

**Land, Ethnicity and the Competing Power  
Agrarian Dynamics in Forest Margin Communities in  
Central Celebes, Indonesia**

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**STORMA Discussion Paper Series  
Sub-program A on  
Social and Economic Dynamics in Rain Forest Margins**

**No. 5 (September 2002)**

**Research Project on Stability of Rain Forest Margins (STORMA)**



**Funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft through the SFB 552  
„STORMA“**

**[www.storma.de](http://www.storma.de)**

**ISSN 1864-8843**

**SFB 552, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen,  
Büsgenweg 1, 37077 Göttingen**

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## LAND, ETHNICITY AND THE COMPETING POWER

# **Agrarian Dynamics in Forest Margin Communities in Central Celebes, Indonesia<sup>1</sup>**

**MT Felix Sitorus<sup>2</sup>**

## **Summary**

This paper examines the making of agrarian structure in the tropical forest margin communities. Framed with a concept of agrarian dynamics it is shown that agrarian structure is a socially-made structure. By analyzing two cases of villages situated at the forest margin Lore Lindu National Park in Central Celebes, it is shown that such an agrarian structure was constructed through a process of land-based powers competition between “indigenous” people namely Kaili and Kulawi in one side and the immigrant people particularly Bugis in the other side. As the Bugis peoples established their land-based economic power through process of land accumulation and conversion for cacao cultivation, the village heads found that their land-based powers were reduced. Concurrently, as the indigenous people faced the problem of land scarcity, the social tension apparently increased inside the village. In order to sustain their political power, and also to reduce the social tension, the village heads had reclaimed a part of forest area to be the village area which is then distributed to the indigenous peoples. Such forest reclaiming had caused forest instability as a cost for social stability inside the village.

*Keywords: land, forest margin, agrarian structure, ethnicity, power*

## **1. Introduction**

Agrarian dynamics refers to the making of agrarian structure in a social unit such as a rural community. Consequently, it has to be said here that agrarian structure is not a naturally-made structure but a socially-made one. Specifically it is a social relationship arranged in respect to distribution of access to land resources. Such a relationship probably takes one out of five ideal formations, namely naturalism, feudalism, capitalism, socialism, and populism. Each of the formations has its own distinctive nature regarding function of land and land tenure or, specifically, land ownership. As the distribution of access to land is probably either equal or unequal, the agrarian structure then implies the degree of social stability or of social instability in a community. It can be said that equality in agrarian structure leads the community toward an agrarian harmony and, consequently, social stability, whereas inequality in agrarian structure leads the community toward an agrarian conflict and, therefore, social instability. Since agrarian dynamics is perceived as the making of agrarian structure, it particularly refers to the subsequent implication of either equality or inequality in agrarian structure.

Taking the meaning of agrarian dynamics mentioned above, I conducted a research project to examine the making of agrarian structure specifically in the tropical forest margin communities. In this research I scrutinized the issues of the historical aspect of agrarian structure, the factors which determine this structure, and the implications of such structure on social stability in the forest margin communities. In particular, I analyzed the relation between the multi-ethnic

immigration history and the making of agrarian structure, the role of political and of economical powers, and the relation between social and natural stabilities or instabilities.

The research was conducted in Sintuwu and Berdikari, two of forest margin villages situated in District Palolo which is well known as Palolo valley of Donggala Regency, Central Celebes. The research strategy was case study, which included the application of qualitative approach together with the quantitative one. A quantitative approach was adopted specially to obtain quantitative data regarding land holding and land ownership. Thirty households were elected randomly either in Sintuwu or in Berdikari for the purpose of survey samples.<sup>3</sup>

## **2. The Villages: Sintuwu and Berdikari**

Palolo valley – also called Sopo valley – is one out of 18 districts in Donggala Regency, Central Celebes. It is the upper area of Palu valley, which stretches from east to west and has its end at Tomini Bay. Palolo valley itself is bordered by Lore Lindu National Park (LLNP) in the south and by state forest in the north. East and west borders are Parigi District (Poso Regency) and Sigi-Biromaru District respectively.

Palolo is one of the most populous districts in Donggala Regency, following Banawa and Parigi, where wet rice fields dominate the ecology. In 1999 population density in Palolo district (339.1 sq. km.) was about 79 persons per sq. km. Compared with the 1996 situation (69 persons per sq. km.), the 1999 situation represented an increase of about 13 percent. Such a situation is deviant, considering the domination of dry land cultivation in the ecology of Palolo. Elsewhere in rural Indonesia the ecology of most populous areas are absolutely characterized by domination of wet rice fields.

The primary factor explaining the high density of population in Palolo valley is the relatively rapid flow of immigration incidence. Palolo valley is a frontier area which since the 1960s continually receives migrants from other areas, especially of Central and South Celebes. It can be concluded that Palolo was developed by migrants who moved and then settled there spontaneously or as part of an official program.

Sintuwu (19.23 sq. km.) and Berdikari (5.34 sq. km) are two out of 21 villages situated in Palolo valley. These villages are precisely situated on the edge of tropical forest. Sintuwu is situated next to the LLNP, while Berdikari is situated next to the production forest. Both Sintuwu and Berdikari were established during the last 30 years through a process of multi-ethnic immigration. Sintuwu was established by three primary ethnic groups namely Kaili, Bugis and Kulawi. Berdikari also was established by three primary ethnic groups namely Kulawi, Bugis, and Toraja (see Table 1). According to Table 1, it is clear that Bugis appear to be the second largest ethnic group, following the “indigenous” ethnic groups, namely Kaili in Sintuwu and Kulawi in Berdikari.

Situated on the Gumbasa river banks, the first settlement in Sintuwu was established in 1961 by five Kaili households which moved out of the village Bakubakulu of Sigi-Biromaru District. These pioneers were forced by local government to move out of their village after breaking the local law by practicing shifting cultivation in the protected forest area. The Kaili migrants continually flowed mainly from Sigi-Biromaru to Sintuwu in the 1960s and had its peak in the 1970s. In the 1980s the immigration flow was still going on, but in a decreasing trend.

The first Bugis migrant entered Sintuwu in 1968 to be a laborer in a small saw-mill company. In the 1970s, following the first one, a number of Bugis took their family to settle in Sintuwu. They were a labor force for a logging company named PT Kebun Sari, which had its operation in the forest area that was now an LLNP area. Bugis migration to Sintuwu had its peak in the 1980s. The relative economic success demonstrated by the former migrants became a pull factor which drew more Bugis to Sintuwu. Most of them came from Bone, Soppeng, and Barru districts of South Celebes and commonly had spent a short period living in Palu city.

No. Ethnic Groups	Sintuwu (households)				Berdikari (households)			
	H-1	H-2	H-3	Total	H-1	H-2	H-3	Total
1. Kaili*)	31	70	88	189 (57.62)	-	-	-	
2. Kulawi	30	-	-	30 (9.15)	175	63	5	243 (54.73)
3. Bugis	42	51	2	95 (28.96)	22	21	67	110 (24.77)
4. Toraja	3	-	-	3 (0.91)	11	13	36	60 (13.51)
5. Others	6	5	-	11 (3.35)	11	8	12	31 (6.98)
<b>Total</b>	112	126	90	328 (100.0)	219	105	120	444 (100.0)

**Table 1.** Households Numbers by Ethnic Groups in Sintuwu and Berdikari, 2001

**Notes:** H = Hamlet (*Dusun*); Sintuwu as well as Berdikari consists of three hamlets. \*) Including Kaili Taa (98 households), Kaili Tara (60 households), Kaili Ledo (25 households), and other Kaili (Ija, Unde, Rai: 6 households). **Source:** Based on data of village profile, information from village secretaries, and information from key informants. Number in brackets are percentages.

Following the Bugis migration to Sintuwu was the Kulawi migration. The first group of Kulawi migrants was a group of rattan gatherers. They came from villages of Kulawi district throughout the forest area which was now included in LLNP. Kulawi migration to Sintuwu had its peak at the last years of the 1980s. Most of them came from some villages (Onu, Towulu, Lonebasa) of Kulawi District.

Coincidentally with the establishment of the first settlement in Sintuwu in 1961, a group of three Kulawi households moved from the village Kantewu of Kulawi District to the eastern area, which is now the well known village Berdikari. They established the first settlement on the Meno river banks. This first group of migrants were then followed by others from a number of villages in Kulawi District such as Kantewu, Siwengi, Onu, Lonebasa and Towulu. The Kulawi migration to Berdikari had its peak during the 1970s and the 1980s.

In 1965 a group of Javanese transmigrants (85 households) entered Berdikari and were settled in an enclave named Berdikari II inside Berdikari. In 1977 the enclave of the Javanese settlement was separated from Berdikari to become an autonomous village named Bahagia. This Javanese village is now an enclave village inside Berdikari.

The first Bugis migrant came into Berdikari in 1969. This first Bugis migrant then asked his relatives to move to Berdikari. Since the early 1970s, the flow of Bugis migration to Berdikari has increased and had its peak in the last of such decade. Most of them came from Pinrang

District of South Celebes. Since the early 1980s the flow of Bugis migration has decreased, so that in the 1990s it became sporadic. Toraja migrants also started entering Berdikari in the 1970s to become sharecroppers upon the land owned by Toraja staffs of “Kantor Bendahara Negara” (Office of State Treasury) and of “Komando Resort Militer” (Commando of Military Resort) live in Palu. In the 1980s and 1990s the Toraja migration to Berdikari increased as the Toraja staffs of those offices retired and subsequently occupied their own land there.

As migration to Sintuwu and Berdikari is still going on, the population density in those villages is increasing. In 1996 the population density in Sintuwu and Berdikari respectively were 54 and 286 persons per sq. km. In 1999, or three years later, the numbers respectively had increase to be 65 and 346 persons per sq. km. The growth of population density during the last three years in Sintuwu and Berdikari is respectively 20 and 21 percent.

### **3. Land Use Patterns**

Wet-rice fields, dry land cultivation, and plantation are the landmarks of agrarian structure in terms of land use patterns in both Sintuwu and Berdikari. Since the proportion of dry land cultivation in the two villages is not significantly different, the difference in agrarian structure between Sintuwu and Berdikari then is related to the composition of wet-rice fields and plantation. The 1998 official data from the Statistical Center Agency of Donggala Regency reveals a contrast between the first and the second village dealing with the composition of such land use patterns (see Table 2). Sintuwu is characterized by domination of plantation (25%) over wet-rice field (4%), while Berdikari is characterized by domination of wet-rice-fields (28%) over plantation (7%).

Wet-rice fields in Sintuwu and Berdikari are developing in opposite directions. In 1992 official data from Statistical Data of Sigi-Biromaru District indicated that the wet-rice fields in Sintuwu (270 ha) were larger than in Berdikari (125 ha). Six years later, as mentioned above, this development has reversed. The explanation for this reversal is the establishment of a better irrigation system, which gives a greater opportunity for rice-field expansion in Berdikari. On the other hand, the irrigation system in Sintuwu can not overcome the decreasing of water debit in the rivers which are the main sources of irrigation water. Consequently, the rice fields suffer from the lack of water and resulting decrease of productivity. This situation has come to be a reason for converting rice fields into cocoa plantations in Sintuwu. Moreover, the good price of cocoa has pushed the villagers to convert more rice fields into cocoa plantations during the 1990s.

Cocoa cultivation has been a profit-making farm enterprise during the 1990s in Sintuwu and in Berdikari or in Palolo valley as a whole. Expansion of cocoa plantations in Sintuwu is going on in three ways: namely, conversion of rice-fields into cocoa plantations, conversion of dry land cultivation (especially corn fields and coffee fields) and house garden into cocoa plantations, and illegal land grabbing in the forest area of Lore Lindu National Park (LLNP). Land use conversion into cocoa plantations was mainly done by the Bugis who bought rice-fields and dry land from mainly the Kaili. Meanwhile, expansion into the forest was mainly done by the Kaili and other “indigenous” people. Contrary to the Sintuwu situation, there is no significant conversion of rice-fields into cocoa plantations in Berdikari. But conversion of dry land cultivation and house garden into plantations as well as expansion into the forest also happened in this village as

intensely as in Sintuwu. The villagers, especially “indigenous” people namely Kulawi, cleared the production forest for cocoa plantations.

At present, the villagers of Sintuwu and Berdikari also cultivate cocoa in dry land by practicing a multiple cropping system. They grow cocoa plants around the food crops fields or inside them with a large planting range. Hence, dry land cultivation in Sintuwu and Berdikari consists of two production systems. Firstly, there is a seasonal cropping system dominated by food crops, namely corn, which produces subsistence for villagers. This cropping system can be perceived as subsistence production. Secondly there is an annual cropping system dominated by cash crops, namely cocoa, which produce commodities for local and supra-local markets. This cropping system together with the plantation system can be perceived as petty commodity production.

No. Patterns of Land Use	Sintuwu	Berdikari
1. Wet rice fields	75 ( 3.9)	150 (28.1)
2. Dry land cultivation	647 (33.6)	160 (30.0)
3. Plantations	491 (25.5)	30 ( 5.6)
4. House gardens	30 ( 1.6)	29 ( 5.4)
5. Idle land	120 ( 6.2)	15 ( 2.8)
6. Others (housing, roads, etc.)	560 (29.1)	150 (28.1)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.923 (100.0)</b>	<b>534 (100.0)</b>

**Table 2.** Land Use Patterns in Sintuwu and Berdikari, 1998 (Ha)

Source: Kecamatan Palolo dalam Angka 1999 (*Figures of Palolo District 1999*).

Therefore, the cocoa planting area in both Sintuwu and Berdikari is larger than what official data show. There are not exact data, but it is reasonable to say that cocoa planting covers more than 25% of the village area in Sintuwu and more than 7% in Berdikari. But this refers only to legal cultivation. In the forest area the villagers still illegally cultivate cocoa. Informants estimate that the villagers of Sintuwu cultivate nearly 100 hectares of cocoa inside LLNP, while villagers of Berdikari cultivate more than 100 hectares.



## 4. Agrarian Structure

### 4.1. Land Holding and Land Ownership

In the 1960s both the Kaili in Sintuwu and the Kulawi in Berdikari luxuriated in land abundance. Everyone could clear the forest area as much as he was able. Everyone just needed to ask the chief of pioneer settlement, or the then Kepala Desa (village master), about a piece of forest area to be cleared and cultivated. The chief then by grace would “give” the applicant a piece of forest area to be cleared and cultivated. The first Bugis migrants in both Sintuwu and Berdikari also obtained a piece of land as a gift of Kepala Desa. This pattern of land acquirement was still valid for the Kaili and Kulawi migrants until the 1970s, when the migration of the first and the second ethnic group respectively to Sintuwu and Berdikari had its peak.

In the 1980s, land obtained as a gift of Kepala Desa was not generally valid anymore. Although a number of Kaili and Kulawi migrants in Sintuwu still obtained land as a gift of Kepala Desa in 1980-s, the gift was as small as a house garden. In Berdikari, where the problem of land scarcity had become apparent due to the small scale of village area, Kepala Desa had no more land to distribute. Although a number of Kulawi migrants still obtained the land as a gift, they did not obtain it from Kepala Desa but their relatives. As shown in Table 3, purchasing is the more general way to obtain land (since the 1980s) among both the Kaili of Sintuwu (33% of plots held by samples and the Kulawi of Berdikari (38% of plots held by samples). They purchased land mainly from their own relatives. Another way is “breaking the law”, by grabbing the forest area. About 26% of plots held by Kulawi samples in Berdikari was obtained by grabbing the production forest area.

Land obtainment as a gift of Kepala Desa is not valid for the Bugis and the Toraja . The main way for obtaining land among the Bugis is by purchasing it from relatives but mainly from the Kaili and Kulawi. As shown in Table 3, about 59% and 60% of plots held by Bugis samples in Sintuwu and Berdikari respectively had obtained by purchasing. In the first year of their migration, the Bugis migrants generally obtained land by sharecropping or leasing. But in a relatively short period they would have their own land by purchasing.

Although a norm of intra-ethnic land transaction is still existing among the Kaili and the Kulawi, empirically the inter-ethnic one is now coming to be dominant. In the cases of Sintuwu and Berdikari, and even more in the case of Palolo valley, the Bugis farmers are the most active land purchasers. They already have cash money to purchase land from the Kaili and Kulawi at any time. On the other hand the Kaili and the Kulawi commonly need much money for ceremonial purposes, such as wedding celebrations and the last rites. Anytime a Kaili household or a Kulawi household conducts a ceremony for either a marriage or a last rites of a household member, it will take a very large amount of money to fulfill the “adat” (customary) prerequisites. Normally the host has to kill a number of cows and to cook quintals of rice for the day to day ceremony. Since the Kaili household or Kulawi household has not enough cash, the fastest way to get money is to sell a piece of land to the wealthy Bugis.

Villages, Ethnic Groups	Number of Plots by Modes of Obtainment				Total Plots
	Gift	Purchasing	Sharecropping	Grabbing	
<b>I. Sintuwu</b>					
1. Kaili (n1=16)	12 (28.57)	14 (33.33)	8 (19.05)	8 (19.05)	42 (100.00)
2. Bugis (n2=8)	7 (25.93)	16 (59.26)	4 (14.81)	0 (0.0)	27 (100.00)
3. Others (n3=5)	4 (26.67)	8 (53.33)	1 (6.67)	2 (13.33)	15 (100.00)
All (n=31)	23 (27.38)	38 (45.24)	13 (15.48)	10 (11.90)	84 (100.00)
<b>II. Berdikari</b>					
1. Kulawi (n1=12)	14 (35.89)	15 (38.46)	0 (0.0)	10 (25.64)	39 (100.00)
2. Bugis (n2=9)	6 (17.14)	21 (60.00)	8 (22.86)	0 (0.0)	35 (100.00)
3. Others (n3=9)	1 (3.85)	12 (46.15)	13 (50.00)	0 (0.0)	26 (100.00)
All (n=30)	21 (21.00)	48 (48.00)	21 (21.00)	10 (10.00)	100 (100.00)

**Table 3.** Modes of Land Obtainment by Ethnic Group in Sintuwu and Berdikari (Survey Sample, 2001)

However land market in Sintuwu and Berdikari has socially and economically lead the Kaili/Kulawi and the Bugis towards a different direction each other. In one hand the Kaili and Kulawi households are sinking from “landlord” towards “landless”. In the other hand the Bugis households are climbing from “landless” towards “landlord”. As shown in Table 4, samples of Bugis households in Sintuwu hold a total of 2.32 hectares of land in average, including ownership of a sub-total of 0.95 hectares of dry land. Meanwhile the Kaili households hold only a total of 1.86 hectares of land in average, including ownership of a sub-total of 0.81 hectares of dry land (0.69 ha) and wet-rice field (0.12 ha). Land holding or land ownership gap in Berdikari is more significant. Samples of Kulawi households in Berdikari hold a total of 2.35 hectares of land in average, including a sub-total of 0.93 hectares of dry land (0.67 ha) and wet-rice field (0.26 ha). Meanwhile the Bugis households hold a total of 3.31 hectares of land in average, including ownership of a sub-total of 4.31 hectares of dry land (3.04 ha) and wet-rice field (1.27 ha). Comparing with Bugis households of Berdikari, the Bugis households of Sintuwu in general have no wet-rice fields anymore since it was conversed to be cocoa plantation.

The Bugis households are growing to become economic elites in Sintuwu as well as in Berdikari. They are establishing hegemony upon the village economy through process of land accumulation as well as accumulation of surplus produced by cocoa plantation. Never did a Bugis household sell a piece of land to other ethnic groups members. In case of a Bugis household need much money, commonly in purpose of funding a “pilgrim” (*naik haji*) to Makkah, the household would not sell the lands but pawn it exclusively to another Bugis household. That way gives the household an opportunity to get back the pawned land at the end

of pawning period. Moreover the economical hegemony of Bugis ethnic group is establishing through a domination in cocoa economy. In spite of holding the largest cocoa plantation in average, the Bugis people also control the local market of cocoa. Some large Bugis farmer also take role as the “middleman trader” who collect cocoa from the smaller plantation operators and then sell it in a relatively large volume to the larger traders such as exporters and inter-island traders in Palu city.

Village & Ethnic Groups	Dry Land (ha)		Wet Rice Fields (ha)		Forest (ha)	Total (ha)
	Owned	Share-cropped	Owned	Share-Cropped		
<b>I. Sintuwu:</b>						
1. Kaili (n1 = 16)	0.69	0.62	0.12	0.06	0.37	1.86
2. Bugis (n2 = 8)	0.95	0.81	0	0	0.56	2.32
3. Others (n3 = 6)	1.37	0	0.1	0.17	0.42	2.06
All Ethnic Groups (n = 30)	0.90	0.55	0.08	0.06	0.43	2.03
<b>II. Berdikari:</b>						
1. Kulawi (n1 = 12)	0.67	0	0.26	0.08	1.34	2.35
2. Bugis (n2 = 9)	3.04	0.5	1.27	0	0	5.31
3. Others (n3 = 9)	1.09	1.67	0.33	0.34	0.33	3.76
All Ethnic Group (n = 30)	1.50	0.65	0.59	0.14	0.63	3.52

**Table 4.** Average Land Holding by Ethnic Groups and Land Use Patterns Sintuwu and Berdikari, 2001 (Survey Samples)

During the last decade, coincidentally with the on going economic hegemony of Bugis migrants, the others ethnic groups such as Toraja and Chinese also tend to accumulated land resource as well as surplus of cocoa production. As shown in Table 4, samples of other ethnic groups in Sintuwu hold a total of 2.06 hectare of land in average, including ownership of a sub-total of 1.47 hectares of dry land (1.37 ha) and wet-rice fields (0.10 ha). Concurrently in Berdikari the other ethnic groups hold a total of 3.76 hectares of land in average, including ownership of a sub-total of 1.42 hectares of dry land (1.09 ha) and wet-rice fields (0.33 ha). Together with the Bugis, the other ethnic groups tend to occupy the upper layer of land holding or land ownership stratification in Sintuwu and in Berdikari.

Having their land sold out to the Bugis and other ethnic people, where do the Kaili and Kulawi people go? Since the off-farm economic activities are less developing in Palolo valley at a whole, there is no any economic field for them but agriculture itself. Coping with the land scarcity inside the village area, they do expansion into the forest area. The Kaili (and also Kulawi) of Sintuwu do expansion into the forest area which now claimed to be LLNP area. This expansion however had brought the Kaili people into land dispute with LLNP Office. In one hand the LLNP Office proclaims the Kaili people have transgressed the national park borderlines to cultivate the forest

area. The LLNP Office then perceives the Kaili as the land grabber. In the other hand the Kaili people do not agree with the lastly park borderlines.

No. Status, Village, and Ethnic Groups	Forest Illegally Cultivated (ha)	Land Owned (ha)		Land Sharecropped (ha)		Total Legally Land Holding (ha)
		Dry Land	Wet Rice Field	Dry Land	Wet Rice Field	
<b>I. Cultivator of Forest:</b>						
<b>A. Sintuwu</b>						
1. Kaili (n1=6)	0.96	0.54	0.0	0.08	0.0	0.62
2. Bugis (n2=2)	2.25	0.50	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.50
3. Others (n3=2)	1.25	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
All (n=10)	1.29	0.42	0.0	0.05	0.0	0.47
<b>B. Berdikari</b>						
1. Kulawi (n1=8)	2.01	0.35	0.39	0.0	0.12	0.87
2. Others (Neither Kulawi nor Bugis, n2=1)	3.00	1.48	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.48
All (n=9)	2.12	0.48	0.35	0.0	0.11	0.94
<b>II. Non-Cultivator of Forest:</b>						
<b>A.. Sintuwu:</b>						
1. Kaili (n1=10)	0	0.78	0.19	0.95	0.09	2.01
2. Bugis (n2=6)	0	1.10	0.0	1.08	0.0	2.18
3. Others (n3=4)	0	2.06	0.15	0.0	0.25	2.46
All (n=20)	0	1.13	0.13	0.80	0.10	2.16
<b>B. Berdikari:</b>						
1. Kulawi (n1=4)	0	1.30	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.30
2. Bugis (n2=9)	0	3.04	1.27	0.5	0.0	4.80
3. Others (n3=8)	0	0.72	0.37	1.87	0.39	0.94
All (n=21)	0	1.82	0.69	0.93	0.15	3.59

**Table 5.** Average Land Holding among Cultivator and Non-cultivator of Forest Area by Ethnic Groups in Sintuwu and Berdikari, 2001(Survey Samples)

The last borderline were established slyly in 1982 along the logging road (called as *Jalan Jepang*) which separate the village area and the slopping forest area. The villagers argued that the borderline had proceeded about two kilometers into village area, measured from a “traditional borderline” inside the forest established on the top of Manjapi Hill about 1949 (?). Factually the Kaili had cleared and cultivated the forest area before the officially park borderline was fixed in

1982. Although cultivating forest area is now an illegal business, there is no a step back way for Kaili people into the village area.

The similar phenomena is happening in Berdikari where the Kulawi people suffering from land hunger enter the production forest area, clear it, and then cultivated it to be cocoa plantation. The production forest borderlines established by Department of Forestry in 1983 was openly transgressed by the villagers. Moreover the Kepala Desa of Berdikari does not agree with the officially forest borderlines. He proclaims that a part of production forest area has to be included into village area.

It seem that expansion into the forest area had worked effectively to cope with land scarcity inside the village. As shown in Table 5, the Kaili household samples that illegally cultivate the forest area (0.92 ha in average) in Sintuwu just legally hold a total of 0.62 hectares of land inside the village. This number is much smaller than a total of 2.01 hectares of land legally held by the Kaili household samples who are not illegal cultivators. The relatively similar condition also is revealed in Berdikari, where the Kulawi household samples cultivate forest area (2.01 ha in average) just legally hold a total of 0.87 hectares of land inside the village. Meanwhile Kulawi household samples who are not illegal cultivator hold a total of 1.30 hectares of land inside the village.

Never did a Bugis household grab a piece of land inside the forest area either in Sintuwu or in Berdikari. The Bugis people always put the legality in priority concerning with land holding. Moreover the Bugis people calculate that land clearing activity inside the forest area hardly need much time, labor force, and money. Purchasing is more efficient than grabbing. This is the way taken by two Bugis household samples of Sintuwu who had “illegally cultivation field” inside the LLNP area (Table 2). Actually they had purchased the field from the Kaili people before 1982, when the newest park borderlines were not established yet.

## 4.2. Land Tenancy

Land tenancy institutions are relatively new phenomenon for the Kaili and Kulawi people in general. This kind of institutions were introduced mainly by the Bugis and also Toraja migrants in purpose of getting access to land resources in the first year of their living in Palolo valley. Three kinds of land tenancy institutions introduced by Bugis/Toraja migrants namely leasing (*bapajak*), sharecropping, and borrowing are commonly applied among the wet-rice peasantry in South Celebes which is the region where they come from. There is no but one kind of institution namely *bapetak* which is likely an indigenous one.

Land leasing is conducted by households of all ethnic groups but Bugis households are the majority. It is applied upon rice fields and dry land formally on the bases of a “letter of land leasing”. Land rent must be paid in cash just at the beginning of leasing period. Since the length of leasing period is measured in seasonal term, the lease holder was not permitted to grow annual crops over the leasing land but seasonal crops such as rice (paddy) and corn.

Sharecropping is also conducted by households of all ethnic groups but the majority are Bugis and Toraja households. Sharecropping is usually applied upon dry land, especially the area of land absentee. According to data issued (2001) by Kantor Pajak Bumi dan Bangunan (Office of Land and Building Taxes) of Central Celebes, nearly about 14 hectares of land in Sintuwu is land absentee owned by individuals living outside the village. Meanwhile in Berdikari the land absentee area includes nearly about 14 hectares. It is clear that data of land absentee in Berdikari

does not yet include the land areas belonged to staffs of Kantor Bendahara Negara (formerly 120 hectares but 50 hectares are already occupied by the villagers) and of Komando Resort Militer (about 300 hectares). Depending on a consensus between the land owner and the sharecropper, the sharecropper possibly cultivates seasonal crops (food crops) or annual crops (cash crops) over the land. The commonly working norm of sharing is that two portions of harvested yields go to land owner and one portion goes to sharecropper. Cost of production is evenly shared, but labor wage is solely covered by the sharecropper.

Land borrowing is also conducted by households of all ethnic groups exclusively over the dry land. In doing land borrowing in Sintuwu, most of the Kaili and Kulawi households apply such institution over the land owned by the former governor (a Kaili?) of Central Celebes. Meanwhile most of the Bugis and Toraja households apply such institution over the land owned by Bugis/Toraja staffs of Kantor Bendahara Negara and Komando Resort Militer. The borrowers are usually allowed to cultivate only seasonal crops over the borrowed land. The yields of cultivation usually go to the borrower at a whole.

Meanwhile *bapetak* is commonly applied among the Kaili/Kulawi households exclusively over the wet-rice fields. It is a control over a piece of wet-rice field based on a prerogative right for planting and then harvesting. All of work sessions between planting and harvesting, including financial cost, are responsibilities of the land owner. Working norm of yield sharing in Sintuwu is that one quintals of each *petak* (land piece) yields (rice) goes to the *bapetak* right holder, whatever the productivity. While in Berdikari the working norm is that one out of every four portions of “petak” yields goes to the “bapetak” right holder. Since it is exclusively demarcated by either neighborhood or kinship, *bapetak* relationship is likely an equalization mechanism among the Kaili/Kulawi people regarding the fulfillment of subsistence.

It seem that all kinds of land tenancy institutions in Sintuwu and Berdikari are likely the means of intra-ethnic solidarity. Any land tenancy institution such as leasing, sharecropping, borrowing, or *bapetak* relationship commonly relates two households of the same ethnic group. The most exclusive ethnic group is likely the Bugis. Rarely did a Bugis household gives another non-Bugis household access to land. Once the Bugis people have the land on their hand, no any chance for other ethnic group members to get access over such land.

## 5. The Role of Political and Economical Powers

Sintuwu and Berdikari are likely neither the real territorial nor the real genealogical villages, since there are neither territorial organization nor genealogical organization effectively working over the villages. The nationally wide model of “territorial village organization”, which refers the “Javanese village”, is not working well in Sintuwu and in Berdikari. The village administration is not really run by an organizational apparatus but solely by the *Kepala Desa*. It means the villages namely Sintuwu and Berdikari cannot be considered as modern organizations characterized by Max Weber’s bureaucracy. There is no bureaucracy even in term of power stratification either in Sintuwu or in Berdikari. The existing pattern is likely power polarization with the whole political power held solely by *Kepala Desa*.

Although power polarization in Sintuwu and Berdikari resembles the power structure in a simple genealogical group, those villages are not the genealogical ones. The villages are relatively new settlements (since 1960-s) inhabited by the people of various ethnic groups such as Kaili, Kulawi,

Bugis, and Toraja. As shown in Table 1, anyone can make a distinction between one and another hamlet by ethnic group domination in Sintuwu and in Berdikari. Moreover, although a hamlet is inhabited by more than one ethnic groups, it does not exactly mean that the households of various ethnic groups are living together in a housing cluster. Actually even in a hamlet territory each ethnic group tend to establish its own housing cluster separated from housing clusters of other ethnic groups. It seem that ethnic solidarity is more significant than hamlet solidarity either in Sintuwu or in Berdikari. Moreover the Kaili and Kulawi people had proclaimed them selves the “indigenous people” of Sintuwu and of Berdikari respectively. Meanwhile the Bugis, Toraja, and other ethnic groups are posited as the “newcomer”.

Since Sintuwu and Berdikari are likely a “large multi-ethnic tribes” characterized by the absence of modern village organization, the making of agrarian structure is directed by the *Kepala Desa* through his political power practices. *Kepala Desa* was the only person who had the authority to control the land resource, so every household had to ask him for obtaining a piece of land to cultivate. During 1960-1980 *Kepala Desa* of Sintuwu significantly performed such authority by distributing land resource among the Kaili migrants. In 1980-s he still performed such authority by distributing house garden for the Kulawi migrants. Concurrently in the period of 1960-1980, *Kepala Desa* of Berdikari also performed the similar authority by distributing the land for the Kulawi migrants. In 1965 he had demonstrated the same authority specifically by determining the settlement site for Javanese transmigrants inside the village territory.

There are at least two main idea of political-economy of land among the Kaili of Sintuwu and among the Kulawi of Berdikari and the first one is that “land to be the bases of political power”. Since “ensuring people welfare” is one of the power functions, there is no another more strategic way to fulfill such function in agrarian society but land distribution. Consequently such function assumes that land resource is put under the authority of *Kepala Desa*. Land becomes the mean of power legitimate for *Kepala Desa* among the Kaili and the Kulawi.

The second idea is that “land to the indigenous people”. Never did *Kepala Desa* of Sintuwu and of Berdikari give a piece of land for non-indigenous people (non-Kaili/non-Kulawi) except for the first one of Bugis migrant. Implementation of such idea of political-economy had brought about an uneven land distribution among the villagers. In 1970-s the Kaili of Sintuwu and the Kulawi of Berdikari were becoming the “landlord”, while the “newcomers” such as Bugis and Toraja were the “landless”.

Coping with the discriminative mechanism of land distribution, the Bugis/Toraja then introduced and practiced land tenancy institutions such as leasing, sharecropping, and borrowing to be the ways for getting access to land resources. Moreover for the Bugis leasing or sharecropping is not merely a survival strategy but accumulation strategy. Little by little they succeed to accumulate financial capital in order to purchase land from the Kaili and Kulawi. In the second part of 1970-s, land transfer by purchasing from the Kaili/Kulawi to Bugis was significantly started. Since the early of 1980-s more and more land pieces are purchased by Bugis. It seem that land accumulation among the Bugis is facilitated by Kaili’s and Kulawi’s habitude to sell their land in order to get cash for covering the budget of “adat” rituals such as marriage party and last rites.

Since the second part of 1980-s until the first part of 1990-s Palolo valley, including Sintuwu and Berdikari, had experienced a phenomenon labeled here as the “cocoa revolution”. That was a phenomenon of rapid expansion of cocoa cultivation in all of Palolo valley. There was no social group that takes the largest benefit out of this phenomenon but the Bugis. They had cultivated

cocoa since early of 1980-s and they had accumulated land in purpose of expanding their cocoa plantation. It means that Bugis were already tuning in when the cocoa revolution came on. The cocoa revolution had brought about the Bugis becoming the leaders of cocoa economic as well as the leaders of village economy. In a relatively short period they had grown to be “petty capitalists” or “rural capitalists”. Continually they accumulate capital both in term of surplus and of land resources so that most of the cocoa plantation inside the village are under their ownership.

It is very clear that “cocoa revolution” is the making of agrarian structure directed by economic power. But this time the economic power is not grasped by the Kaili/Kulawi people but by the Bugis people. The political power is still grasped by *Kepala Desa* (Kaili/Kulawi). But since there is no more free land to distribute inside the villages, the role of economic power is much significant than political power regarding the making of agrarian structure. Land purchasing by Bugis people is increasing, while land distribution by *Kepala Desa* has finished.

What happens in Sintuwu now is likely a process of competing powers. The political power held by *Kepala Desa* (a Kaili) is now competed with the economic power held by the Bugis. Moreover as the economic power is grabbed by the Bugis, there is likely an effort to take over also the political power especially in Sintuwu. In the election of *Kepala Desa* in 1995, a Bugis economic leader was proposed to be one out of two candidates. The other candidate was the former *Kepala Desa*, a Kaili who had in charge since 1969. However the election event was accompanying by a silent tension especially between the Kaili and the Bugis. At last the former *Kepala Desa* won the election, but the level of social tension had been increasing. In the 2002 election the former Bugis candidate is proposing himself again and the villagers are facing the similar social tension once again.

Meanwhile, in order to retain the political power, creatively *Kepala Desa* of Sintuwu and of Berdikari had displaced the working area of their political power from inside to outside the village territory. *Kepala Desa* of Sintuwu proposes a claim that a part of forest area now included in LLNP is a part of village territory. Concurrently *Kepala Desa* of Berdikari also proposes a similar claim on a part of production forest area. Based on partial claim, *Kepala Desa* of Sintuwu and of Berdikari then perform their political power in distributing the claimed forest area.

However land clearing inside the forest area is illegal but it was locally formalized by *Kepala Desa*. *Kepala Desa* issues *Surat Keterangan Pengolahan Lahan* (Letter of Land Use) for the Kaili and Kulawi who apply to clear the forest area for cocoa plantation. The applicant will be charged about Rp 100.000 for each hectare of forest area asked for cultivation. However the letter is not officially accredited by supra-village government institutions, especially by *Badan Pertanahan Nasional* (National Agency for Land Affairs) at regency level. Meanwhile *Kepala Desa* argued that such letter is not a land ownership document but a land use document which prevents the cultivator from borderline disputes.

It seem that land grabbing inside the forest area has been considered as a way of land obtainment especially for the Kaili and Kulawi people. When the Bugis people is coming to dominate land holding inside the village, so that they have no enough land to cultivate anymore, there is no another way to cope with the land scarcity but to grab the forest area around the village margin. Although the agriculture density either in Sintuwu or in Berdikari is likely not as dense as the case in rural Java, the access of landless people to land is relatively limited. Such explanation about this phenomenon is that the land tenancy institutions which open the access to land are not well developed there. Hence grabbing forest area is likely taking a function of reducing social tension due to the uneven agrarian structure inside the village.



## 6. Concluding Remarks

Agrarian dynamics in term of the making of agrarian structure either in Sintuwu or in Berdikari is directing by the competing powers. Two kinds of powers competing each other are the political and the economical one. Political power and economical power are now in competition Since the making of agrarian structure refers to the distribution of access to land resource, it is pointed out that political power was the dominant factor in the making of agrarian structure in the first two decades of villages establishment (1960-1980). During mentioned decades the political power distribution was polarized so that Kepala Desa solely held the whole power in his hand.

Articulated on land distribution practices, the main ideas of such political power are that “land to be the bases of political power” and that “land to the indigenous people”. Upon the application of villagers, Kepala Desa then distributed the land inside the village exclusively for the Kaili or Kulawi. Such mechanism of land distribution had raised the Kaili and the Kulawi people becoming the “landlord” in Sintuwu and Berdikari respectively.

Since the making process of agrarian structure is heavily directed by political power, and the articulation of such power is in favor of Kaili or of Kulawi, there is no way for other ethnics especially Bugis to own the land but by purchasing. By practicing land leasing, sharecropping, or land borrowing the Bugis accumulate financial capital projected for land purchasing. The “cocoa revolution” (about 1985-1995) then ejected the Bugis become the economic leaders of all around the villages. In a relatively short period the Bugis had got success in accumulating economic power in hands, hence there is no significant difficulty to purchase and to accumulate more and more land in their hands. By the mid of 1990-s the Bugis of Sintuwu and of Berdikari had emerged to be the new “landlord”, taking over the status from the Kaili and Kulawi people who had gradually sunk towards the status of “landless”.

As the Bugis people dominate land holding and ownership inside the village area, and as there is no more free land to distribute by Kepala Desa, there is no mode of obtainment new land for the Kaili and Kulawi people but to grab the forest area next to the village. Considering it a means of reducing social tension inside the village, the Kepala Desa again performs his political power to claim the forest area and to distribute it for the Kaili and Kulawi people upon application. Land grabbing in the forest area then, to some extent, is becoming a means of getting relative equilibrium regarding distribution of land holding.

The cases of Sintuwu and of Berdikari have shown up a failure of agrarian transformation from the naturalistic formation directed by “traditional” political power toward the capitalistic formation directed by economical power at a whole. Today both of naturalistic and capitalistic formations are existing either in Sintuwu or in Berdikari. But naturalistic formation is existing inside the forest area or outside the village territory to resist with the capitalistic formations which tend to marginalize the “indigenous people” (Kaili or Kulawi) inside the village. It means that social tension inside the village is transferred to be natural tension inside the forest area. The existence of naturalistic formations regarding agrarian structure inside the forest area in one hand had likely brought about physical environment destabilization. But in the other hand it had ensured the social stabilization inside the village.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is a research report out of a number of research activities under “Project A2: Social Organization and Processes of Ecological Stabilization and Destabilization” of STORMA (Stability of Tropical Rainforest Margin) Research Program, a research collaboration between Georg-August University Goettingen and Kassel University (Germany) in one hand and Bogor Agricultural University and Tadulako University (Indonesia) in the other hand. Intensively data collection (April – July 2001) was helped by two post-graduate students of Rural Sociology Program, Postgraduate Scholl of Bogor Agriculture University namely Joula Olvi Sondakh and Sahyuti who conducted research for completing master theses.

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<sup>3</sup> The household samples were elected randomly without referring to household samples of Project A3 and A4 of STORMA research program. About household samples of Project A3 and A4, see: M. Zeller, S. Schwarze and T. van Rheenen, “Statistical Sampling Frame and Methods Used for the Selection of Villages and Households in the Scope of the Research Program on Stability of Rainforest Margins in Indonesia (STORMA)”, STORMA, Sub-program A: Social and Economic Dynamics in Rain Forest Margins, Discussion Paper Series No. 1 (March 2002).