* and this predisposes many people not only in Parudongka but also in the sub-district to accord him honoured status.

Having met different groups in several villages in Routa, I found that some families are more prominent than others. The growth of many of the well-established families in

Routa can be said to be like that of a clump of bamboo; fast-growing, strong, self-sufficient and widely influential. The resulting social networks and spheres of influence can become ever wider over time, strengthened by marriages to people outside the clump. It may appear to grow slowly, but underground rhizome runners can stretch far away from the parent clump. How quickly a new plant can establish itself from the rhizome will depend on the soil and climate conditions. Before a new plant can become self-sufficient, it must receive sustenance from the parent. After the new plant is self-sufficient, it still retains the genetic material from the parent. Families grow and spread to take up land and to widen their influence, always acknowledging their origins. This metaphor is apt to describe the social networks and spheres of influence developed in Routa. McWilliam (2009: 111-126) describes the common botanical idiom, 'trunk' and 'tip', when he explores the expression of precedence in the island of Timor in eastern Indonesia.

Pak Ansar is one of the Tolaki who have many relatives in Routa, not only because he was headman in Routa for more than 30 years, but also because he married three times and his progeny have spread into three of the seven villages in Routa sub-district (Routa, Walandawe and Lalomerui). Even though Pak Ansar does not hold a formal position as *puutobu* in Routa today, some people, particularly his extended family members and those in Walandawe and Lalomerui, still regard him a Tolaki leader in Routa.

A Bugis woman from Sinjai passed away about two months after I finished my field work. She had married three times in Tirawonua and Parudongka. Many of her offspring spread and married into other *suku* and live in several villages under Routa sub-district. One of her sons is a civil servant and works as a secretary of Parudongka village. He married a relative of Malik. Many people, not only her relatives, paid respect to her as a wise woman who knew much about the history of Routa. She lived there from before the DI rebellion.

The role of kinship is not only about the number but also about the success of the family members. Muhammad is one such Torajan who lives in Parudongka. People accord him honoured status because of the success of his extended family members. He moved to Parudongka with his parents in 1971. Since then he has returned only a few times to Toraja to attend funerals, however he said that he may never visit Toraja again because now he has few family members left there. He has made a success of living in Routa; he

has a large cacao farm and paddy fields in Parudongka. One of his children graduated from nursing school, married to a policeman and is now living in the Moluccas. Another of his daughters is married to the head of Parudongka village; he has the largest pepper farm in Rota.

### **Generating social status through patron-client relationships**

Pelras (2000: 15-20) proposes that social stratification in Bugis-Makassar society can be understood through patron-client relationships. He explains that although the patron-client system created 'subdivisions' of people into different groups, it is distinct from subdivision into 'ranks' in 'territorial units or kingdoms' which have absolute character, with membership determined by 'birth or residence'. A patron-client relationship has 'a voluntary basis' and the continuation of the relationship depends on the willingness of both parties. The relationship can be categorised as a mutual obligation relationship between a superior (a patron or leader) and a number of subordinates (clients, retainers, agents or followers).

Mattulada (1987: 5-7) explains that Bugis-Makassar people usually established three kinds of business: agriculture (*allaong rumang*), trading (*dangkangeng*) and sailing, including fishing (*pasompe*). Mattulada emphasises a three-tiered structure in each kind of business:

1. The leader, *punggawa*, has an obligation to maintain all equipment and meet expenses; sometimes he is also called *punggawa lompo* (superordinate chief).
2. Next is the subordinate boss, called *punggawa caddi* in trading boats (*pinisi*), *punggawa palaong* in agricultural activities and *punggawa pajala* in fishing boats. These subordinate bosses usually have good skills in supervising their workers in each of their fields to good effect.
3. The last category is that of worker (*sawi*).

Parties (e.g. *punggawa lompo*, *punggawa palaong*, *sawi*) who are involved in the one business from the lowest position to the highest commonly have family ties. The *sawi* as the lowest stratum always gives respect to both the *punggawa palaong* and *punggawa lompo*, while *punggawa palaong* pays respect to the *punggawa lompo*. There is always opportunity for *sawi* and *punggawa palaong* to move to the strata above them. Also, as their relationship is voluntary, *sawi* could be offered a move to another *punggawa lompo*



in order to become *punggawa palaong*. Those relationships developed over time into patron-client relationships.

Chabot (1950 cited in Pelras,2000: 15-17) points out that patron-client relationships in Bugis and Makassarese societies initially formed between a 'lord' and a master (*karaeng*) and a number of retainers, whom he refers to as his children (*anagna*) or his men (*taunna*). Although retainers obey their lord, both parties need each other. According to Chabot, such a relationship can only exist between superiors and subordinates, because relationships between equals will result in rivalry, especially those of high rank, who always remain rivals.

Other aspects develop from a reciprocal relationship. People in Routa always call traders or patrons '*bos*' or '*punggawa*', which means 'a leader'; they will call them '*bos*' even if they themselves do not have a patron-client relationship with them. All the patrons are traders, mostly Bugis from the south. Acciaioli (1989) explains that Bugis-Makassar in their efforts to find a better life throughout the archipelago, including in Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi area, not too far from Routa), always establish their community based on hierarchical relationships. This pattern of super-ordinate and sub-ordinate, of leaders and their followers, evolved into the patron-client relationships in the many destinations of Bugis people. Migrants who came as traders to Routa generally struggled to become patrons, not only in regard to their own *suku*, but also for other people.

The absence of a local traditional polity with hereditary leadership allowed residents to have the same chance of earning respect. My observations suggest that in Routa, a significant determinant of social status is the success gained through sustained and productive effort, no matter which form the livelihood takes, however, in order to maintain their standing, people must continue to make every effort to be acknowledged as more distinguished than others and to extend their honoured status to their family members. They ensure this by prioritising and engaging these family members in their livelihoods and subsequently giving them support to establish their own, but also by continuing to provide financial and other support to them as their clients.

Pa Anis, a Torajan merchant, started out as a collector of eaglewood and has now become one of the major traders; with large cacao and pepper plantations (see Chapter Four). Pa Anis earned respect and honoured status because of hard work in trading activities and achieving notable success in establishing his farms. He received support

from his families and friends, particularly in providing capital. He then gradually accumulated assets and respect from his clients.

Haji Hendra is an example of a person who has gained status and power through mastering trading activity, not only within the Bugis community but in the whole of the Routa sub-district (see Chapter Four). He has grown to become what is Mattulada calls *punggawa lombo* (as explained above) through hard work, good behaviour, business acumen and some good luck. He now controls most of the timber-trading activities in Routa from across the lake in Timampu. The local government in Routa sub-district always relies on him when government guests are on their way to Routa; Haji Hendra provides lodgings in Timampu and assists with transportation.

Haji Hendra also accumulated respect and honoured status within his family. He was successful in supporting his sister and brother in establishing their agricultural enterprises. Pelras (2000: 52) points out the importance of kin relations in patron-client relationships in Bugis and Makassarese societies, which often leads to political power through building up followers. Haji Aris (Haji Hendra's older brother) has a large cacao farm, wet-rice fields, a rice mill and hand-tractors for hire in Tirawonua village. The head of Routa sub-district also appointed H. Aris as *puutobu* in Tirawonua. The Bugis residents of Tirawonua and those in other villages in Routa sub-district now regard Haji Aris as an elder (*orang tua*) and *puutobu*, and show their respect at important social occasions as well as at rural and sub-district meetings.

Hajja<sup>80</sup> Fitri is one of the daughters of Haji Aris; she is relatively wealthy and lives in Tirawonua. She owns a large cacao farm, wet-rice fields and a rice mill in Tirawonua. Her daughter married the policeman assigned to Routa, a man called Darman, who now also helps to maintain the family business. Darman is a Torajan from Luwu who has been in Routa since 2006. Pelras (2000: 26) highlights the advantages of a political marriage in the Bugis societies. Members of the police force are considered distinguished because they have a better education than most and can exert power from their government-sanctioned position. These factors can help him to entice more clients and resolve disputes more easily.

Pelras (2000: 26) explains the well-known tenet about 'the three points' (*tellu cappa*) which men can use to rise in honoured status in Bugis society:

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<sup>80</sup> The title for Muslim women who returned from pilgrimage to Mecca.

1. the point of his dagger (*cappa kawali*), signifying prowess to wage war;
2. the point of his tongue (*cappa lila*), symbolising diplomatic ability; and
3. the point of his penis (*cappa lase*), for the importance of an advantageous marriage. The marriage of a policeman, Darman, to a daughter of Hajja Fitri, from a relatively wealthy family in Routa, is an example of *cappa lase*, an advantageous marriage.

Bugis believe the use of this tenet will ensure success in life. Today, rather than being warlike, Bugis are likely to be fearless in business, take risks and be strategic in planning.

The Bugis kin group of Haji Hendra is the most successful family in Routa sub-district. They have taken risks in business. According to Bugis thinking, diplomacy (*cappa lila*) is an integral part of good business; they use it to good effect with their clients. In addition to using the point of his tongue in business, the success of H. Aris in being appointed as *puutobu* is an example of how Bugis traders are able to link to social and political power. They have established businesses and accumulated diverse means of production, such as land, dammar trees, hand-tractors, a rice mill and logging trucks. Some people also explained that because the Haji families have been living there longer than most, their number has spread to almost every village in Routa and they have married into other groups across the sub-district. One of Haji Aris's relatives married Hanung, the Tolaki who was formerly head of Walandawe village. Because he is still acknowledged as the community leader in Walandawe and he has a large extended Tolaki family, this was surely an advantageous marriage for both families. In order to overcome labour shortages in Routa, Haji Aris engaged Hanung to herd his cattle in Walandawe and Tetenggowuna.

Unlike the Haji families, Kadir is a Bugis who has not maintained high esteem in the eyes of the people of Routa. He was formerly prominent as a trader of forest products, particularly dammar resin and rattan, but his business failed, adversely influenced by the falling price of rattan around 2000. As is common in Routa, traders always provide everything for their workers including lending them money. Kadir lent money and provided food stuffs on credit to his workers (rattan collectors) and their families before they went to the forest. When the rattan price collapsed, Kadir could not afford to sell his rattan at a reasonable price and recoup his money. It has also been suggested that the main cause of the failure of his business in Routa was because he could not maintain good

interpersonal relationships. Many considered him arrogant; they felt he did not respect their dignity as he often used harsh words which are considered insulting. He lost respect on two counts.

Traders such as Guntur in Rوتا village and Kacong in Tanggola village can be categorised as new emerging traders in Rوتا. They set up their businesses in the last decade and gain respect from people on a daily basis. They accumulate respect by working hard and never treating their clients as slaves. Any mistakes in maintaining good interpersonal relationship with clients can ruin their business, as Kadir experienced.

Guntur receives respect not only because he has many clients, but also because he is wellknown as a religious leader; he always leads the prayers in the mosque in Rوتا and delivers the sermon at Friday prayers. He has been appointed chairman of the mosque building committee. He is also heavily involved in discussions with local government on important decision-making processes regarding development in Rوتا sub-district. On one particular occasion, I found the head of Rوتا sub-district (*camat*) consulting Guntur about the palm oil company opening a new location in Rوتا.

As well as leading community activities, such as the above, traders also work at strengthening good relationships with locals at the level of community by engaging in everyday activities. Traders always express their sympathy if anyone in the village is sick or injured. I also found traders being involved with people in public enterprises, such as repairing the hydroelectric power plant in Rوتا. This kind of participation creates and maintains a perception that traders share the burdens of life with them.

Pelras (1998: 20) points out that Bugis traders have the aptitude to adapt to various situations; Bugis people have the distinction of being able to move with the times, to encompass the complexities of modern life, to deal with the modern world. Furthermore, Pelras (1998: 22) elucidates the transition of Bugis societies from primarily based on kinship groups and local communities to societies based more on interpersonal relationships and between functional groups in the framework of smaller or large political units, often involved in the development of political opinion. In addition, Meereboer (1998: 255) suggests that Bugis traders not only carry out ceremonies to show their wealth, they also contribute to the ceremonies of their clients. This can increase their popularity and makes it easy for them to find new clients. Ma Bakri and Ma Samad have many followers in Rوتا and Walandawe villages who accord them honoured status, as they always provide help to their relatives there.

Wolf (1983: 138-163) emphasizes that patron-client relationships 'involve a socially or politically or economically superior person in a vertical relation with his social, political or economic inferior'. Wolf describes patron-client relationships as dyadic (interaction between two people or two groups of people) and vertical relationships. Also the relationships are manystranded, illustrated as a variety of relations like threads that are bound to each other and support each other. This kind of weaving can involve economic exchanges, kinship, friendship or neighbourliness, and imply the existence of social sanctions to govern them. Trust, mutual understanding and the absence of formal sanctions are the characteristics of a patron-client relationship. The relationship must grow over time and be tested in a number of contexts. People exert a lot of effort before growing to become patrons in Routa. They are not involved in trading activities per se, but many engage in social activities in addition to trading. Some are religious leaders, involved in discussions about social and development activities in Routa sub-district. Some patrons began as small traders, gradually gaining the confidence of people to become their patrons. Such is the case of Lantang, Haji Hendra and potentially so for Kacong and Sawal (see Chapter Four).

Community leadership is part of becoming a patron. Patrons always engage in the discussion of development activities at all levels, not only with the village head but even the head of the sub-district. Upward mobility to gain distinctive social status is not only about capital but also social connection (Shrestha, 1989: 372). Importantly, the relationship between patrons and clients in Routa is not limited to economic activities. Traders who act as patron or *bos* often also act as advisors or consultants for a range of matters. Sometimes clients come to discuss education for their children; they may come to discuss agricultural technology, regarding types of fertiliser and seed that will increase the quality and quantity of their harvest. Often clients come to them just to find out the latest information from outside Routa.

Pa Anis is regarded as the leader of all his family members and friends who moved, because he helped with their relocation. During the few times I visited Pa Anis's house and kiosk, I found that family members brought their cacao or pepper yields to him and traded them for everyday consumables. On occasions, they stayed for a while to chat with him or even take a meal together. They discussed many things: agricultural innovation, the price of fertiliser and agricultural products, the up-to-date situation in Routa, and how to legalise their landownership. Most of them rely on Pa Anis for advice. They regard him

as a patron and they call him 'bos'. Pa Anis earns respect not only because he is acknowledged as a successful trader, but also because his clients regard him as their protector who provides for their everyday needs. The more clients they have, the more power they can use, so each patron continually works to increase the number of clients they have. Loyal clients always respect their *bos* in the way a son respects his father.

The patron-client relationship is generally considered a concept characterised by a dichotomy which suggests it is a fixed relationship, but in Routa the dichotomy describes a fluid social situation. In this remote area, it is an important relationship of mutual (albeit unequal) benefit, important socially as well as economically.

### **Upward mobility through education**

The head of Routa sub-district (*camat*), when I undertook my field work, began as the headmaster of the elementary school in Routa village. Traders often believe that education will give their children more opportunity to become involved in prestigious government positions. As time goes by, education is more commonly seen as a vehicle for upward mobility. The improvement of infrastructure, such as tracks and small boats for crossing Towuti Lake and most recently the availability of electricity in some villages, have given people the opportunity to encourage their young family members to pursue education beyond Routa. The increased likelihood of being accepted as civil servants in skilled roles, such as a teacher, a nurse, a midwife, police and army personnel, and thus receiving both prestige and eventually a pension, is a motivating factor. For example that whilst the 'education' of their parents may not qualify them for any but the most menial of jobs, the mining company recognises the need to support education of the next generation. It has introduced scholarships for six students to complete their high school education in Kendari, setting them up in a group home with house parents and providing extra tutoring where necessary.

People now regard education as a legitimate vehicle for upward mobility. Guntur's business acumen shows the influence of good education. His choice of having a university graduate as his book-keeper suggests that his administration is streamlined and well ordered. Similarly, Pa Anis's wife, who graduated from SMEA (Sekolah Menengah Ekonomi Atas), a vocational school focusing on business and economics, carries out Pa Anis's office administration. Both these women are role models for pursuing educational opportunity.

The most recent migrants from Toraja in Routa are living in Leperi, a hamlet of Walandawe village, and they settled there from around 2009. They came with a preacher who appealed to the government for land through the head of Walandawe village. As new migrants, Toraja in Leperi rely entirely on this man as their leader whom they regard as having a good education (he graduated from Missionary School in Makassar). In one village meeting in Walandawe, I found that he always spoke on their behalf; the Toraja in Leperi rely on him to act as their spokes person in local government matters.

Bahrin is another example. Before coming to Routa, Bahrin worked as a part-time mechanic in Sorowako. He graduated from technology (senior) high school (STM) in Palopo. People appointed him as the secretary of Tanggola village because they respect his level of education. Because of his educational background people consider Bahrin has ability to take care of the village administration.

Many Bugis and Toraja children from Routa who are willing to continue education after elementary or middle school choose to undertake it in South Sulawesi close to Routa, in towns like in Wawondula, Malili or Sorowako, because they are familiar with those places and consider the quality of schools in South Sulawesi better than in Routa. Many people also feel they can safely leave their children with their relatives or friends in South Sulawesi and transportation to these places is easier. By contrast, because their family net tends to be wider, many of the Tolaki send their children to school in Unaaha (capital of Konawe district) or even Kendari (capital of Southeast Sulawesi province) for university opportunities. To some extent, people in Routa still use kinship and their trade connections to enhance the level of education of their children.

There is an acknowledged need to send children to pursue education outside Routa, not only because of the lack of schooling after junior high level there. The quality of all schooling in Routa is very low, so many people are worried that their children will find it difficult to manage senior high and to gain university entrance.

Although education is gradually being used as a vehicle for upward mobility in Routa, it is not easy for people to use education as their ladder to achieve higher social status. It is an expensive and long-term commitment for parents to send children away for education; they have to invest time and money long before their children graduate from university and possibly secure an advantageous job, but it is a gamble that many parents who are able to do so are willing to take.

### **Enhanced power through government positions**

Some families dominate advantageous positions in government. Some of them work as civil servants and are appointed as village heads. Many are Tolaki who are regarded as native to Southeast Sulawesi. From its official beginning as a village, Routa has been led by Tolaki who have dominated formal positions of political power. Pa Ansar has successfully supported some of his family members to gain government positions. They usually obtain information concerning development activities in Routa because, as civil servants, they regularly travel back and forth to Unaaha or even to Kendari.

Weber, (1968 cited in Saunders, 1990: 20) explains that a particular group may take control of another under the influence of a state institution, whether by directly controlling it, or by influencing those who do. A group of Tolaki have controlled government positions since Routa was established as a village when it became part of the new province of Southeast Sulawesi in 1964.

The head of the district (*bupati*), who is Tolaki, appointed a Tolaki from Latoma (in Unaaha) as the first head of Routa sub-district (*camat*); he was replaced by another Tolaki from North Konawe who is still in that position. Longstanding domination in government positions has allowed this group of Tolaki to build good connections with government officials at district level. Tolaki capitalise on these connections to extend their occupation of government positions. Teaching, nursing, sub-district officials and village heads are affected. Other positions such as police, including *kapolsek* (the head of police in a sub-district), are appointed by the central government; these positions are not dominated by the Tolaki, because they are appointments made by the government of Southeast Sulawesi, although there are Tolaki in provincial-level positions but they do not dominate as they do at the district level. Some teaching positions, and those for health officers in remote areas, are filled on merit by the designated provincial and central government authorities; not all these positions will necessarily be filled by a particular family group.

One of Pa Ansar's sons, Basri (see Pa Ansar's kinship ties in Figure 4 in Chapter Three), works as the health officer in Lalomerui village, but he also plays an important role in always bringing up-to-date information from the district level. He involved himself in facilitating difficult land negotiations between the oil palm company and people in Lalomerui. He always attempts to find out about the activities of the mining company. He



has also organised people to establish an association of Wiwirano<sup>81</sup> people (Kerukunan Keluarga Besar Masyarakat Adat Wiwirano), and he acts as its secretary. Although not all people acknowledge the organisation, he is still keeps introducing himself as the representative of the people in Routa, especially at district and provincial levels. He carries out activities and influence beyond his formal position as health officer; he can do so because of his position in the family clan.

In addition to the Tolaki group, there are a few Toraja in the villages of Parudongka and Tanggola who occupy government positions and generate influence from them. From the first time Parudongka was designated as a village in 1996, Muhammad was in charge as the head of hamlet, became the village secretary and finally became village head in 2008. Since then, Muhammad has become one of the most important figures in Parudongka. He married one of his daughters to Ilham, the son of a successful Torajan merchant from Timampu. He then helped his son-in-law to replace him as the head of Parudongka village in 2009. His son-in-law then also bought a pepper farm of approximately 3 ha in 2010 and has become the most successful pepper farmer in Routa. He earns around Rp 200–300 million per year (AUD 20,000–30,000). He said to me that after deducting his expenses, he may receive between Rp 50–75 million per year (AUD 5,000–7,500). Ilham then bought a rice mill, a second-hand truck and established a car repair business. Now he has built the most expensive house in Parudongka, adjacent to Muhammad's house. With his efforts, Muhammad was able to give his daughters a better education than most others in Routa. Through his prowess, Muhammad is now regarded as a community leader in Parudongka. Many guests who visit Parudongka stay in his house. People also pay respect to his family because of his daughters' educational achievements. I found people rely on Muhammad to communicate their aspirations and concerns to the head of the sub-district (*camat*) or other government officials.

The second wave<sup>82</sup> of Toraja migrants now live in Tanggola village. Their ancestors were from Batusitanduk. Jaka and Bahrin are two Toraja from Tanggola; they occupy government positions, the head and secretary of Tanggola village respectively. Although

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<sup>81</sup> Wiwirano was the former name of Walandawe area; this area is considered by many Tolaki as their original homeland (see Grubauer's observations in Chapter Two).

<sup>82</sup> I categorise the Toraja migrants into three waves (see Chapter Three); I consider the Torajan who came during the dammar resin era as the first wave of Toraja migrants in Routa. Around the 2000s there were some Toraja from Batusitanduk who returned to Tanggola. They are the offspring of Toraja who were displaced to Batusitanduk during the DI rebellion. I categorise them as comprising the second wave of Toraja in Routa. Finally, I categorise Toraja who came to Routa around 2009 and reside in Leperi in Walandawe village as the third wave of Toraja migrants to Routa.

they are not rich and do not have more assets than other people, they are still respected by other people because of their positions. Most Tanggola residents are originally from Batusitanduk, where Toraja from Rounta were displaced during DI rebellion.

### **Social status in Rounta**

Davis and Moore (2008: 30) declare that no society is 'classless' or 'un-stratified', even though it seems that the Rounta community is relatively egalitarian. There are persons who receive more respect than others, which suggests that forms of social precedence are strong in this community. People receive respect from within their own family. Over time, their wider social profile can be heightened. Some people may even be accorded the position of *orang tua*. Being a founding father, *orang tua* or *puutobu* engenders respect from everyone. Their respect becomes increasingly widespread as their family extends, because of intermarriage across *suku*.

A patron engenders and requires respect from their clients; a successful trader engenders respect from their customers. Although traders receive respect from many people, their position is fluid and mutable, not like *orang tua* who have a more permanent social position. A trader's position of status and power could well decline during a business slump. A trader is able to gain economic power and market domination but unless he matches this with good interpersonal relationships he may face ruin. Social power for a Bugis trader is considered important capital. Bugis do not tend to involve themselves in the business of politics and government.

People like to display their success. Like Guntur, the new migrants work hard in establishing their livelihoods as farmers. As well as leading prayers, Guntur now tries to display his outstanding achievements in trading as the leader of the mosque building committee. He persuades many people, not only from his village but also some from other villages, to donate. Guntur always maintains his power and status through involvement in meetings and discussions about development activities with local government. I also found that he always attends rituals which mark important family occasions and thanksgiving ceremonies. He said that if he receives an invitation, he will always attend; this is his way of showing his respect for people, many of whom are his clients and agents. Other high-profile people engage in similar activities to demonstrate and reinforce their status.

Being a Tolaki civil servant earns respect from other Tolaki, but Bugis traders are more likely to respect the position not the person. For them trading holds more importance than government administration, which they consider marginal compared to their business. Good interpersonal relationships may arise for Tolaki civil servants with their 'clients', the prestige or respect developing from situations like that are important because it increases their influence. Social power for Tolaki accompanies the particular status accorded government positions. From their execution of administrative matters, their social standing, personal profile and family influence are increased. For them, theirs is the business of administration, which nets a good wage and a pension as well as power and influence. Pak Ansar maintains his political power through actively supporting the formation of new villages and making every effort to place his family members in leading roles in any new administration areas. Nepotism exists across all ethnic groups and is expected by all groups as a natural part of life in Rوتا.

There are also people who are *de jure* leaders in every sub-district in Indonesia. They are the head of the sub-district (*camat*), the head of police (*kepala polisi sektor kecamatan/kapolsek*) and the army commander (*danramil*),<sup>83</sup> however because their tenure is short and unpredictable, their status is compromised, as the length of tenure is imposed from outside (central government).

To some extent, the increasing mobility of people from Rوتا to cities in both South and Southeast Sulawesi provinces, the increasing number of migrants, the coming of the oil palm plantation and mining employees have opened the eyes of many people in Rوتا regarding the benefits of education. Some young people who are lucky enough to be sufficiently educated are government officers. Despite their age, their education and the government positions they occupy, plus the length of tenure in that position, may make them more distinguished than those who may be older. People consider them to have special tasks as representatives of the government in Rوتا.

In addition to *orang tua*, *puutobu*, traders, patrons, civil servants and people who are leaders of government institutions, there are ordinary people, many of whom still work as forest gatherers; some are old men who have no family members in Rوتا or are widowers. People in this category have few aspirations; their lot is to struggle for subsistence with the help of their patrons.

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<sup>83</sup> *Danramil* is an abbreviation of **Komandan Daerah Militer**.

## Conclusion

Early in Routa's development, individuals and families struggled to set up their livelihoods in the context of limited infrastructure on the frontier. Over time, people began to acknowledge leaders within their group or in each settlement (*desa*). They can be people regarded as having lived longer in Routa and contributed to the establishment of the settlement. Many of their progeny have spread into villages in Routa sub-district; people acknowledge those who live longer in Routa as elder *orang tua*.

In addition to *orang tua*, there are those who attained notable success in their field (farmers, traders and government officials). They receive respect from people who see them as successful farmers and as leaders who can provide information or help in difficult situations by lending money and giving protection.

People in Routa have come to appreciate the advantage education can bring. There are an increasing number of salaried positions in Routa sub-district today that require qualifications. A salaried position means a regular and reliable income, access to bank credit and possibly a pension. A salaried position carries status, not only for the person in employment but also for their family.

The value of the social relationships is construed differently by different *suku* according to their life path, for example, Bugis as traders and farmers are looking through the lens of business, so for them a perspective through trading is salient. Some Tolaki are able to mobilise networks and seek to occupy government positions; a few Tolaki become patrons. It is not easy to compare social status across cultural groups and livelihoods. There is no common measure to compare a prominent trader, a person who occupies the highest local government position or a landowner with large acreages of cash crops. In Routa it is not only possible but likely that a trader or a government official will have a large farming enterprise as well.

Success in economic and social activities are yardsticks which are evident in social stratification in Routa. Economic success alone is not sufficient to be accorded higher status; it must be combined with a display of good behaviour in everyday life. Distinction in both economic and social fields determines the ups and downs of the social status of people in Routa.

## Chapter Seven

### Transformations on the frontier

#### Introduction

Even though there is no signal, almost every person in Routa has a mobile phone; some have more than one. Mobile phone coverage is lost around 10 minutes after the boat leaves the port of Timampu. Soon after the signal is lost, the function of many mobile phones immediately changes.

The absence of mobile phone access has meant that people in Routa use mobile phones (which they charge with a generator) as a torch, as entertainment, to listen to music, play games or to take pictures, rather than as a communication tool. It seems that Routa residents have begun to explore some of the advanced technologies but do not enjoy the advantages of telecommunication on an everyday basis.

I went with one of my informants on several occasions to climb the steep hills of cacao or jungle in Tirawonua village to try and find a mobile signal. It was an exhausting journey; often we had to hold onto protruding tree roots if we did not want to tumble down the slippery tracks. We would spend almost 10 hours walking back and forth in the steep mountains in the frontier between South, Central and Southeast Sulawesi provinces. Eventually we managed to get a faint signal.

In October 2011, when I visited Pa Andi, petty traders had arrived to sell water-purifying equipment. According to Pa Andi and the few people there, a water purifier is popular in Routa because it does not use electricity (but it does require replacement cartridges, providing an opportunity for a continuing relationship with the purveyor, the possibility of another sale of yet another indispensable item) and makes it easier for many housewives in Routa to undertake their everyday activities. Some people are even talking of buying a refrigerator.

To some extent, the success in pepper cultivation has given many residents confidence to invest time, effort and money. The price of pepper in 2012 was Rp 50,000–Rp 60,000 (AUD 5–6) per kilogram. Then, it was more than three times that of cacao, which was only Rp 10,000–Rp 15,000 (AUD 1 – 1.5) per kilogram. This has raised the hopes and dreams for many people. It is clearly a boom time for this cash crop. A few people have attained significant yields (around a half ton per hectare per year) and hope

to be able to pay off debts to their patrons. Seeing these benefits, many others followed their lead and established their own pepper plantations.

In the last few years (at least since 2011), there has been some improvement taking place in Routa, such as the availability of electricity in Tirawonua, which was organised by the community (see Chapter Three), and the improvement of logging tracks between the port of Lengkobale to Routa village (through Parudongka and Tirawonua villages by one of the timber traders). Forming and grading these tracks have encouraged traders to travel back and forth to Timampu more regularly, and this enables them to obtain market information about their agricultural products as well as farming information about technologies, fertilisers and disease management from people in the neighbouring villages.

Turner (1994 cited in Tsing, 2003: 5102) describes the frontier as a site of transformation, of change and uncertainty. Bilington (1966 cited in Barbier, 2012: 110), a geographer, poses a socio-physical definition of frontier as 'a geographic region next to the unsettled portions of the continent in which a low man-land ratio and unusually abundant, unexploited, natural resources provide an exceptional opportunity for social and economic betterment'. Both these descriptions are appropriate to Routa, but the isolation and remoteness are not about the distance but the geography, because it is located in rugged terrain which makes it difficult to reach from anywhere and easy to ignore. Scott (2009: ix-x) provides an historical picture of Zomia<sup>84</sup>, which could have been written about Routa to describe its transformation from jungle to plantation; its inhabitants, from forest gatherers to agriculturalists; of the economy from subsistence farming to cash crops stimulated by market demand, facilitated and stimulated by traders and the hardwork of its residents, mostly migrants, who are at the centre of this transformation. Not all of them can achieve the success they envisage, despite their hard work. The appearance of the oil palm plantation at about the same time as the multi-national mining company has driven another aspect of the transformation.

Changes in Routa are resulting from both local mercantile capitalism (traders) and big business (palm oil and mining). The transformation in this frontier might be considered inevitable; from the history of transformation in Routa, people have always

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<sup>84</sup> *Zomia* is a new name for virtually all the lands at altitudes above roughly 300 m all the way from the Central Highlands of Vietnam to north-eastern India and traversing five Southeast Asian nations (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Burma) and four provinces of China, Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi and parts of Sichuan (Scott, 2009: ix).

been able to adapt to the changes stimulated by the traders and migrants. Both can be seen as agents of change. People seem to readily assimilate the transformation, facilitated by the agents of local mercantile capitalism, mainly because it tends to transform gradually. This contrasts with big business, which imposes novel ways outside their everyday experience and even imagination.

Generally, traders disseminate the information to their clients and people in Routa. Pa Alan, a trader in Timampu, told me that he always travels to neighbouring villages in Sorowako and Palopo, sometimes he travels even as far as Makassar. He always collects information regarding the price of agricultural products as well cultivation techniques. He shares the information with a few traders from Routa who are his clients and regularly come to him. From around 2009, he began establishing a pepper plantation in Routa. He always chats with people, talking not only about what they are presently doing in agriculture, but also about the possibility of introducing new agricultural products to Routa. They discuss a range of issues, including the impacts of mining activities in Sorowako, impacts that could extend into Routa as well.

On the other hand, the transformation put into effect by big business is not gradual but sudden, imposing an exponential rate of change and demanding much of the local population. Apart from often being foreign owned, the working culture is quite foreign, especially regarding working hours and the nature of many of the jobs and the requirements. The establishment of the oil palm plantation in Lalomerui village has also provided opportunities for some in Routa to obtain more information about new agricultural technologies, such as which fertilisers to buy and their application rate. Some who travel frequently back and forth to Lalomerui have also drawn lessons on how to maintain good crops from observing the crop management practices of the oil palm plantation.

The establishment of an oil palm plantation has led to the transformation of livelihoods for those in Lalomerui village, because the company monopolised land and forced people to rely on forest products, particularly timber. The situation with mining has yet to be realised. Already the company has established a team who has developed a micro-finance organisation and improved one section of the road from Routa village to Walandawe village. It appears that to date the mining company may be more in tune with the needs of the residents of Routa.

The arrival of the palm oil and the mining companies has gradually pushed Rota from a forgotten frontier into the limelight of development. Even the government which had ignored this area for so long has begun to take an interest, attracted by the potential of financial gain, both government revenue and private benefit. Some traders have prepared themselves to be suppliers or employees for the mining company.

It seems that the presence of both the oil palm plantation and the mining company will contribute significantly to changes in Rota, although the benefit derived may be more advantageous to the companies than to the people, who may at least enjoy some changes to their lifestyles. Li (2005: xviii) suggests that the transformation in the upland areas of most of Indonesia's provinces was initiated by local people, so it has to be understood in the context of their everyday lives and practices where contradictory pressures must be negotiated.

### **Livelihood transformation**

Gatherers of forest products were the first to come to this frontier. Even one of the founding fathers of Rota who was a forestry official was also a gatherer of dammar resin and rattan. But the heyday of dammar and rattan has passed. People have come to appreciate that the forest resources are slowly dwindling (as discussed in Chapter Five). Now, mature dammar resin trees are not only being logged, but have been almost logged out around many villages. Today dammar can only be found around Walandawe and Lalomerui villages. In the last decade, the number of people able to rely on forest products has decreased significantly. The expansion of the oil palm plantation, which cleared more than 4,000 ha of land in Lalomerui, has also contributed to natural forest product decline and has reduced the biodiversity.

Traders who have clients can become timber traders. They make agreements with timber buyers in Timampu for the timber traders in Parudongka and Rota, and with buyers in Kendari for timber traders in Lalomerui. They received support from the buyers to set up timber mills in their villages, but like dammar and rattan, timber is a dwindling resource. The decline in the amount of timber located close to the villages has meant that timber-fellers need to venture further into the forest, which has increased operational costs. It is also likely that the planned expansion of the oil palm plantation and the increasing presence of the mining company have heightened concern about the diminishing forest.



Many households are not satisfied with the very basic income they earn from casual wage labour in forest resource exploitation. It may be that even the people in Lalomerui will find over time that they cannot live within the means that the forest can supply, and that the promised profit-sharing from the palm oil company cannot provide sufficient subsidy for them to stay in Lalomerui and live as they imagine, but they will have no option of cash cropping.

Routa frontier attracts migrants because of the abundance of land. The availability of vast land areas allows residents to establish cash crop plantations in new areas instead of clearing their previous fallow fields. In Routa, converting secondary forest is easier than rejuvenating an old farm; besides, there may still be a useful yield to be had from a neglected farm. Converting forest allows them to slash and burn involving less labour and, as well, the ash results in slightly increased land fertility. Clearing new land allows farmers to expand their land holdings. Nevertheless, the abundance of land does not guarantee profitable exploitation.

Another aspect that influences transformation in Routa is migration. The migrants particularly from southern Sulawesi come to plant lucrative cash crops and they bring knowledge and experience which are then available to the locals. On a daily basis, the migrants also discuss with local people the possibility of new cash crops that have high market demand. Local people have profited by their example.

Local traders are concerned with the development of cash crops in Routa in order to fulfil market demand in Timampu. Most of the traders/patrons support their clients in Routa to set up their own cash crops so they can accumulate product sufficient to transport to the market. Grogan, Thomsen and Lyimo (2012: 78) note that economic influence from markets often provides incentives for farmers to intensify their agriculture, especially where land is abundant such as in Routa.

In the last decade, at least from the beginning of 2000, a growing number of young people from Routa have been pursuing education to senior high school or university beyond the region. In addition, some households have started using generators to produce electricity for lighting at night and to operate TVs and radio-cassettes. To cope with this change, people not only move to cash crops but expand and diversify their livelihood activities.

The changes in expectation and lifestyle require a significant increase in income. Most residents in Routa sub-district carry out more than one livelihood activity; when

they can, they will give priority to cash crops. This is also an indication of the engagement of the frontier people in Rوتا with the global capitalist market. Acciaioli (2011: 1) found that the transformation of Sembulu people in Kalimantan from porters to establishing a small-scale rubber plantation was marked by engagement with global markets. Their expectation of remuneration was changed and they were no longer satisfied with the pittance they received as porters.

The comeback of pepper in around 2009 with a boom price then more than three times that of cacao has given an opportunity to Rوتا residents to earn and own tens of millions of rupiah per year, which has never happened before. Even someone like Pa Andi has started to think about buying a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Two factors mitigate against the achievement of a high yield in pepper production: the limited labour and the limited availability of modern agricultural techniques to increase productivity. These work against the development of extensive pepper farms; as a result, overall and production per hectare of pepper is still low.

The establishment of the oil palm plantation in Lalomerui has also created dirt roads to markets in North Konawe district, and even as far markets in the provincial capital, Kendari. These roads have increased accessibility, particularly for the residents who live in nearby hamlets and villages close to Lalomerui, such as Walandawe and Rوتا. Some government officials from villages in Rوتا sub-district now use this road rather than going through North Kolaka district if they have government business in Unaaha (the capital of Konawe district).

Along with palm oil, the mining company in Rوتا has also improved the road from Rوتا to Walandawe, and provides round-the-clock electricity in Lalomerui village. The availability of electricity has allowed traders from North Konawe district to come and carry out a fortnightly night market in Lalomerui. On one occasion when I revisited Lalomerui on September 2014, I found the night market there, the first in the sub-district (see Image 25).



Image 25. **The night market in Lalomerui village in September, 2014.**

Even though the roads have improved, the transportation costs for the small amount of pepper yield is still relatively high, too high to compensate for the difference in price they could receive in Rوتا, so many households prefer not to sell their pepper directly to the market in Timampu. As a result, most of the residents are price takers and rely on the local traders to be the price makers.

Roads have allowed petty traders from southern Sulawesi, such as Palopo, Malili, Sengkang and even as far as Java, to come and offer various kinds of merchandise. The introduction of a number of new products, such as items of furniture, brick houses, motorcycles and many other sophisticated technologies, has encouraged residents in Rوتا to keep adding new ways to perpetuate their cycle of debt to support their growing needs. They are used to being in debt; it is a way of life for them. These circumstances have compelled many Rوتا residents to seek supplementary activities to create additional income to satisfy their purchase of sophisticated goods.

The improvement of roads from Lalomerui to North Konawe has allowed Jafar, a resident of Tetenggowuna hamlet in Walandawe village, to purchase cheap items from the market in North Konawe. After frequently travelling back and forth to the market in North Konawe (Wiwirano market), he then established a small shop in Lalomerui close to the the oil palm plantationlabour camp. In addition to being the owner of a small shop, Jafar has a team of chainsaw operators to support his timber supply business for the timber mill owned by the head of Lalomerui village.

In addition, the improvement of access to Routa has brought another opportunity. In 2012, Safar was involved as a member of the winning team (*tim sukses*) for one of the candidates in the election of Konawe's district head (*bupati*). Safar supported his relative who was the candidate in Unaaha. During the campaign period, Safar was busy travelling back and forth between Routa and Unaaha. When I asked him what benefit he could gain from this activity, he told me that he was reimbursed for his operational costs to provide information about the constituency and distribution of campaign paraphernalia in Routa. Apparently, he also felt proud to carry out a job that he considered prestigious and only a few people in Routa are able to undertake. Some other people in Routa and the other villages were also involved as members of other district head candidate teams.

The transformation of livelihoods has indeed been supported by the improvement of access (roads), which has stimulated the arrival of more petty traders from outside Routa at least over the last five years. The changing circumstances provide more opportunities to Routa residents to find new activities and so diversify their livelihoods. It has created a number of new jobs. The growing number of motorcycles has stimulated the proliferation of mechanics and machine shops. As well, an increasing number of logging trucks has increased the need for truck drivers and *kondektur*. The availability of *katinting* (small boats) not only connects Routa to Timampu and provides a livelihood for the owner and the operators, but has also triggered the establishment of several kiosks in the port. Some people are working as pepper pickers as the growing number of pepper plants bear fruit.

Even though livelihood transformation in Routa began slowly, it continues and is increasing at pace. Generally, the residents exploit the abundance of land to set up cash crops, however, a range of factors prevent them relying only on income from cash crops. Cost of living pressures are beginning to become evident, along with the improvement of access and the presence of large companies. Their smalholder cash-crop enterprises to date are not sufficient to fulfil their growing demand for the new sophisticated items that are now appearing in Routa.

The appearance of both palm oil and mining activities has to some extent provided opportunities to some households to diversify their livelihoods. Some people who have not been traders have begun to make plans to set up small shops or to be suppliers of provisions for the mining company. A few people in Lalomerui and Routa have already

been recruited as cooks, cleaners and laundry staff. Some young men from other villages have also been employed in the mining company in minor auxiliary positions.

The degradation of forest resources, the arrival of migrants, market demand and income generated from cash crops, the arrival of big businesses and the improvement of access have influenced people to move from relying on forests to becoming settled farmers. Many farmers also said to me that they now want to be independent, free of debt from traders or patrons, but the pattern of debt tends to be cyclical; as soon as a patron can see that his clients are able to meet their debt, s/he will suggest another purchase, convince the clients to invest, and so the cycle is perpetuated.

### **The oil palm plantation**

The biodiesel that can be produced from palm oil is cheaper than from any other source; it more than tripled the palm oil price in the global market between 2000 and 2008 (McCarthy & Cramb, 2009: 113). Furthermore, McCarthy and Cramb point out that the frontier places in Indonesia are always considered as evidencing 'backwardness, an unproductive form of agriculture, practised by undisciplined or lazy local agriculturalists' (2009: 113-118 ). There is a policy narrative positing that the introduction of a oil palm plantation can drive the agrarian transformation in the frontier to be a more 'efficient and intensive form supported by new agricultural techniques' in accord with particular concepts of rural modernity (McCarthy & Cramb, 2009: 113).

Around 2005, the oil palm plantation in Routa sub-district was established in Lalomerui village. From the beginning, it has attracted people not only from regencies around Southeast Sulawesi province, such as South Konawe, North Konawe and Konawe, but also from other provinces such as East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) and North Sumatera. The oil palm plantation has the potential to make Lalomerui one of the gateways for migrants into Routa.

In contrast to the migrants already employed, almost all Lalomerui residents are reluctant to work for the palm oil company due to the very low wages and long working hours. They claim that because of their limited education and skills, they are recruited to fill only the lowest positions as unskilled labourers. Some worked as land clearing contractors, but claimed that the margin of remuneration from the palm oil company was very low and sometimes there was payment pending. Most of residents in Lalomerui consider working as loggers to be better than working with the palm oil company. As

timber-fellers they receive more cash and they are not bound to regular hours of work, such as they are in the oil palm plantation. The benefit to the community is not proceeding as hoped; the company virtually ignores the local people and vice versa.

From the New Order period, large investments such as palm oil have been a mainstay of Indonesian government revenue. The discourse of big investments relies on the belief that economic growth through capital investment will overcome poverty and economic backwardness by a trickle-down process and association. These claims are influenced by the work of Rostow who asserts that economic growth was the solution to the stagnation of underdeveloped economies. Despite the popularity of this view, after the fall of Soeharto in 1998, there were many critics who saw that the implementation of Rostow's theory was actually increasing inequality rather than engendering a trickle-down effect in Indonesia (Griffin 1981, cited in Robinson, 1986: 5). In reality, the implementation of Rostow's thoughts persists in many parts of Indonesia through the devolution of authority from central government to local jurisdictions in the reform era. Generally, local governments use the arguments of economic growth and increased local revenue to attract large international investment capital using similar reasoning to that which was promoted by the New Order regime, despite the fact that such reasoning may no longer be valid.

The massive expansion of palm oil (*Elaeis guineensis*) plantations is not only occurring in Rounta sub-district, but also in several neighbouring sub-districts of North Konawe district such as Oheo, Wiwirano, Andowia and Langgikima. This situation has been encouraged by one of the large national palm oil companies (PT. Damai Jaya Lestari), which has built a palm-oil processing plant in North Konawe and has expanded its branches to Lalomerui (PT. Mulya Tani). The opening of the palm oil factory indicates that most oil palm plantations around North Konawe have reached the harvesting stage, which will require more labour. This situation will probably attract more migrant workers to the oil palm plantations, including to the one at Lalomerui.

In the first decade of the 2000s mining and palm oil sectors were the most popular investments in Southeast Sulawesi province, indicated by the number of permit applications. Some of the oil palm plantation companies in North Konawe and Konawe are branches of the national palm oil company PT. Damai Jaya Lestari, which is expanding its business to Sulawesi due to decreasing available land in Sumatera.

There are 4,200 ha of palm oil located in Lalomerui village, a gazetted area of only 3,714 ha (Routa sub-district in Figures, 2012). Clearly the oil palm plantation has encroached on areas outside Lalomerui. Some residents in Walandawe village, particularly those who live in Tetenggowuna hamlet, allege that the palm oil company based in Lalomerui has already taken areas of their land and even protected forest areas surrounding their village, so they are demanding compensation in the form of making a road from Lalomerui to Walandawe.

There is a possibility of palm oil providing benefit for local farmers (smallholders). Rist, Feintrenie and Levang (2010:1009) found that many smallholders elsewhere had benefited from the higher return from their land and labour generated from palm oil, however the support from district authorities and smallholder cooperatives has played a significant role in making it happen. McCarthy (2010: 824) points out that the design and implementation of smallholder schemes and the state played a critical role in incorporating smallholders into the palm oil economy. The success of any of these projects depends on strong, effective, proactive participation of local government for the benefit of all stakeholders (local government, the company and the smallholders).

The Indonesian government has also used palm oil for rural socio-economic improvement through a scheme involving the concepts of nucleus estate (*inti*) and *plasma*<sup>85</sup>, Nucleus (*inti*) is the area of land that the Indonesian government grants the company the use of for up to 35 years.<sup>86</sup> This system was well known as Nucleus Estate Scheme (NES) and applied between 1977 and 1985. In many cases, the relations between nucleus and plasma or smallholders has been poor, and widespread conflicts have occurred. In Sumatera, for example, conflict was triggered by the appearance of independent palm oil mills which offered higher prices than the nucleus, and endangered the supply chain to the nucleus (McCarthy et. al, 2012: 557). From 1986 to 2000, the Indonesian government changed the scheme to support cooperative (*koperasi*) arrangements through Primary Cooperative Credit for Members (Kredit Koperasi Primer untuk Anggota/KKPA). From 2005, the scheme changed again to become a partnership scheme (*kemitraan*) and, after 2006, it was changed to the plantation revitalisation scheme. Benefit sharing and land arrangements depend on the village estate negotiations

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<sup>85</sup> According to regulation of Agricultural Ministry No. 98/Permentan/OT.140/9/2013.

<sup>86</sup> Indonesian law No. 18 of 2014, Article 11.

with the company. At least 20% of the total development area was allocated to smallholders (McCarthy et. al, 2012: 557).

'Smallholder' refers to the land owned by ordinary people, often with ancestral connections to it. The plantation company may need access to smallholders' land to be viable. Landholders are expected to give the company the use of their land with the same time frame, which can be renegotiated and extended beyond the initial concession. PT. Mulya Tani (the palm oil company) already occupies 4,200 ha in Lalomerui, divided into 2,400 ha as nucleus and 1,600 ha as plasma; the remaining 200 ha consists of stone, rivers or land that cannot be cultivated<sup>87</sup>. Li (2005: 229-248) in her research on nucleus and plasma suggests that contract farming is the transformation from mixed farming to monocrop cultivation and more intensive commercial production. It involves the desire to modernise and to release rural people from 'backwardness and subsistence' by means of contracted monocrop cultivation, but even though the oil palm plantation and other plantations may contribute to an economic boom and offer the pathways out of poverty, they are also creating environmental and social problems (McCarthy et. al, 2012: 555).

The company in Lalomerui has responsibility to take care of the nucleus (2,400 ha). Considering that people in Lalomerui do not have skills to cultivate oil palms, they have devolved the responsibility for this to the palm oil company, so the company must maintain the plasma as well (1,600 ha). Unlike other cash crops, oil palm should be taken to the factory as soon as possible, ideally around eight hours after harvest; while for other cash crops such as cacao or pepper, farmers can sell their yield more than a month later to any markets. With the absence of a formal financial institution, farmers in Routa often use the yield from their cash crops as stockpile to manage any excess. This reason has made many people reluctant to cultivate palm oil in Routa.

Most people consider the oil palm plantation arrangement as an investment rather than a source of everyday earnings. Even farmers in Sumatera face difficulty when they try to establish palm oil plots independently. These constraints include obtaining access to capital, planting materials, fertilisers and marketing networks. It results in poor yields and many have been forced to sell their land and exist as casual wage labourers (McCarthy, 2010: 826).

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<sup>87</sup> The information was recounted by the head of PT. Mulya Tani in Lalomerui.



The company and the head of Lalomerui village along with the community leaders in Lalomerui divided the plasma land into parcels; each parcel is 2 ha. Every current resident in Lalomerui received one certificate of 2 ha. There are 1,600 ha of plasma, which consists of 800 certificates or parcels, but residents in Lalomerui number only around 100 people. Many of the certificates have become the property of people living outside Lalomerui, who may or may not have ancestral connection to this land. Some people in Lalomerui worry that the certificates have been traded to people with no connection to Lalomerui; they simply have a pecuniary interest. I have information which supports their concern. Until now, the actual distribution of certificates to people remains unclear, but nepotism and corruption are not beyond the realms of possibility.

In the case of Routa sub-district, an agreement was struck between the company, the village head and the community leaders (*orang tua*). This agreement regarding profit-sharing was communicated to the Lalomerui village residents. According to this agreement, the people in Lalomerui will earn 30–40% of net income from the plasma once the trees are productive, in approximately five years. Many households imagine their poverty will be alleviated once they receive this income from the palm oil company. It remains to be seen if this will be the case. People are worried that their profit, which they fear has not been quarantined, will be consumed by the company as costs of production increase. According to them, there is nobody who can force the company to be transparent or to advocate for the local people in this matter.

Most people in Lalomerui do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to communicate their aspirations or to understand the profit-sharing offers from the company. Some imagine that government institutions such as the Departments of Agriculture and Forestry and the Land Agency should oversee the situation and guarantee the rights and obligations of the company and community in Lalomerui, but there seems to be little concern from the government about this. As Rist, Feintrenie and Levang (2010: 1017) found in many palm oil locations in Kalimantan, farmers rarely read the contracts they sign. In Lalomerui, many people are illiterate; even the village elders do not have the necessary experience to manage local interests effectively in the face of a national company, skilled in matters of law and profit-making.

In Lalomerui, the oil palm plantation has also cleared the forest around the periphery of the village, which results in the area looking like it is being smothered, a tiny island in a sea of palm trees. Tropical forest contains up to 200 different species of trees

alone per hectare, compared with just 10 species per hectare in the temperate woodlands of the Northern latitudes (IUCN, 1977: 1 cited in Appell, 1988: 273). Worldwide, only 10–15% of species, including plants, animals, bacteria and viruses, have been identified and described by biologists from an estimated 10 million distinct organisms or species (Raven, Berlin & Breedlove, 1971: 1210 cited in Appell, 1988: 273). It is suspected that 90% of this enormous number of species can be found in tropical forest alone (Myers, 1977: 4 cited in Appell, 1988: 273) and the great majority is destroyed in clearing for the world's apparently insatiable appetite for palm oil.

Acciaioli (2011: 1) describes a similar situation in Sembuluh in Central Kalimantan as 'foolhardy policy' and a deprivation of livelihoods. Overall, the area of Lalomerui village has now been reduced to only 30 ha. The village head allocated a quarter-hectare house-yard (it may be enough for vegetable but not rice), to each of the 24 households, and other areas for public facilities such as a school, a soccer field and a village office. People also have farms but these are located far from their houses; on average they spend two or three hours or more walking to reach them. Many people grumble about this situation. Lalomerui residents claim that a part of the oil palm plantation location belongs to them through inheritance, because the company has delimited the size of the village as well as their land.

Formerly, Lalomerui was in an area of shifting cultivation for people from Routa and Walandawe, locally known as *berkebun pindah-pindah*. They had moved a number of times before deciding to settle in the place that is now the village of Lalomerui. They showed me some of their former locations which people labelled old settlements (*kampung tua*) or former settlements (*bekas kampung*). In some locations, remnants of their houses can still be found; a broken wooden frame and neglected garden plots were evident.

Pelzer (1948) defines shifting cultivation as the rotation of fields rather than crops, a short cropping period from one to three years followed by a long fallow period of five to ten years. Ruthenberg (1980 cited in Mertz et al., 2009: 261) proposes another definition, 'if less than 30% of the land is farmed (or more than 67% fallowed)'. Pelzer's definition emphasises the period of being fallow while Ruthenberg stresses the proportion of land that is fallow. The irony is that in Lalomerui, because of the size of the holdings, the fallow system can no longer be applied. It seems that the farmers there can no longer farm in the way these scholars describe or the way they learned from their forebears. They are

persons displaced by economic development, displaced in their own environment and manipulated by the ignorance of their own people.

The situation for the Lalomerui farmers is unlike that of other villagers (in Parudongka, Tirawonua and Routa) who moved from relying on forest gathering and swidden farming to become sedentary farmers of their own volition, on their own initiative and to their own time frame. They were able to adapt to the gradual transformation because they had control over the pace of change. People in Lalomerui cannot follow the livelihood transformation that has occurred there, because it has come too fast, been too extensive and they have no frame of reference for this kind of development and they have had no control over the pace. To make matters worse, the problem of place compounds the problem of pace.

The palms are regimented in rows like soldiers, armed with spikes. The monoculture environment is eerily quiet. Acciaioli (2011: 2) laments that in Central Kalimantan, the oil palm plantation introduced monoculture, which cannot be integrated into the forest. Forest must be cleared entirely before planting the palms. It may accelerate the breeding of insects such as locusts which periodically swarm and destroy rice fields or farms owned by the locals. Clearing forest also destroys biodiversity, and may mean the death of plants not yet studied in regard to possible medicinal uses that may be sought by the pharmaceutical industry.

In Lalomerui, livelihoods are under threat, the farmers have no option but to keep on as they have always done; they know no other way. Because no help is forthcoming, they must act as though it is their problem to overcome. They have been forced to solve problems that are not of their own making. Lalomerui farmers now have to manage for five years until they receive any entitlements from the company, but who knows what the payoff will be when it does come. This situation has forced them to rely on gathering forest products, an activity which now includes harvesting timber, much of it illegal. I found that almost all households in Lalomerui have at least one chainsaw. Even the head of the village has established a timber business and is also working as a timber collector. It appears that the current forest activities further threaten forest preservation in this area, however I heard people argue that the damage they create impacts the forest far less than the oil palm plantation does. It is a matter of considerable conjecture, but outside the scope of this research.



Image 26. **Oil palm plantation in Lalomerui**

The main kinds of work of the oil palm plantation in Lalomerui today are land clearing, establishing a nursery and also planting palm oil trees. These are mostly undertaken by men, while women usually carry out weeding, spreading fertiliser around the trees, watering the nursery, and some plant the oil palms.

As the palms are coming into production, the number of migrant workers in the plantation will have to increase. They will need more labourers to maintain the plantation and harvest the fruit. The head of Lalomerui village has developed a plan with the plantation management to place the migrant workers into two new villages; Mopute and Watupali which were only established in 2012 (see Chapter Three) and do not yet have residents.

The absence of a road from Lalomerui village to other villages has resulted in none of these migrant workers coming from villages in Routa sub-district. The absence of any other roads also compromises the opportunity for the people in other villages in the sub-district to support the expansion in Lalomerui. People from other villages in Routa are not able to capitalise on increased demands for staple foods such as vegetables and fish. Some Bugis traders from Central Sulawesi travel back and forth to Kendari to meet the needs of wage labourers in *afdelings* there.

Developing oil palm plantations in many parts of Indonesia, including Lalomerui, is controversial. The oil palm plantation in Lalomerui has increased the value of land in this area by enhancing transportation facilities. As many scholars emphasise, improving sustainable livelihood is not all about income but also other aspects, such as health, education and infrastructure which translates into five kinds of assets: natural, human,

social, physical and financial (Scoones, 1998; Ellis, 2000; Bebbington, 1999; Carswell, 2000; Chambers & Conway 1991). Furthermore, Susila (2004: 107-114) found that the palm oil industry in Indonesia made a significant contribution during the economic crisis (Krismon in 1998). In some parts of Indonesia, particularly in Sumatera (Kampar and Musi Banyuasin), palm oil industries do contribute to income distribution and apparently poverty alleviation, as well as increasing smallholders' incomes. Hopefully Lalomerui can profit like Sumatera but to date indicators do not suggest reasons for optimism, because no smallholder in Routa will ever be growing their own oil palm. The model of development in Routa is significantly different but not necessarily significantly better.



**Image 27. The palm oil factory in North Konawe regency**

According to Susila (2004: 111), some issues and constraints may occur. Many palm oil industries are implicated in environmental issues. Deforestation and monoculture practices can lead to environmental deterioration. The operation of the oil palm plantation may engender land conflicts and local people may miss their opportunity to improve their welfare. They appear to be missing out on the ability to control their own destiny.

The presence of the palm oil company has resulted in livelihood transformation which cannot be ignored or avoided by people in Routa sub-district, such as has already occurred in Lalomerui but in a direction which the residents did not envisage. For the people in Lalomerui things are worse. People cannot even transform their livelihood in order to respond to the huge change in their environment. To some extent, they are forced to revert to their ancestors' livelihood as forest gatherers because they cannot

manage the distance to their present landholdings. They have lost control over their future, their plans and their hopes. Transformation is not always positive and it seems that the local people who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of at least some of the aspects of development may be instead collateral damage. History has shown what happens when land became scarce in the Lauje highlands of Sulawesi (see Li, 2014). Although there is no such pressure on the land in Routa, there are still instances such as the case of land encroachment in Lalomerui, selling dammar concessions and paying off debt with land which may hint of things to come.

### **Towards the mining operations**

In 2009, the mining company PT. Sulawesi Cahaya Mineral (PT.SCM)<sup>88</sup> engaged a team from the ANU and two local universities from two provinces within in the mining concession, Tadulako University in Central Sulawesi and Haluoleo University in Southeast Sulawesi. The team conducted a baseline survey for community development preparation. From then on, news spread that Routa would become the centre of mining operations for a large international company and this attracted the attention of people in Routa and neighbouring areas. This is mainly influenced by the prosperity of people who are engaged in the mining activities in some regencies of Southeast Sulawesi such as in North Konawe, Kolaka, North Kolaka, in Central Sulawesi such as in Morowali and particularly in Sorowako, South Sulawesi (the place adjacent to Lake Matano close to Routa), which is run by Vale from Brazil, (formerly Inco from Canada).

In late 2012, PT. Sulawesi Cahaya Mineral obtained an official permit to use the forest area in Routa (Izin Pinjam Pakai Kawasan Hutan (IPPKH))<sup>89</sup>. The use of a forest area permit (IPPKH) is crucial, particularly for the mining companies when mine areas are located in the national protected forest zones. Usually the IPPKH licence is approved after securing all other permits<sup>90</sup>. PT SCM itself has been waiting about five years for their IPPKH approval. They have started exploratory activities that consist of trenching and drilling in order to calculate the quantity and the quality of the nickel ore deposit; they will continue to carry out feasibility studies. According to their geologist, who has much

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<sup>88</sup> It was owned by Rio Tinto and Sherritt from Canada.

<sup>89</sup> IPPKH refers to the use of a forest permit in a protected forest area.

<sup>90</sup> These are permits from the central government (Ministry of Mining and Ministry of Forests), provincial and district governments, and include an analysis of environmental impacts (AMDAL) before a mining company can apply for IPPKH.

experience in mining operations, the exploration period usually takes five to seven years but can take even longer. The mining company has begun to recruit local people to help those preparing coordinate points for soil sampling.



Image 28. Digging and drilling employees of mining; most of them are from Rوتا

While awaiting the approval of the IPPKH from the central government, PT. SCM tried to create a mechanism for the fair selection among the people across Rوتا villages. They sought to establish selection criteria to distinguish those who are local and engaged in discussions of these selection criteria with people in all villages. Local people have been assured that PT. SCM will not ignore them and that it has placed recruitment of local people as its first priority, but this will affect only low-level positions. The company considers that, because the lack of education, these positions would be the only ones suitable for the people of Rوتا.

Although the criteria appears to have been addressed, there are other matters which the coming of the mining company will highlight but may not be so easily resolved. There has been much discussion to decide who supplies transportation (buffaloes and motorbikes) and what kiosks or trading companies may provide daily needs to the company. Jealousy arose when the company chose particular *pajekka/patekke* or motorbike owners over others. A similar situation also occurred between owners of kiosks; the ones that were left out claimed they also had the ability to provide logistics and supplies if the company could just give them an opportunity. The company overcame the problems using the criteria for distinguishing who is local, determined through community consultation. According to these criteria: employees should have a Rوتا

identity card (KTP), they should have a house there and have stayed at least five years in the Routa sub-district area. As a result of using the criteria, the mining company and local traders then formulated a schedule for people who own buffalo, motorbikes for transport, and kiosks for goods. The company has also engaged people in the discussion regarding price standardisation of the activities.

The increasing mining activities are also creating demand for goods and services. Initial mining demands have started to attract people from across Towuti Lake to become involved in trading by making links with local traders. The company has given an undertaking to patronize local suppliers and only when they cannot fulfil a request, such as hiring a helicopter, will the company look to outside suppliers.

From my consultation with traders in Timampu, I found that all of them were interested in becoming suppliers to the mining company in Routa. One (who was originally from Sorowako) explained that he had already tried to build good connections with the company officials by providing all manner of help. According to this trader, in the future, when the mining operation commences, there will be many traders willing to ingratiate themselves into mining activities, so he decided to establish a good connection early with both the mining company and the people in Routa. He has already supported a few kiosks in Routa by providing goods over many years. He hopes to increase this support through his local suppliers.

In order to build infrastructure, such as roads, factories and a port, over the next two years the mining company has planned to recruit more people. PT SCM and its contractors estimate they will need approximately 10,000–11,000 workers at all levels of skill for those activities<sup>91</sup>. The mining operation will encompass two districts, Konawe and North Konawe. They will build roads and transportation facilities from Routa to a port to be built in North Konawe. This will greatly improve transport links and provide another vehicle for transformation.

The range of these activities will stimulate considerable migration not only from Southeast Sulawesi province but also by people with a range of skills and educational backgrounds from other provinces throughout Indonesia. How can local people anticipate a change of this magnitude? It is clear there will be a range of reactions. Some still want to preserve their current livelihoods as farmers. They imagine that the appearance of the

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<sup>91</sup> Information from the head of the mining company in Kendari, 2012.



mining company will enhance the infrastructure in Routa, which will make it easy for them to bring their agricultural products to market and will reduce transportation costs.

Some, particularly young people in Routa, have low levels of education and skills but want to be employed by the mining company. One of my informants in Routa who is illiterate told me many times that he really wants to be a security guard (*satuan pengamanan*) when the company starts operations. He assumes that working as a security guard will be the only suitable position for people like him who are illiterate; he cannot imagine he would be suitable for any other work. This shows that people are aware that they may have difficulty adapting to the livelihood transformation stimulated by the mining company because they cannot meet the high standard of employment requirements and they have had no time to prepare for this change. In many remote and less developed areas, particularly in eastern Indonesia, poor educational attainment and inadequate training result in local people being excluded from an equal chance of employment (Ballard, 2001: 15).

The mining company has already noted the willingness of people to be employed in the mining company during the community preparation research they undertook in 2009. The levels of education and skills are so low that the company has had to consider establishing a range of education and skill-enhancement programs as prerequisites to employment. The people in Routa are victims of lack of educational opportunity as a result of longstanding abandonment by the government.

In 2011, the company established a community development department in their office in Kendari which committed to undertaking a range of community development programs in Routa<sup>92</sup>. They have started to set up teams both at the sub-district and village levels. The company will discuss a variety of community development programs (such as increasing productivity of cash crops, including the possibility of setting up a new advantageous livelihood) in every village; these development programs will be delivered by the team who will also be involved in the process of recruiting local people.

Considering every mine has a finite life, the mining company has planned to assist people in keeping their current livelihoods instead of recruiting them as labourers in mining activities in low positions. There will be a range of programs to enhance the productivity of farmers, graziers and even traders. The mining company believes that if it

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<sup>92</sup> The baseline survey recommended this program.

can enhance farm productivity and traders' capacity, it will be able to enhance their prosperity through their current livelihoods.

There will also be a long-term program to bolster the education level of children and young people in Rوتا by providing scholarships, vocational training and enhancing teacher qualifications (recounted by PT. SCM leaders). This approach is based on the recommendations from the ANU baseline study, carried out in 2009 before exploration commenced (Robinson et al., 2010).

Rapid change will be inevitable with the presence of mining activities. The mining company will hire other companies as contractors. In many cases, the contractors will also bring their own employees and recruit only some new employees. It is still unclear whether the contractors will be required to follow the same rules as PT. SCM in prioritising employment of local people.

The mining company and its partners (contractors) will need a range of support staff and goods. To be involved, the local people must fulfil a standard stipulated by the company. Most of the local people have limited experience, so are not familiar with the standard required. Local people need to learn company ways and this will not happen without training. The speed of development is often too fast for local people; a situation which occurred in Sorowako. Many of the contractors will not wait until the local people are sufficiently prepared. As a consequence, they will recruit people from anywhere as long as they can fulfill the employment criteria and they will organise supply from outside the area. Stiff competition will occur between local people and migrants who can come better prepared.

Southeast Sulawesi is one of the provinces in Sulawesi island with low population density and has been a popular destination for migrants from other provinces, especially from South Sulawesi which has the highest population density in Sulawesi island. Mining and palm oil have provided a drawcard.

Table 5. Population density per km<sup>2</sup> in Sulawesi Island from 1971 – 2010

Provinces	Population density per km <sup>2</sup>					
	1971	1980	1990	1995	2000	2010
North Sulawesi	62	77	90	96	73	82
Central Sulawesi	14	20	27	30	35	41
South Sulawesi	83	97	112	121	129	147
Southeast Sulawesi	19	25	35	42	48	59

Source: Calculated from the data of Central Bureau of Statistics 2012.

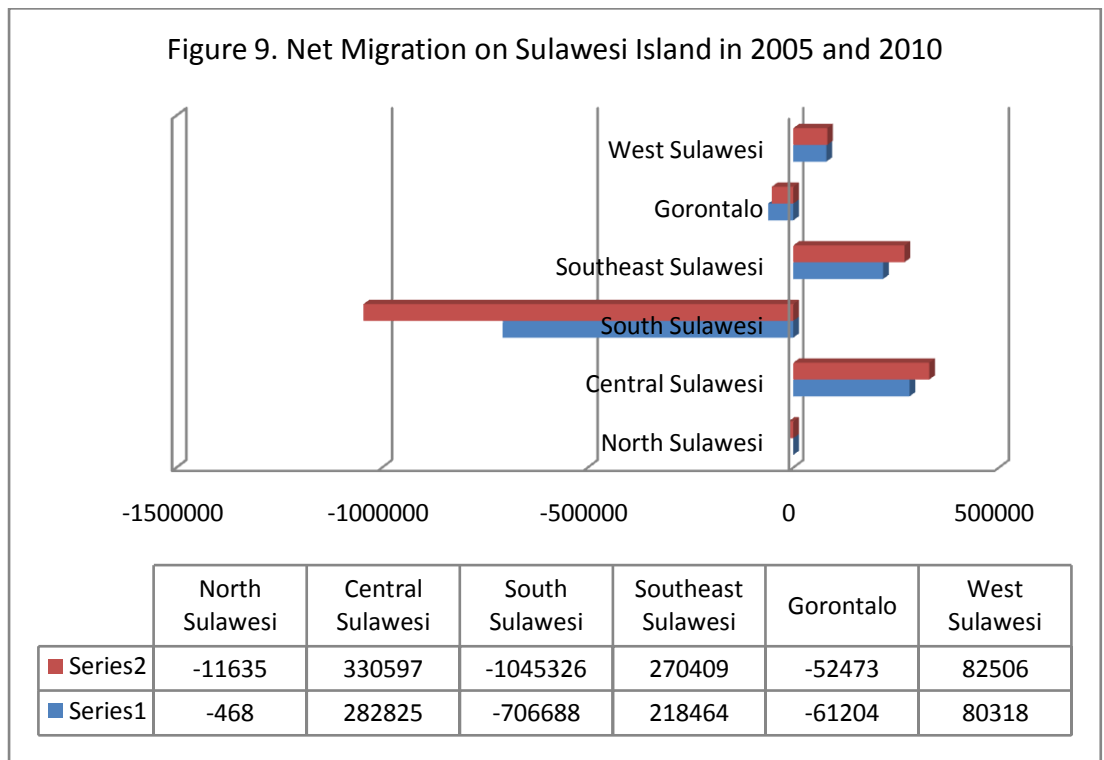
The migration of people out of South Sulawesi province to other provinces in Sulawesi is greater than the migration into South Sulawesi regions. Migration out of South Sulawesi is always larger than from other provinces in Sulawesi (see Table 6). On the other hand, Southeast Sulawesi province has a small population compared to the other provinces, and also the number of people migrating into this province is always larger compared to the number of people leaving.

Table 6. Migration into and out of Sulawesi Island in 2005 and 2010

Province	2005			2010		
	In Migration	Out Migration	Net Migration	In Migration	Out Migration	Net Migration
North Sulawesi	165,689	166,157	-468	206,139	217,774	-11,635
Central Sulawesi	358,601	75,776	282,825	452,792	122,195	330,597
South Sulawesi	320,587	1,027,275	-706,688	364,288	1,409,614	-1,045,326
Southeast Sulawesi	341,057	122,593	218,464	447,484	177,075	270,409
Gorontalo	39,487	100,691	-61,204	64,585	117,058	-52,473
West Sulawesi	166,345	86,027	80,318	172,113	89,607	82,506

Source: Centre of Statistical Bureau Jakarta, 2013

Figure 9. Net Migration on Sulawesi Island in 2005 and 2010



Based on the experiences in other mining areas in Southeast Sulawesi, most migrants come from South Sulawesi province. Most of them work in the lower positions in the mining company or are working as miners. Some come just to capitalise on a range of opportunities as traders, using the rise in the price of daily consumables which typically occurs in many mining areas, where cost of living has risen with the arrival of mining.

Hugo (2006: 78) argues that Bugis, Makassar and Toraja people are the most mobile groups in Sulawesi. For several centuries, Buginese were well known as seafarers, exploring many part of the archipelago and beyond. The movement of Buginese occurs within Sulawesi as well as to the islands. The Torajan people from the highlands of South Sulawesi are also extremely mobile. As mentioned previously, most of the migrants in Rوتا are Bugis and Toraja, coming from South Sulawesi. Some are involved in illegal logging practices, others seek land for small-scale plantations, and others act as traders. Data presented in Tables 5 and 6 supports the information that the migrant population in Rوتا is dominated by Bugis and Toraja. This is because of the easier access from the south than from other regions in Sulawesi.

In existing mining activities, such as those in Sorowako, there was competition between indigenous Sorowakan and migrants, including migrants from more distant places of origin outside Sulawesi Island in the early years of development of the mine. The

fact was that in Sorowako in the 1980s, positions for low-level and unskilled labourers were dominated by indigenous Sorowakan and other people from South Sulawesi. By contrast, middle management and senior manager positions were dominated by people from outside Sulawesi and expatriates (see Robinson, 1986: 240).

On the other hand, Ballard and Banks (2003: 307) suggest a flexible coalition or alliance between the mining company and the local community, which is often represented by NGOs, academics or community activists as state facilitation. In addition, Ballard and Banks (2003: 303) set out several forms of compensation that can be proposed by the community, such as compensation for land resumed and damages incurred, royalties on the mineral resources, equity participation and joint venture access to mine-related infrastructure and services.

With the impact of mining activities, local livelihoods will be simultaneously transformed as a response to environmental, economic, social and cultural changes (Bury, 2002: 9). From Bury's (2002) study in the Peruvian Andes Peru, the emergence of mining activities has compromised water quality and supply, land tenure/grazing areas and social resources. Mining operations require significant portions of land for mine operations, road construction, infrastructure, drilling and tailings and settlement ponds. Many of those sites coincide with some of the most desirable grazing and cropping areas, thus creating conflict over land use priorities (see also Robinson, 1986: 175-212). The mining company in Routa (PT. SCM) has already taken steps to avoid some of the pitfalls which occurred in Sorowako.

Social problems, which range from prostitution, gambling, theft and drunkenness, are always linked to mining employees; problems such as these may lead to family dislocation and the loss of cultural traditions. It is possible to learn from the mistakes of history; it is possible to predict some of the social problems which may befall an area newly opened to mining activities. To date, the mining company in Routa has shown itself to be socially proactive and responsible, a new way of behaving as a multi-national company at the frontier of a developing nation.

The mining company has started to develop electricity in Lalomerui, and to discuss a range of community development programs including establishing micro finance institutions in every village, agricultural training as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) commitments. CSR in Indonesia is the obligatory contribution from the company to the society as a part of the royalties to be paid.

As part of the CSR, the mining company has organised a transparent proactive scheme of ongoing communication by setting up teams at the sub-district and village levels. These teams consist of the government leader (village head)<sup>93</sup> as well as respected community members elected by the local people. As the representatives of the local community, the teams will be facilitated by the company to discuss issues considered important by the local people. The teams will then take the issues to the company in order to align the priorities. They will also consider community development programs which the company can initiate and support. The company will then also give assistance to the action plan and accompany teams and the local community to undertake activities to address the issues.

### **The agents of transformation**

I divide the agents of transformation in Rouda into two categories. The first is transformation influenced by mercantile capitalism, immigrants comprising timber traders, agricultural traders and traders of consumer goods. The relationships of people to the market, either direct or indirect, the availability of new lands, transportation and the number of new immigrants determine the economy of a frontier (Norton, 1977: 465). The second category is transformation imposed by modern capitalism, which comprises the oil palm plantation and the mining company. Both agents have different ways to influence and to incorporate people in this frontier region to the wider economic activities. Giddens (1982: 33) argues that the substantial change in the contemporary world is the transition from traditional societies, which are based on agriculture on the one hand, to industrial societies which rely on mechanised production and commercial exchange of goods on the other.

Over time, the form of transformation supported by the traders does not force people to totally abandon their previous livelihoods; the new can easily be assimilated with the old. Social change as a consequence of development has to be planned and well managed to reduce unintended and deleterious impacts (Appell, 1988: 271). Any change should not be too fast and the difference between developer and developed should not be too great. It should take into account the strengths, knowledge and the potential adaptation of local communities (Appell, 1988: 271).

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<sup>93</sup> In the level of sub-district, the head of sub-district (*camat*) is included in the team.

In Routa, life has been supported by appropriate stepping stones: from forest gatherer to swidden farmer, from slash and burn practices to sedentary farms, and then to market competition. These appear as a logical sequence. The signs of transformation influenced by traders can also be seen in the use of animals. Where once water buffalo pulled the ploughs, now hand-tractors is used to cultivate rice fields. Previously buffalo provided the only mode of transport for timber and dammar (*pajekka* and *patekke*), now logging trucks do most of the work. In everyday life, people are gradually changing from using timber as their fuel for cooking; now many are using LPG or kerosene, or even electricity (rice cookers).

The transformation promoted by traders allows local people to some extent to preserve their livelihoods and allows them a measure of control over their life. Most households are growing cash crops, some of them still also planting upland rice (*padi lading*) and even collect dammar resin. From my observation, I found that people in Routa have not totally left swidden farming activities behind. Such is the case of Hanung and other people in Walandawe and Routa who grow cacao but still cultivate upland rice (*padi ladang*). This is probably related to their experience of uncertainty because of market fluctuations and turbulent changes surrounding cacao production, the cash crop before pepper. Cramb et al., (2009: 323) explains that relying solely on cash crops may well improve their livelihoods but from their perspective, complete specialisation for the market will increase dependence and vulnerability. They believe that swidden practices can still provide an important safety net to cope with market fluctuation and turbulent change, and cultivating dry rice will give them a sense of security and freedom from the fear of uncertainty.

The palm oil activities impose a new paradigm, an entirely new way of life which cannot be easily incorporated into present livelihoods and which demands forsaking everything they know to embark on a journey of unknown destination. For local people in Lalomerui the rejection of the opportunity to work in the oil palm plantation is an indication of the incompatibility with transformation stimulated by big investment. By contrast, the mining company plans to empower the local people through supporting existing livelihoods as well as improving opportunities for employment and vocational training. It is implementing a new model of investment.

The transformation that has occurred in this remote frontier area has also brought significant change. From 2011 to 2012, the number of TVs and digital TV receivers in

Routa sub-district has grown from 74 units to 125, an increase of 25%. As well, the number of houses that use electricity has increased from 252 in 2011 to 270 in 2012, a rise of 7.14% (Routa in Figures 2011 and 2012). Giddens (1982: 33) maintains that industrial society is often associated with modernisation. In modern society, people always struggle to break free from the traditional institutions in order to reach economic prosperity. Li (2005:32) explains that the upland people have started to use more sophisticated equipment and have tended to imitate the lifestyle of people in the lowlands. Now that people in Routa have access to television, there is even more for them to imitate.

The competition to obtain sophisticated goods, such as TVs, radio cassettes, rice cookers and more, has increased competition to achieve better yields. People are motivated to look for ways to increase pepper productivity that will allow them more disposable and discretionary income. I found one had started to use a manual that he brought from Kendari showing how to cultivate pepper. Households have begun to calculate and optimise income that they can derive from any livelihood; they are becoming more commercially oriented. Morrison (1995: 218-220) emphasizes that modern Western society shows rationality in their system of law, politics, science and commercial life. In the economic field, rationalisation was encouraged by the introduction of money, which brought the application of calculation to ensure profits. In traditional society, strict accuracy in calculation is becoming an increasing trend. In Routa, the commercialisation of land, staple goods and crop yields are part of this trend.

Residents such as Pa Anis, Pa Iwan and Pa Bakri told me of their plans to send their children to the faculty of geology at the university in Kendari (the capital of Southeast Sulawesi province) or in Makassar (the capital of South Sulawesi province) to respond to the possibility of employment when mining activities are in full swing in Routa. At her father's request, I have helped a daughter of the secretary of Parudongka village to apply to the medical faculty in Haluoleo University in Kendari. According to my informants, previously many households in Routa just expected their children to be a teacher, a nurse or a midwife. Rigg (2007: 71) affirms that the features of livelihoods in modern society are commercially oriented, outward looking, mobile, and unequal, individualistic, dependent and competitive.



## **Conclusion**

Environmental change and market demand have forced people to find alternative strategies to support their livelihoods. The type of cash crop they cultivate has been influenced by the experience of the migrants who come to find land in Routa, and traders who connect people to the markets. The conversion from forest gatherers and swidden farmers has taken place gradually; some still combine cultivating a cash crop with being a forest gatherer and swidden farming. Livelihood diversification is the main strategy for most households to survive and for a few to accumulate assets.

The fungal disease that attacked most of the cacao plantation in Routa has driven people to cultivate pepper. The current high price of pepper has raised the optimism of many. Not only local traders but also those from outside Routa have begun to introduce people to a range of goods, even ones that are not necessary for people in Routa who live with limited services. On the other hand, the appearance of things that people want rather than those they need has motivated them to take up seasonal job opportunities and diversify livelihoods in order to accumulate more income and transform their lifestyle.

Transformation is inevitable, it will eventually reach every corner in the world, including the remote places such as Routa. People are taking into account the changes, as they always make every effort to anticipate and adapt to transformation, no matter whether the transformation is encouraged by mercantile or modern capitalism.

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusion

In the development of the ethnographic analysis of this thesis, I have been guided by four key/general/framing research questions. Namely, (1) What motivates migrants to Rوتا?, (2) How do migrants establish settlements and generate livelihoods?, (3) What factors influence people to transform their livelihoods, and (4) What are the principal agents of transformation. In this concluding chapter I provide an overall perspective/summary/set of answers to these guiding themes.

Transformation began before Dutch colonial influence was evident. The Rوتا frontier has been transformed from temporary settlements which became permanent destinations for migrants, from swidden farming for subsistence which metamorphosed into sedentary cultivation and cash cropping. It has changed from a safe hiding place far from government contact for people who fled from endemic warfare, tax imposition and a cruel rebellion, to become a safeplace that provides a wide range of opportunities for people seeking their fortune and a better life.

Its people have taken their own initiative to develop over time. This progression has taken place as a response to environmental changes and market demand opportunities as well as knowledge transmitted to this remote place through traders and migrants. People on this frontier have little difficulty in negotiating these changes. Historically, changes of allegiance and polity was a part of life. The DI rebellion and the TNI response also forced change on these people. Change is part of their collective memory, so it is not difficult for them to take the steps necessary to accommodate the pace and direction of environmental changes and market fluctuations.

Ethnicity (*suku*) plays an important role in many respects; people established settlements based on their affiliations to parental *suku*. They then establish livelihoods and rely on their *suku* relatives and friends from their places of origin to overcome chronic labour shortage which occurs because the large land area cannot be managed with the manpower on site. Similarly cash crops (such as cacao and pepper) are cultivated by all *suku* members, but there are specific livelihoods that are favoured by particular *suku*. Thus we find wet rice (*padi sawah*) fields in Tirawonua cultivated almost exclusively by Bugis and Toraja residents, while in Walandawe and Lalomerui, Tolaki people cultivate dry rice (*padi ladang*).

Some traders (mostly Bugis) expand their activities to become patrons. They provided goods and income opportunities for their clients but also variously engage in social activities as religious and political leaders. Patrons and traders act as mercantile agents of change; they bring market knowledge as well as agricultural information that influences people to follow a trend. People from each of the ethno-linguistic group generally adapt to the opportunities pace of change facilitated by patrons and traders.. This has been their way of life since the dammar resin era beginning in the nineteenth century. The patron-client relationship is mutually beneficial and small scale capitalism of this kind does not undermine people livelihoods. Actually in Routa, all patrons and traders are engaged in production, but on a larger scale than their clients. By contrast, the presence of imposed, large-scale capitalism such as oil palm plantation driven by the demands of sustained large scale profits does threaten people's livelihoods. In Lalomerui for example the company increasingly occupies most of the available arable land which has made it difficult for people to cultivate cash crops and has forced them to obtain income from ever-dwindling and less accessible forest products.

### ***Suku* and Migration to the frontier**

The abundance of forest products, particularly in the in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when dammar resin was booming, and abundance of land have attracted migrants from South Sulawesi to Routa, however the access difficulties and the limited infrastructure have restricted the number of people who migrate and stay in this remote place. Dammar collecting was pioneered by Toraja; they were closely followed by Bugis merchants.

Chain migration, a feature of all migrating *suku* is an important source of labour to tackle labour shortage problems. Both invited and independent migrants have contributed to the increase in population and the formation of settlements (*kampung*) as well as villages (*desa*). Many households invite their families and friends to come and help them to clear the land, harvest or work in the timber industry. Others rely on their family and friends within Routa sub-district and pay them as wage labourers. Some migrants who come independently because of the availability of land and opportunities to establish farm enterprises in this frontier. It takes time and effort for someone to be successful in this remote place. Although chain migration can increase the population, it does so gradually.

Although invited and independent migration continues in Rوتا and has the potential to alleviate the labour shortage problem, the ability of local people and traders to provide the initial requirements for those whom they invite is limited and may fluctuate according to the rise and fall of their fortunes. The improvement in infrastructure, such as roads, communication, education and health facilities, is also growing slowly in Rوتا. The roads are just dirt tracks, a mobile signal is difficult to find, the standard and quality of education is minimal and the health facilities are grossly inadequate. These factors reduce the motivation of invited migrants to stay in Rوتا permanently. All *suku* practise invited migration. It provides security, gives promise, allows for livelihood improvement, promotes opportunity, creates stability and social cohesion. As a vehicle of population growth it shows real promise and as such should receive government support. In its present iteration, it is slow so the population remains low.

### **Settlements**

The migrants who have succeeded chose to stay permanently and formed settlements based on *suku*. Each *suku* has its own pattern of livelihood: the Torajans who were resin gatherers and farmers settled Parudongka, the Bugis as traders and cultivators of wet rice and cash crops settled Tirawonua, while Tolaki, who engaged in swidden agriculture combined with forest gathering and some occupy government positions, settled in Rوتا, Walandawe and Lalomerui. Over time, other villages have developed in a similar fashion.

There are three categories of official settlements in Rوتا: 'old' villages which were formed prior to 2005 before Rوتا was officially established as a sub-district, 'new' villages which were formed to meet the requirement of Rوتا to become a sub-district in 2005, and lastly 'villages-in-preparation' which were established in 2012.

People in the old villages, no matter their *suku* have strong connections with their settlements. The residents have made every effort to survive despite all the difficulties. The events of the rebellion era stimulated a strong bond between people and their sense of belonging. They regard themselves as *orang* Rوتا. The re-establishment of settlements in the Rوتا regions was mainly initiated by the former residents.

The absence of government forced people to act on their own initiative to improve their lives. Infrastructure development was largely initiated by the local community with limited government intervention or support. Over time, the local timber traders, mostly

Bugis, have worked with village communities to gradually improve tracks from the port of Lengkobale to the main settlements. They also were responsible for the change from canoe to small, motorised boats (*katinting*) to cross Towuti Lake. Residents cooperated to establish rainfed irrigation to cultivate staple foods in Parudongka and Tirawonua. The Bugis of Tirawonua cooperated to build a mini-hydroelectric scheme in 2011; it was successful and it continues to operate. Contrast this with the fate of the hydroelectric plant funded by the government in Routa, which operated for less than one week and still remains under repair.

Old settlements created by the residents are markedly different to the settlements created by the government just before Routa was officially established as a sub-district. More than half the Bugis residents in Puuwiwirano have returned to their places of origin; others had no option but to stay because they have sold all their assets. They came to Puuwiwirano at the invitation of local government (largely Tolaki); they believed that the government would provide infrastructure for them and they did not feel settled, so most opted to return. This feeling was compounded by the fact that local government who promoted this destination did not provide the necessary infrastructure before inviting the migrants from areas of South Sulawesi and Southeast Sulawesi provinces. It shows a sadly rudimentary understanding of 'planning'. This 'development' may have impressed the provincial government on paper, but its realisation was a cause for angst among the locals. The local people have derived no benefit and many consider it a waste of public money. Any benefit went only to political elites.

### **Suku and Livelihoods**

Generally *suku* in Routa diversify their livelihoods because to date there has been no single livelihood that can provide sufficiently. Every household optimises each and every livelihood opportunity to enhance their income and secure subsistence. They diversify, collecting forest products, planting rice as their staple food and cash crops, first cacao then pepper and most recently a few people have started to cultivate patchouli.

To date, timber (largely Bugis-owned) is the only product from the forest that can be used to generate sufficient income, however only traders can capitalise on timber to earn significant income. Other forest products such as resin from dammar trees can only provide supplementary income for the mostly Tolaki collectors. To some extent forest products are still important, particularly for residents who live in villages such as

Walandawe, Lalomerui and a few in Routa village. Some households go regularly to the jungle to collect fish to supplement their protein and to find traditional medicines from the forest to combat the problem of the absence of government health officials and medicine in Routa.

From the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, residents in Routa have moved full circle to cultivate cash crops. People were successful in cultivating cacao from the beginning of the 1990s until the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century when fungus attacked most of their cacao farms and significantly reduced the yield. Currently, pepper is many times more valuable than cacao, which has encouraged people of all *suku* in Routa sub-district to grow it. No matter whether they are traders, patrons, teachers, police or even timber traders, they are all competing to grow pepper, however they did not replace the previous crop (cacao) with it, they opened new land to grow it. This is the way that people on this frontier accumulate assets (land). While the features of livelihood development such as diversification, proliferation, intensification are evident across all *suku*, some people run counter to their *suku* stereotype and their success makes them the more prominent.

### **Traders and patron-client relationships**

The introduction of cash crops was driven by market demand disseminated through traders. The emergence of these crops has encouraged many households to convert secondary forest (former logging areas) into farms. Some, particularly Tolaki, convert this secondary forest to cultivate dry rice and subsequently cultivate cacao in their former rice fields

The major traders are mainly Bugis and their mode of operation through patron-client networks expresses a common pattern in Bugis communities and is a key feature of Bugis migration on the frontier. The relationships between patrons and clients in Routa sub-district are mutually beneficial and complementary. As well as acting as the local buyer/supplier, the traders provide a channel for farm and forest products to get to the market, however not all traders can become patrons; sufficient capital, a good connection with 'big' traders across the lake, experience and residents' trust are pivotal requirements that a trader needs to become a patron. To some extent, a high level of education can influence a patron to be more creative in terms of broadening their client base. In remote places, patron-client relationships can develop from strong multi-stranded relationships.

Traders in Routa can be classified into several types. Firstly, people who become traders are encouraged by the remoteness of Routa. The isolation has made many people reluctant to travel to the market. They then encourage a member of the community whom they consider has ability to sell the agricultural products and provide them with provisions from the markets. Gradually this person grows to become a patron with the trust and support of the people. The relations between the people and traders in this category involved kinship and friendship; initially it was not based on a vertical hierarchy. Many of the traders in this first category began as forest gatherers and timber-fellers, as did many of the local people at the beginning of Routa. A few then gradually engaged in trading of forest products and timber. Some have now grown to become the richest men, dominating economic activities in this remote place. Most of the people in this study who followed this path are Bugis.

Secondly, consider the traders who migrated to Routa with the purpose of becoming a trader. The presence of cash crops in Routa has caught the attention of traders from outside the area to come and connect the cash-crop production in Routa to the market. Their prior experience as merchants makes them more creative and they become patrons quite rapidly compared to the previous category of traders. They began as economic superiors and formed vertical relationships with their subordinate clients. They involve themselves in many social activities to make the relationships with their clients stronger, eventually becoming community leaders. Their economic power has been expanded to social power. All of the people in this study who followed this path are Bugis.

The third category are local people who grow from having a kiosk to become patrons. They are involved as agents of traders in the second category and receive support from traders outside Routa. In some ways, this category is quite similar to the first, but the difference is that these traders themselves began in vertical relationships with superordinate traders. They began as clients and in turn became patrons. Strong social relationships with their community are still pivotal. The relationships are often strong because of kin relations. In this study, this pattern was followed across *suku*.

The last classification is the itinerant traders from within Routa and outside. I found one of the itinerant traders who lives in Routa shows all the characteristics of a successful trader although he is really only a fish peddler. Because he lives in Routa he has more opportunity to build good relationships with people compared to those who live outside.

People have asked him for help to provide staple goods and he has responded quickly; they are in effect asking him to be their patron. He encourages people to order goods from him and repay by instalment. He gives customers additional information about the relative price and quality so they can make a choice; he provides good 'after-sales service'. Some of the traders in this last category have the ability to become a patron. With his potential, this young man has a bright future. In this study, Bugis predominate in this category.

Across *suku* the pathway of becoming a patron in Rounta is not only about economic considerations, even more important is establishing good social relationships with the community. Being humble, polite and creative in providing distinctive services to people act as pivotal social capital to be a patron, rather than financial capital per se.

Patrons are always privy to contemporary economic information, so they act as a point of reference for many people. They take the risk to try new things and to act as role models for their clients. Patrons take on the role of markets and financial institutions in this remote place. They are always able to serve their clients in ways familiar to the clients. Clients can come to borrow goods or money whenever they want without a guarantee, such as a bank requires. Patrons can meet immediate needs for food, money or agricultural inputs.

Patrons also undertake social roles as religious leaders. As well, government officials in villages (mostly Tolaki) and even at the sub-district level often invite them to give suggestions concerning development. On many occasions they also fill the absence of agricultural extension work by providing information about new crops, agricultural techniques, fertilisers and market information (crop prices). This demonstrates cooperation and respect across *suku*.

Patrons invite people as wage labourers to support their businesses. With the support of patrons, invited migrants can stay permanently. They then maintain their relationship with the patron as clients; so invited migration is also a method that a patron can use to enlarge their client base.

Geography has an important economic role to play in Rounta. The lack of market and financial institution there has allowed those who have family connection to become patron and traders. The easier access to the South Sulawesi province has given more chance to Bugis from that region to act as patrons and traders. Also, some Tolaki



originally from the Southeast Sulawesi province have capitalized similarly, using their positions as government official to become patrons. Kinship plays a major role as well.

### **Labour**

Chronic labour shortage is a major problem for people in developing their livelihoods. Households have to optimise available labour inputs in their agricultural enterprises, with some division of labour by gender and also age; children are included in the pool of available labour.

Other strategies people often employ to overcome labour shortage is temporarily living close to their farms, which allows them to allocate more time to taking care of their farms. Many establish their pepper farms in a piecemeal fashion. Others who have more assets hire people and pay them as wage labour. In wet rice fields, those who own a hand-tractor can set up sharecropping arrangements with surrounding rice farmers. An important strategy to overcome labour shortage is inviting relatives from southern or southeastern Sulawesi to help (*bantu-bantu*).

### **Social relations**

The emergence of cash crops and the transformation from swidden to more commercial farming (involving traders) has resulted in growing differences between people in Rوتا. The transformation leaves some groups marginalised and worse off, and enables others to thrive. The situation has gradually differentiated people into social strata.

Respect in Rوتا society is pivotal. Having assets, wisdom, a large family and education are considered reasons for according respect in Rوتا, It is apply to all *suku*. Traders, successful farmers, village elders (*orang tua*), customary leaders (*puutobu*) and community leaders are all included. Another respected group is those who are well educated, have graduated from a higher level than senior high school. This group includes government officials who are well educated compared to most people in Rوتا.

The formation of Rوتا's social stratification is fluid and mutable. Status can rise and fall in accord with economic achievements and population changes. Status can plummet during a business slump or as the result of improper behaviour. This fluidity can also be influenced by the fact that initially, in their places of origin, people in this frontier were commoners. Unlike status which is inherited, respect in Rوتا sub-district is earned and takes effort to maintain.

### **Oil palm plantation and the mining company**

The post-Suharto era of reform, which started from 1998 in Indonesia, was accompanied by the devolution of authority from central government to local government (*otonomi daerah*) and it has brought many changes. Provincial and district governments have invited large-scale investors to increase local revenue. The impact of this policy has also reached the remote corner of Rوتا, marked by the emergence of large companies.

The expansion of the oil palm plantation has contributed to decreased forest resources. It is marked by the massive transformation of wide expanses of forest into a palm monoculture. The company has taken up most of the land in Lalomerui, which has forced people to rely on forest products. Those who develop cash crops need to spend half a day to reach their farm. On the other hand, people cannot occupy jobs as wage labourers in the plantation. Remuneration from the menial jobs they can occupy is insufficient for subsistence, but the long inflexible working hours mean they cannot diversify their livelihood as is the practice of the people of Lalomerui. The people in Lalomerui do not cultivate cash crops like other villagers in Rوتا sub-district. They are relying even more heavily on forests to provide their livelihood.

Unlike the palm oil company, the mining company began their operation with a base-line study which has provided much information regarding the culture of the people. Regular discussions have taken place in every village regarding local criteria in order to prioritise local people to work as employees or to receive aid from the company, but the mining company at the moment can only recruit local people into low positions, such as geologist assistants, cleaners and drivers. There company has made commitments to improve the skills of local people in order to strengthen their present livelihoods, to take up government positions or to be included in the mining company at a higher level than they presently can be.

The company has provided scholarships to children from Rوتا to continue their senior high schooling in Kendari. There is a plan to provide scholarships every year to local people, not only for senior high, but also for those who are willing to pursue their education at university.

The mining company has also established microfinance to manage people's cash revenue from pepper and to provide capital to support increasing the productivity of farms. In a boom time, people need a form of savings that can help them manage their income, especially that which is surplus to immediate requirements. A financial institution

may help to prevent people succumbing to the sort of financial problems that happened with the fall of cacao prices. Patrons may not be able to handle the excess income from pepper because they will not have access to sufficient capital to pay their customers; the clients will then hold unprecedented economic power, so the need for a financial institution is becoming obvious.

The functions of the financial institution may not only provide a method of savings, but also may reduce the impact of consumerism, the only strategy that people who have surplus capital have had to date. The appearance of microfinance may give people the opportunity to learn how to develop a more appropriate plan for their future. Eventually, it will give a chance for people to request credit or receive interest on their savings. The mining company has begun to establish an institution that can strengthen the livelihoods of those who are not directly employed.

### **Livelihoods transformation**

The community should be involved at every stage of the discussions regarding their future as a large investment become part of local economic diversity. They need a frame of reference so they can understand, follow, adapt and take initiative to overcome any adverse effect of every change. There is strong evidence that development initiated by local people is more effective than infrastructure built by the government. Community consultation must be sophisticated, ongoing and sensitive and planning must be transparent to ensure that greater benefit is not skewed toward the already rich.

SCM (mining company) has initiated a micro-finance institution in the absence of a formal financial institution. A fully functioning micro-finance institution will impact their present financial arrangements and in time, it may impact the patron-client relationship. While a micro-finance institution in theory provides an alternative source of credit for people other than from traders/patrons, if traders can use their assets as collateral to obtain credit from the same micro-finance institution, it has the potential to benefit traders even more, and so intensify rather than weaken the current credit arrangements.

Researchers in many mining areas remind us about the impact of a huge influx of migrants, which may lead to social disorder and even the spread of serious disease. Indications of problems such as these can already be seen with the palm oil company in Lalomerui. The consumption of excessive amounts of alcohol after workers receive their salary is common in many *afdeling*. There are also whispers about the practice of

prostitution by women offering 'massage' services. All these practices can lead to serious disease and social disruption. To date, the community health centre (PUSKESMAS) in Salubulili is the only health facility in Routa. It does not have a doctor, and nurses can only provide medicine for malaria or typhus, so as is already common practice, all diseases in Routa will be diagnosed as one or the other. The centre is clearly unable to cope with the growing needs of this region.

The changing conditions in Routa brought about by both outside influences and changes within brought about by current pepper boom. There is a possibility of a future scarcity of arable land brought about by the steady trickle of migrants all keen to profit from the pepper boom, coupled with the palm oil company, already keen to expand its plantation area.

As well as the change brought about by outside influences, there are both population and landscape changes in Routa due to development initiated by its own residents and a steady trickle of migrants encouraged by the pepper boom. To date, people have been able to accommodate their increasing needs because of the abundance of natural forest areas which can be converted to arable land. But land is a finite resource. Already there are signs that the pressure of large-scale capitalism is requiring more space and natural resources. For local people and those who come to farm, it will be harder to achieve their dreams if land becomes a scarce resource. When government decision favours big business over the small landholder, both the pace and directions of change are influenced. In the future, the frontier features which made this area a magnet for people will fall victim to what is loosely called progress.

This thesis has described the way that this frontier area has developed through initiated and hard work of its population. The recent histories of development of mining saw SCM putting time and effort into preparing the community for its social and economic impact. The role of the government to show leadership to allow this remote area to take its place in the limelight of development.

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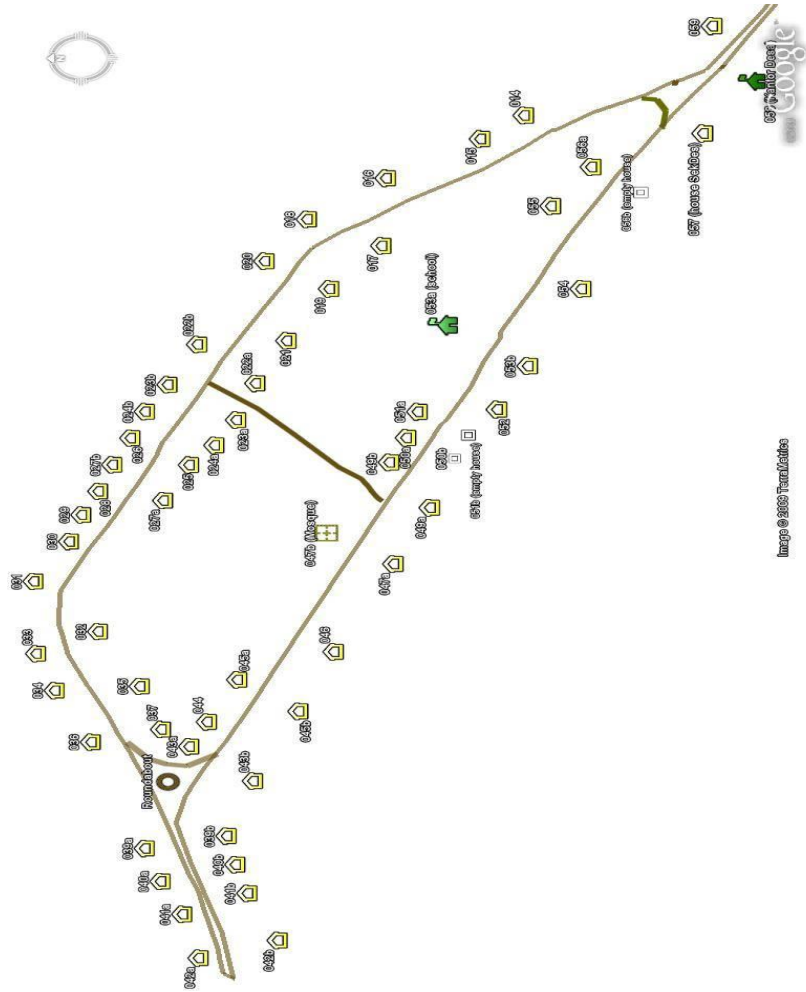
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# Appendix



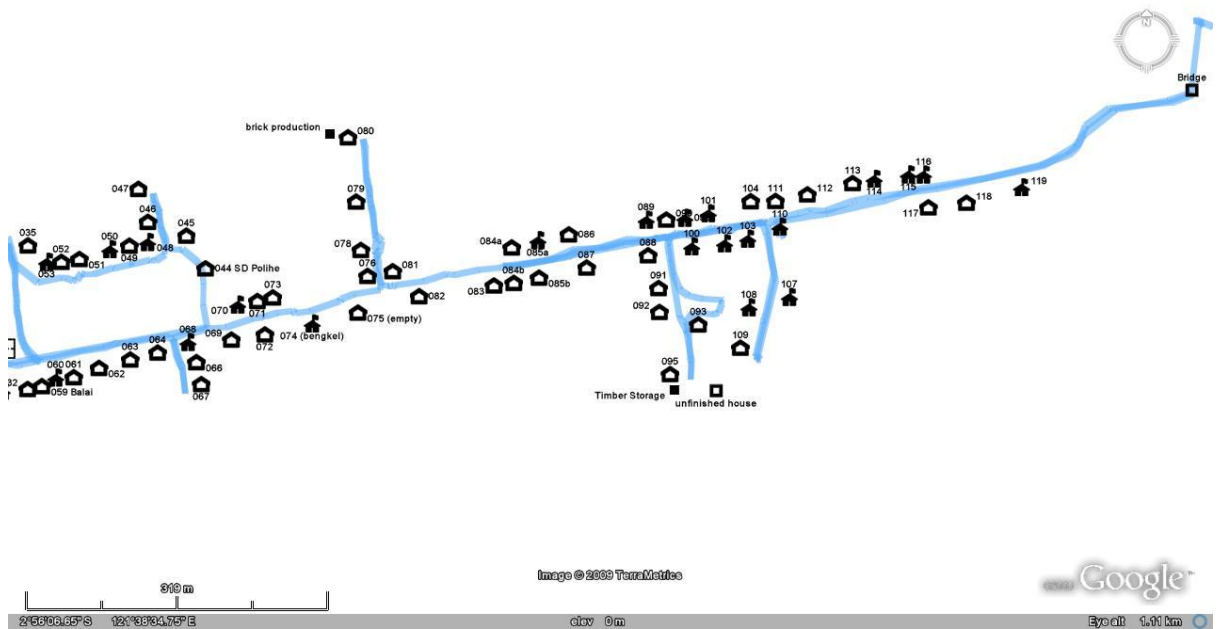
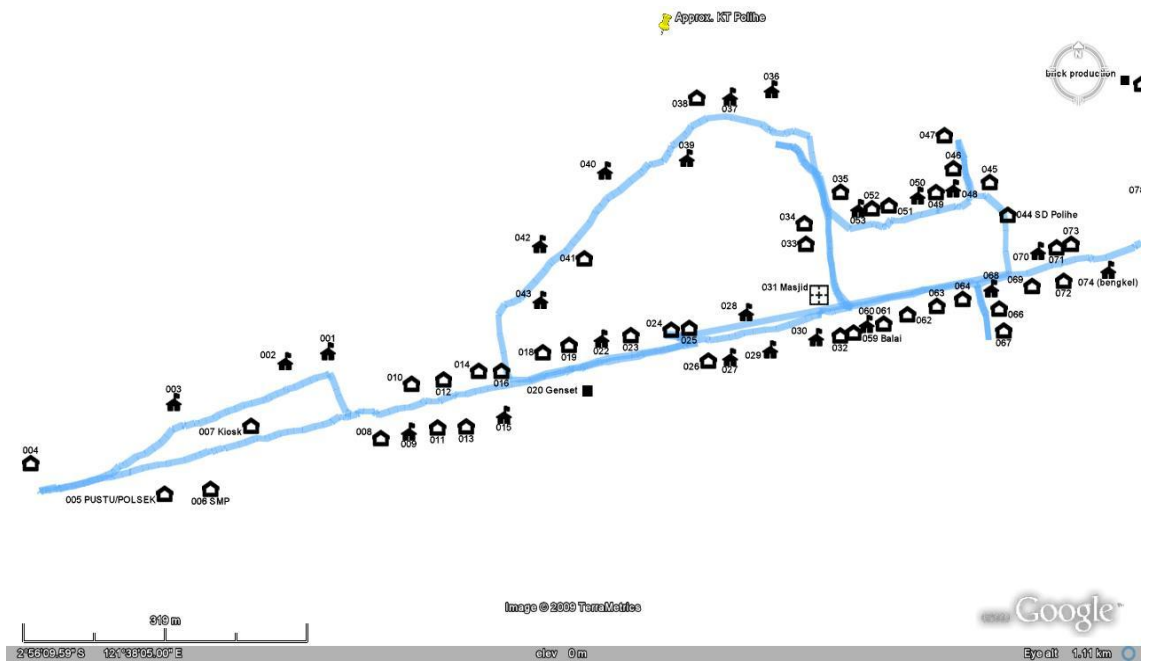
Layout of Parudongka village (provided by PT. SCM).



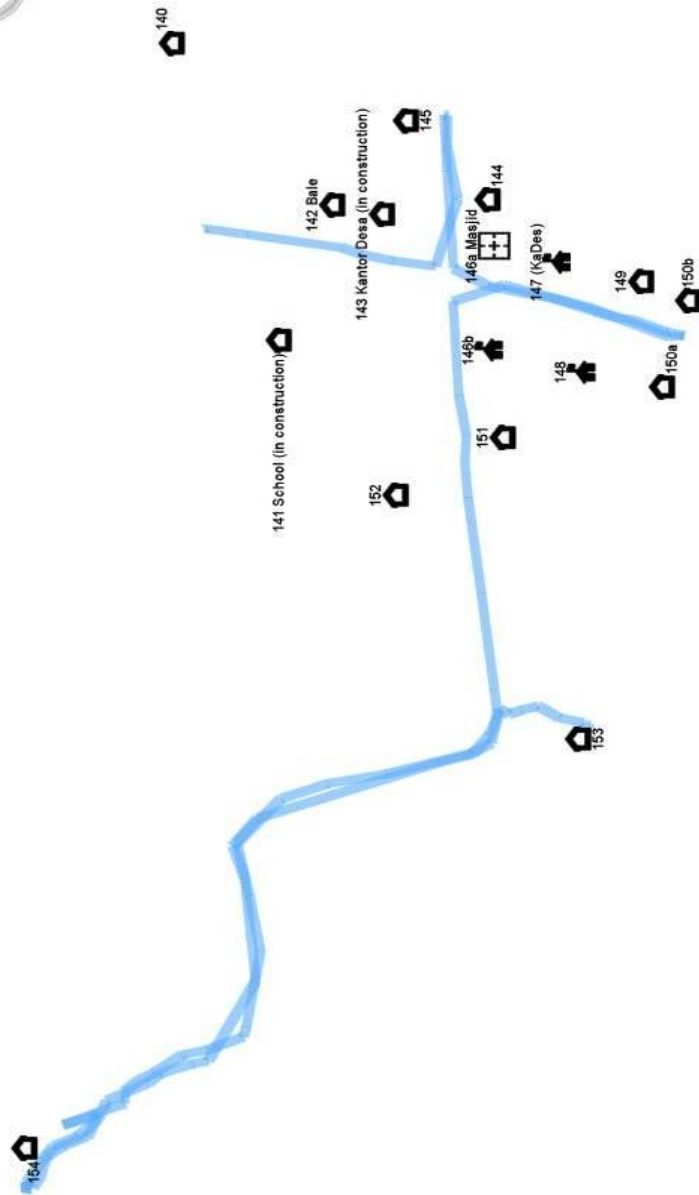


Layout of Tirawonua village (provided by PT. SCM).

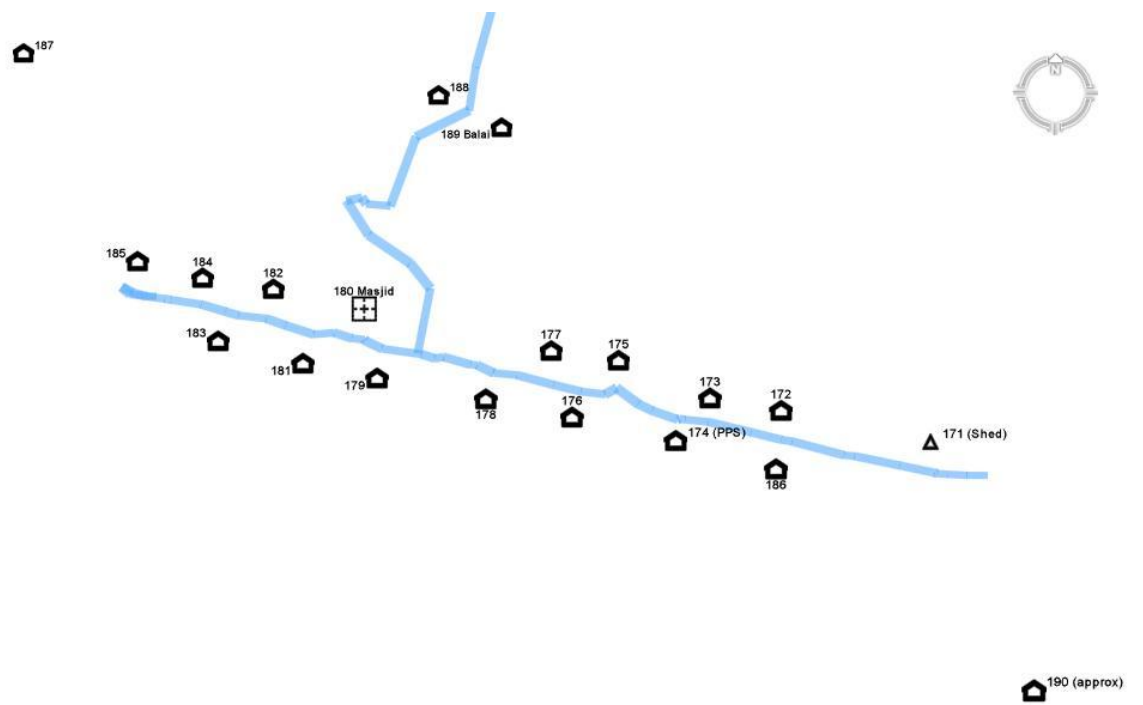
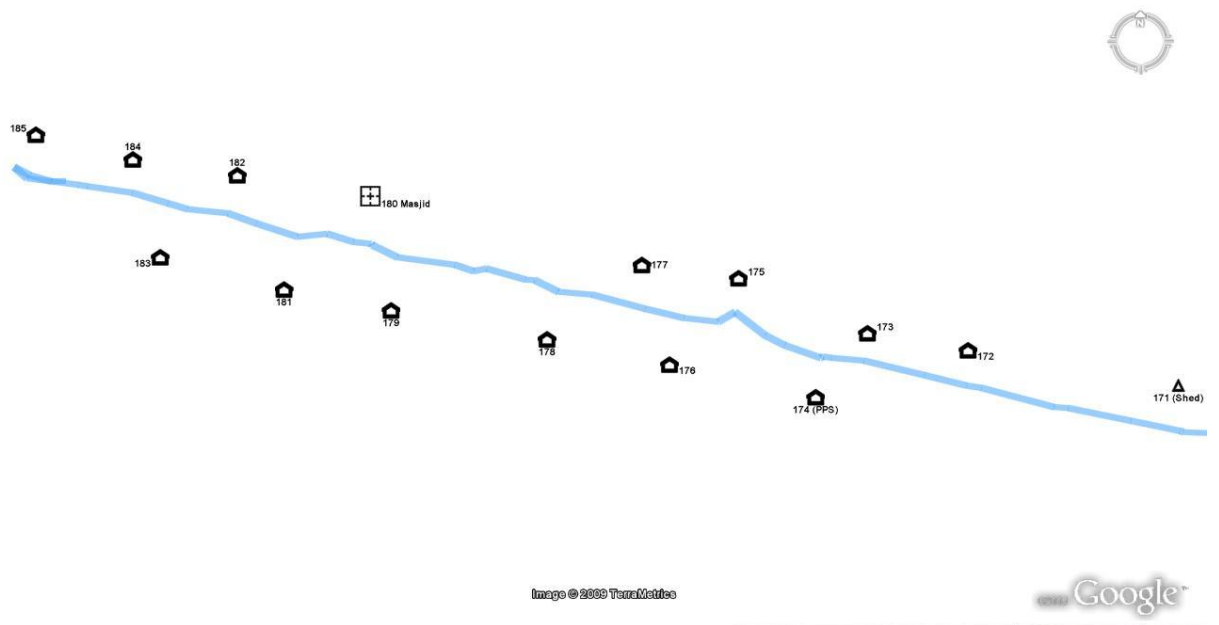




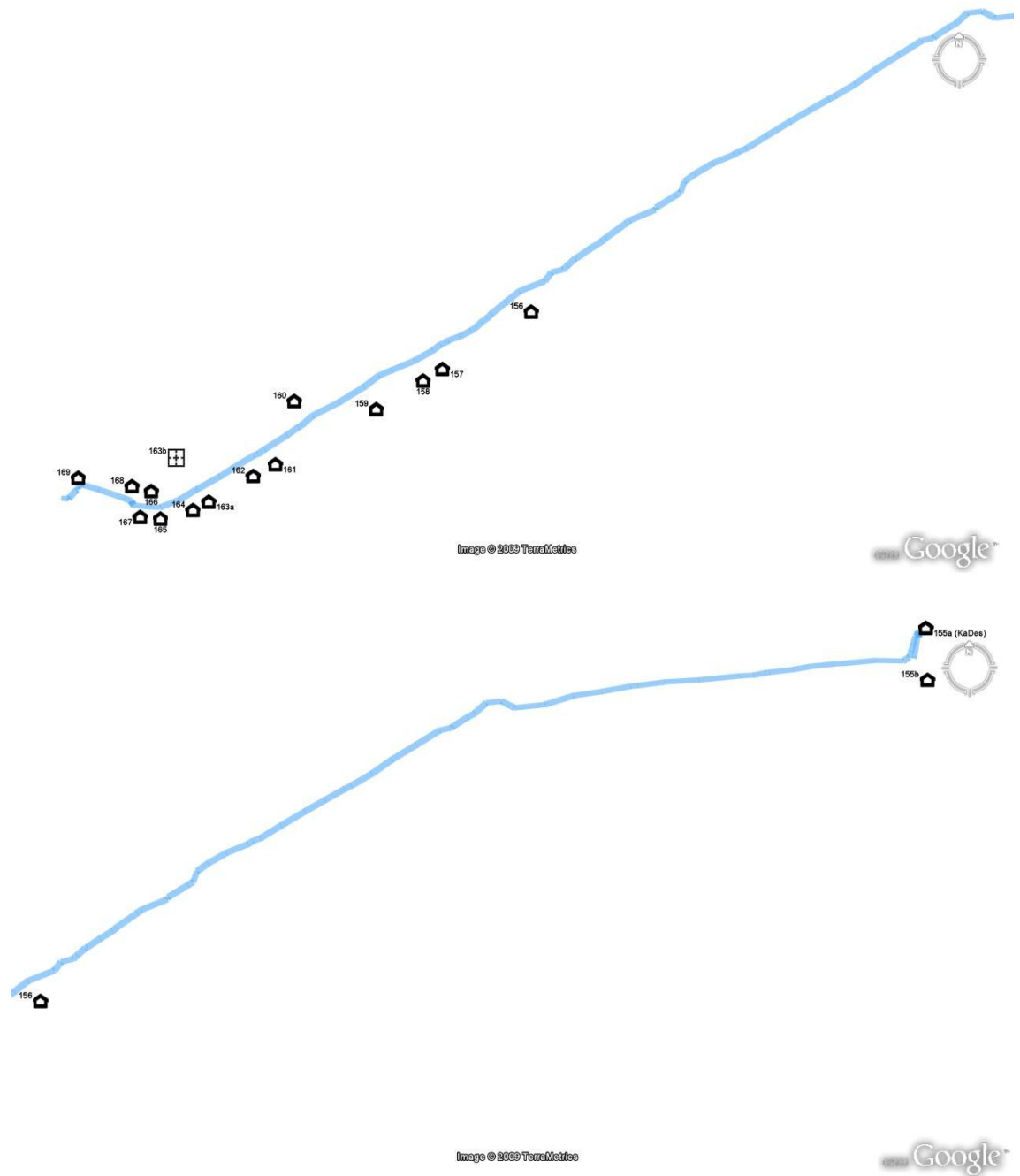
Layout of Rوتا village (provided by PT. SCM).



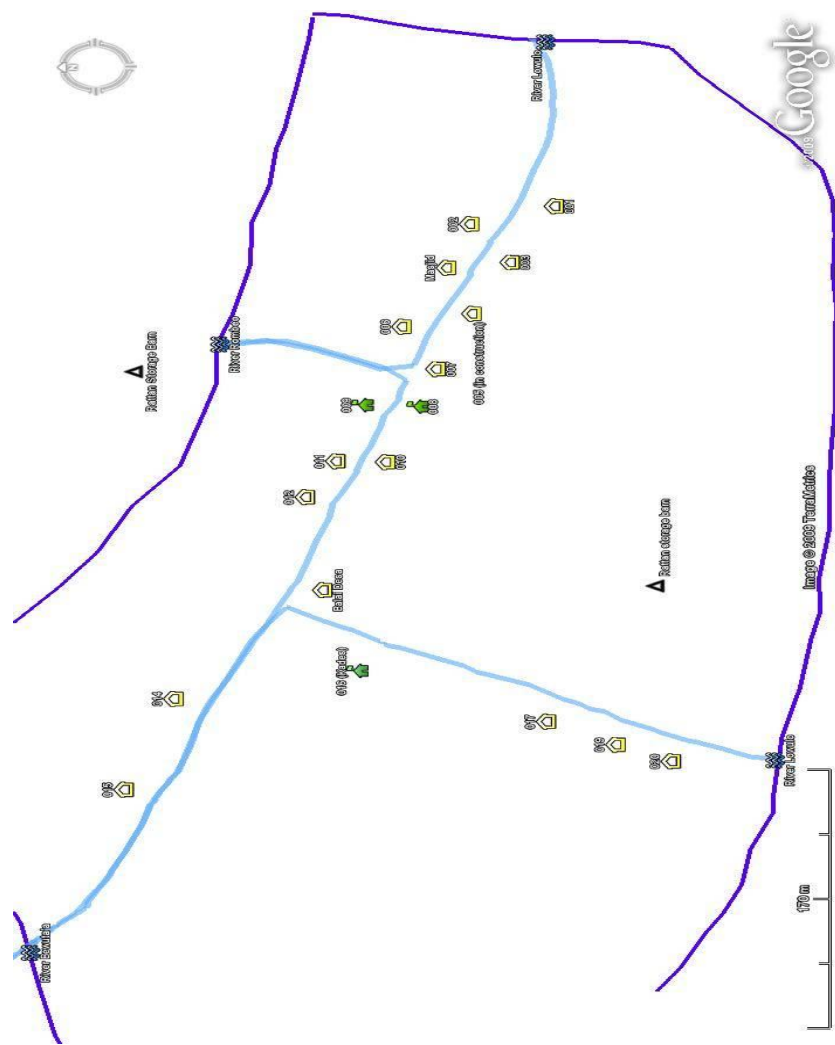
Layout of Walandawe village (provided by PT. SCM)



Layout of Tanggola village (provided by PT. SCM)

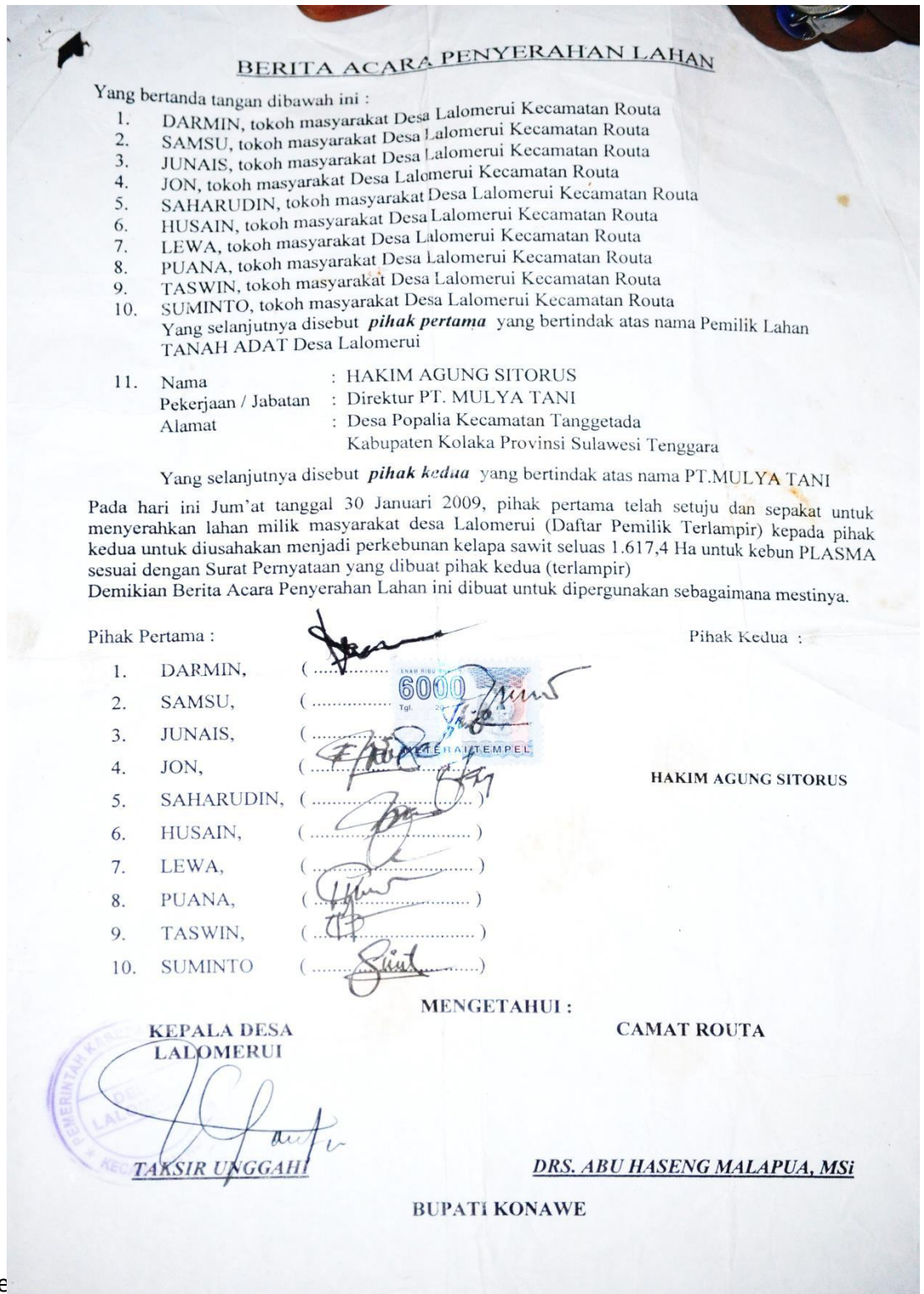


Layout of Puuwiwirano village (provided by PT. SCM)



Layout of Lalomerui village (provided by PT. SCM)

List of people who have signed over their land to the palm oil company for its use



Not

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This document is not complete; it lacks signatures which would give it legal standing but because has been signed by most of the local household heads, they believe that it has legal power.