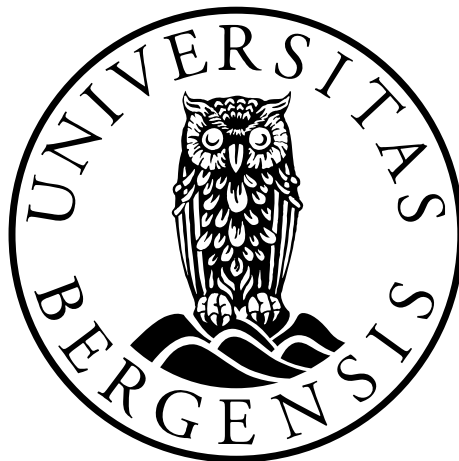


# Bandits of Mandiri

Analysis of a land occupation in Lore Lindu National Park, Indonesia

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Autumn 2013



## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank all the inhabitants of Mandiri, and all my friends in ‘the Resettlement village’ and Palu. This thesis could not have been written without you. I will also thank my advisor, Eldar Bråten, who was indispensable to make this thesis happen. Signe Howell helped me to prepare for and perform my fieldwork. My REDD-colleagues Des Christy and Ferry Rangi, who also did fieldwork in Central Sulawesi in spring 2012 and who were incredibly supportive and patient with me deserves mentioning. Also, Desmond McNeill, J. Nicolaas Warouw and Pujo Semedi gave invaluable support during my time in Indonesia. Finally I must mention Olaf Smedal, professor at the University of Bergen, for inspiring me to study Indonesia and encouraging me to do fieldwork there. I am grateful to everyone who helped me during my fieldwork and through the writing process, even if they are not mentioned by name.



## **REDD**

My fieldwork was sponsored by the REDD program, through prof. Signe Howell from the University of Oslo. This program tries to develop an international financial system that will prevent, or slow down, deforestation in developing countries. In simple terms, the program's goal is to make it profitable to keep the trees standing in contrast to cutting them down. My responsibility in this program was to analyse the progress of REDD in Central Sulawesi with the cooperation of Des Chrity and Ferry Rangi, who were invaluable as colleagues during my time on the island. They were students at Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta on Java, which also functioned as our contact university during research. Dr. J. Nicolaas Warouw and Pujo Semedi, from the Anthropology department were very supportive throughout our project, especially with providing paperwork and general guidance. Our work in relation to REDD was to visit NGOs involved in the project, to map the program's progress on village level and to compare progress plans with actual results. This work was mainly done in the Province capital, Palu, and in the villages chosen as trial areas by the NGOs. It was unfortunate that Mandiri had not been included in the project, meaning that no people in the village knew of its existence. Because of this my Mandiri fieldwork and this thesis do not include a REDD angle, even if deforestation and logging are central themes in the following material. It is, however, important to mention that just prior to my fieldwork the Norwegian government had promised 1 billion USD to Indonesia through the REDD program if they fulfilled the program's goals within a certain date. This information was well known among NGOs in the city of Palu, and a point of interest for anyone believing they could profit from it. I noticed that being a Norwegian I was interpreted as a representative of REDD, more than an analyst, leading to people believing that I could provide them with REDD money. This was a factor involved in the unfortunate situation I describe later in the introduction where I discuss my methodological positioning in Mandiri. I have experienced both positive and negative effects of my connection to REDD, but my utmost priority was always to strive for objectivity and to carry out a thorough fieldwork. I see my time in Central Sulawesi as one dedicated to anthropological studies, and that research on REDD developments in the province was done as an independent researcher drawing on anthropological method, rather than as a member of REDD. It is also important to note that the REDD research did not steal too much time from my Mandiri research.



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## **Introduction**

This thesis is based on fieldwork in the Highlands of Sulawesi in Indonesia, and the research material was gathered during a six month period, from January to June in 2012. In the Central Sulawesi province (Sulawesi Tengah) a large group of people had decided to illegally occupy land in Lore Lindu National Park. I was first told about this situation when I visited a Sulawesi Kampung (ind: village, or as in this case neighbourhood) in the city of Yogyakarta on Java, where I took language courses as preparation for my fieldwork. The occupation was described as complicated, with several incidents leading to desperate measures. Government groups wanted the occupants gone claiming they were nothing but antagonists wanting to maintain their illegal logging practices. The occupants on their part said they had been unjustly treated, and that the land in the national park was compensation for land that had been stolen from them in the past. I became interested in the situation since there seemed to be a lot more to the story than political strife. Conflict has always been an area of interest for me, and this was definitely a story of conflict. After further investigations, and the reassurance that I would be vouched for by associates of the leader of the occupation, I decided that this occupation would be ideal for my study. I have given the place the pseudonym 'Mandiri', an Indonesian word that can be translated as an autonomous freedom, which I found fitting in relation to how the occupants saw themselves.

In retrospect I see that this first introduction to the occupation echoed what I call 'the official story' of the area. This was a formalized version of Mandiri's history, containing a few essential facts and dates, which was told and retold by the Mandiri villagers and the NGO representatives working with Mandiri. I came to appreciate the story's simplicity, even if it lacked the depth needed to understand the progression of the occupation, as I have found myself repeating this story to people asking about my fieldwork. I will explore the role of this 'official story' more thoroughly in chapter 5, but it would be a great introduction to Mandiri to

tell the story here in the words of a Mandiri ‘uncle’<sup>1</sup>, the same way he told it to me during a rainy afternoon in the village.

*“We were in a government resettlement project that moved us from the mountains. In the 90’s there was a land shortage in the [resettlement] village, and this made life difficult. Some NGOs who did research in the area investigated, and found out that people had not received the 2 hectares of land we were promised. Instead people had received only 0.8 hectares. There were four villages affected [in the resettlement area]. The government had lied to us. Meetings in the city didn’t lead anywhere and promises made were not being kept. People in the four villages came together to find a solution. You see, people had worked in the [Ifore Lindu National] park before, in the Mandiri area. Before, there was a logging company there and people had worked for them. They had been allowed to keep coffee trees there. And then we found out that we had been lied to, and that we would not receive the land we had been promised. People thought, why should we be without land when nobody was using the land in Mandiri. So in June 2001, 1030 families traveled to Mandiri and settled here. We have been here since.” (My translation from Indonesian)*

The simple frame of the ‘official story’ avoids mentioning bloody confrontations, lawless actions and internal feuds, but its short and consistent form helps to convey the story quickly. A more elaborate historical presentation of Mandiri will follow in chapter 2. Here I will describe the research questions that I have based this thesis on.

First, what was the actual dynamics behind the occupation? What events lead to people choosing to occupy land and why did it happen the way it did? A second point of interest was motivation. What personal perspectives lead people to act the way they did, and why did they insist on staying even when attempts of compensations were offered, or when achieving what was perceived as a proper living standard turned out to be harder work than

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<sup>1</sup> Uncle, or Om in Indonesian, was the title used for all older men in Central Sulawesi. Note that this title was only used in informal relations, such as friendships or domestic situations. With formal relations and with people of high status the nationally recognized term Pak (sir) or Ibu (mother/ ma’am) was used. These titles will be explored further in chapter three.

expected? These are the questions that were on my mind continuously during my fieldwork. I was also informed that Tania Li had performed fieldwork in Mandiri almost a decade earlier, a work which had resulted in an article and I was given a copy of this article while staying in Central Sulawesi which I read when staying in areas with electricity as it was only a digital copy. Originally I feared that my own writing in some way would be too similar to hers, but I quickly realized that even if we were both anthropologists we had different interests regarding Mandiri, and that our points of focus would be very different. An important difference is that her article is published in 2003, just two years after the final occupation, meaning that she performed her fieldwork at a time when the most heated debates surrounding Mandiri took place. Her paper is focused mostly on these debates between government representatives, NGOs, the National Park leadership, and other interest groups, and trying to clarify the different arguments used by different sides. When I arrived in Mandiri a decade later, the political focus on Mandiri had changed, and I had the opportunity to stay in the village longer than Li. I found I could take the liberty to explore the different perspectives that was expressed by groups and individuals who lived in Mandiri, and compare it to different groups involved in the Mandiri case but who hadn't necessarily visited the area. A person's perception of Mandiri was always affected by his or her experiences, involvement, interests, ideology, and the feuds they had taken sides in, and therefore I found it interesting to describe here the different relations between people as well as their personal perspectives. By trying to present the numerous perspectives involved I hope that this thesis will give a nuanced picture of the situation, or at least in a different picture than what has been interpreted through Sulawesi media, the Lore Lindu National Park management, or state politicians by 2012.

## **Positioning**

There were several challenges in relation to my presence in Mandiri. Being an illegal village, the leadership was suspicious of outsiders, and wanted to know what my motives were, and what they would gain from my research. An acquaintance vouched for my intentions and objectivity, and the head of the household where I stayed would be responsible for me and my actions in daily life. A previous experience had left them wary of researchers; an NGO called The Nature Conservancy (TNC) had collected research material on logging under the cover of a project concerning butterflies. This incident left people feeling betrayed and used. I

felt it was important to make clear that I was not there to exploit them, and that I had no interest in manipulate them or to hide any intentions on my staying with them. After the first meeting with the Mandiri leadership I seemingly had their faith in my project.

However, the situation changed the second week I was in Mandiri, after an independent NGO worker spread rumours about the REDD project and its connection to me (see preface). Since my role in analysing the development of REDD mostly was restricted to the province capital (there were no REDD activities in my field area, and few who knew of the project), there was very little focus on REDD during my initial meetings. The NGO worker believed that my research approbation papers said I was a representative of REDD, which was explained simply as a forest preservation program, and that I had been lying about my intentions on staying in the village. I came across this information overhearing a conversation outside the house I was staying in, where two main figures of the village discussed what needed to be done with me. Remembering the problems people had with TNC I became worried. The leader of the last project was wanted dead, and I might end up being associated with him. Initiating a meeting with my host family, the distinction between my MA fieldwork and my relation to the REDD program was explained, and they were visibly relieved. After this clarification, daily life started to run more smoothly, and my presence became more accepted. The incident did, however, make it more difficult to participate in meetings of the village leadership, an organization who called themselves Forum Petani Merdeka, FPM<sup>2</sup>, and since the meetings had dozens of participants, I had a hard time getting familiar with their network and make amends with those who had believed the rumours about me. This resulted in me not getting nearly enough information about the current FPM affairs to satisfy my curiosity. I did my best to compensate for this by having conversations with FPM members in more informal situations, dropping by for a chat by their house, or when ending up in the same ibadah (ind: worship, or religious service) as them. Still, I feel it is important to note that my views on FPM's ideology and actions from the time of my fieldwork might have been influenced by these certain individuals I had contact with. My contact with the current (and former) leaders of the forum was notably better than with the rest of the participants, so I managed to get a certain historical perspective on FPM actions through interviews.

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<sup>2</sup> I will explore FPM and their role in chapter two.

The REDD incident was partly fueled by how people perceived my role in the village. When I first arrived at Mandiri, I worked hard to transcend the shock people experienced by having a white foreign researcher in their midst. Since an MA degree is seen as a high level of education in Indonesia<sup>3</sup>, there was a level of intimidation involved. I was put in the same role as any outsider who wanted to understand the situation, as people assumed that my research was one of ‘development’, meant to improve their situation. There were hopes that my being there would bring them money or funding to build a school, especially since I was connected to the REDD-project. Most initial conversations included a long monologue of all the shortcomings villagers experienced, such as a lack of school and health care, and a retelling of the ‘official’ story of Mandiri containing few to no personal experiences of the occupation. However, as time passed I became an acquaintance and a friend, more than a researcher, leading to less focus on me as the outsider, but every time I reached a new social group in the area my initial welcome was given along with a wary look. At my initial meeting with the first leader of the occupation, he warned me that people in Mandiri were guarded, and for good reason. There were a lot of groups trying to profit from them, or work against them. People were used to lies and broken promises, so “I feel protective over them. They are vulnerable”. This, he said, was something I needed to keep in mind during my research. I had been given trust, and it was my responsibility to act ethically.

Even if it was difficult to achieve trust in the village, my biggest challenge was language. Having learned Indonesian before I travelled to Sulawesi, I quickly became more fluent in the language as the only people speaking English in the area were Des and Ferry, my two REDD colleagues<sup>4</sup>. The problem was that few conversations in everyday life was in Indonesian. Being the second language of most people in Indonesia, it was more common to use the first language when speaking to people of the same ethnic group. This was a potential problem for me, as I had hoped to pick up on casual conversations to get a wider understanding of daily life in the village. Luckily Mandiri consisted of several ethnic groups, so by trying to partake in conversations between people of different backgrounds, there was a greater chance that any discussions would be spoken in Indonesian. After a few weeks I had a sizable dictionary with words from the languages of two of the largest ethnic groups in Mandiri, Uma and Da’a,

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<sup>3</sup> Can be compared to PHD on an international level since a MA graduate can obtain the role as *dosen* (similar to professor) and teach BA level students at universities.

<sup>4</sup> There was a handful of NGO workers in the province capital who spoke English, but the language of choice was still Indonesian since any meetings with NGOs included people with little to no knowledge of English.

and most people were keenly contributing to it. I never became fluid in the two languages, but I managed to understand enough words to grasp the main themes of conversations, much to the frustration of my main host family who had gotten used to switching to these languages when wanting to discuss private matters.

When I realized masculine aspects had an important role for Mandiri and its history, I was faced with a dilemma many female anthropologists have faced before me. How could I gain access to these arenas when the mere presence of my gender would alter behaviour patterns? Would I gain access at all? Would my trying to gain access risk my position among other villagers? How would the women react? Most of the questions were answered before they became an issue, since the realization of how important male camaraderie and rituals were for the occupation came gradually. After participating in palm wine drinking circles (described in detail in chapter 3), and hearing the stories told, I found that the stories shared here were richer than most, as personal tales and opinions dominated the discourse. It was a huge contrast to the more 'official' and structured story told elsewhere. I also soon discovered that there was a difference between drinking alcohol in the city and in the village.

While drinking in the city was more lax and available for women, drinking in the village was problematic. In the beginning I only participated in drinking circles with students from the province capital. These circles, a mix between students and villagers, was a good way to make contact with new potential informants and to gradually get introduced to the urban/rural contrast with less danger of making unforgivable mistakes in this first phase of field experience. Gradually, my limitations in drinking circles became apparent, as my friends hesitated to invite me to some of these gatherings. There were doubts in how liberal some of the older men would be about my participation, since it was not good custom to put a young unmarried woman in such situations. This was remedied by participating but not drinking, if there were doubts about me being accepted, as this would be interpreted as me observing and not 'participating'. I found this experience valuable but limiting, as I found that people would talk to each other but not to me. It was also more difficult to get people to relax around me, and their behaviour could be stiff and awkward. The equality and trust that was symbolized in the act of drinking together would disappear, leaving me to the role as 'outsider' in a very frustrating way.

However, as people got used to my presence, it became easier to get accepted in drinking circles and other masculine situations<sup>5</sup>. Since most of my associates were men, it became a habit to invite me to events where no other women were present, an act that could cause concern among village leadership and my main host families. This concern was remedied by being under the ‘protection’ of one of my friends, so that my presence were simply an extension of his. The importance of ‘protection’ became less and less important the more I got to know the people frequenting the events, even if it was continuously enforced at larger gatherings.

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<sup>5</sup> One example of other masculine situations is the rallies performed before a football match, where a village’s team would gather and discuss strategies.

## **Chapter Summaries**

Chapter 1, 'Indonesia' gives a short introduction to Indonesia as a country and. The chapter is included to help the reader see Mandiri in a wider context, and includes descriptions of state structures and how these have developed through the country's history. The last part of the chapter narrows the focus down to a Sulawesi context where I discuss how state abstractions have been actualized and interpreted in the island's own context. It is especially important to note the role that local agency and power play have in the interpretation process.

Chapter 2, 'The Story of Mandiri', presents the history of the Mandiri occupation in chronological order, including explorations of contributing factors and external interpretations of incidents. It is important to note that this chapter is how I perceive the historical events based on interviews with NGOs, government officials, and discussions in Mandiri and surrounding villages. As I have not personally witnessed the events, I have made it a priority to use multiple sources to confirm facts and dates, and have taken into consideration people's personal interests and potential benefits in presenting Mandiri in a certain light. The different perspectives and attempts to promote certain images of the occupation will be further discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter 3, 'What Makes a Man', is the first of two mainly empirical chapters of the thesis. Here I give accounts of masculine behaviour and rituals which I argue had much influence in the origin and development of the occupation, and which generate difficulties in communication between the different sides involved in the Mandiri 'problem'. I ask the reader to particularly note the equality of status presented in the drinking circles analyzed here, as this is an important factor to understand chapter 5.

Chapter 4, 'The Dimension of Alcohol and a Christian Minority' is the second chapter with focus on empirical material, and here I will explore the perception of alcohol in different religious groups and what role it plays in the Christian identity in Central Sulawesi. Also, the dichotomy of urban and rural life will be explained in light of drinking customs, including



how certain urban populations perceive Mandiri, before I conclude the chapter with some elaboration on FPM's rural and urban roles in relation to image managing.

Chapter 5, 'Thoughts on Mandiri', is the final part of the thesis, and brings my analysis of the Mandiri situation to a conclusion. This is where the masculine role (and its drinking circles) will be discussed in relation to the occupation, image and reputation, and Identity. It will also shed some light on why the antagonistic image that Mandiri has received is all too simplistic to explain its dynamics.

## **Chapter 1:**

### **Indonesia**

With over 13.000 islands, and over 2.000.000 square kilometre Indonesia has an enormous diversity in ethnicities, languages, flora and animal life (Smedal 1994: 448). Many great cities and kingdoms have blossomed on the islands, wars have been fought, and great states have dissapeared and left nothing but ruins and temples . There is no room in this thesis for describing the long and interesting history of the indonesian archipelago, but some details are necessary to give a wider perspective on my material, such as state structures, an historical perspective on how the Indonesian state has progressed and changed since it was founded, and how state structures and laws have been practiced in Central Sulawesi.

The country is relatively young, being established in 1949, and was loosely based on the Dutch colonial boundaries of Southeast Asia. A large ethnic diversity can be found on it's islands, as the dominant denominator of today's Indonesia was defined by colonial boundaries, not ethnic groupings or linguistic ties. The spice trade lead to Dutch, British and Portugese control over the areas. Joined in trade and colonialism the early Indonesian identity saw the establishment of Bahasa Indonesia, a type of Malay, as the language of choice, and this helped to construct an institutionalization of Indonesia and its history (Smedal 1994: 452). This was before the country became independent, but the Japanese occupation during The Second World War changed the stakes. The Dutch lost their hold on the colony and after the Japanese surrendered, Dutch forces tried to reclaim power over the island, leading to four violent years before the Netherlands finally recognised Indonesian sovereignty with its first president, Sukarno, as leader. Turbulence marked the first decade of the country's political life leading to Sukarno's concept of 'Guided Democracy' which lead to tendencies of autocracy and a strengthening of communist power in the country (Cribbs, Brown 1995:68-96).

Sukarno lost his position when there was a military coup d'etat in 1965, and the communist party was eliminated, its members and supporters killed by the thousands. A new leader, general Suharto, came to power, with the support of the armed forces behind him (Cribbs,

Brown 1995: 97). While the foundations of a national identity had been laid by Sukarno, Suharto continued its construction with reforms imposed during his reign and became the most dominant political figure up until the 21st century. When Indonesia separated from Dutch rule, most Indonesians worked as farmers and there had been few changes in agricultural strategies or instruments. At the same time only six percent of the population had participated in formal schooling under Dutch administration (Bidien 1945: 346-347), leading to the assumption that everyday life for Indonesian people had changed little on a local level.

Suharto formed an authoritarian regime called The New Order. At the beginning the focus layed with development, *pembangunan*, to achieve “prosperity and modernity by employing technology and sound management”(Cribbs, Brown 1995: 115). In came a structure of five-year plans to drive Indonesia in to a better future, and the first thing to manage was the inflation and economic difficulties at the time. Foreign investors were invited in to use the potential of oil resources and logging concessions. Farming culture was reformed through the ‘green revolution, where more effective rice breeds were introduced along with pesticides, farming machinery and technical advice. The rice production increased from 2.6 tonnes per hectare in 1968 to 4.8 tonnes in 1985 (Cribbs, Brown 1995: 116-117).

Behind what seemed to be progress there was a national ideology: the Pancasila, five principles of life, was part of the constitution that was written already during the Japanese occupation. These were coined by Sukarno, and helped to unify an Indonesian identity as they were the base of the state and to have equal significance to all no matter what ethnic, religious or political identity the person had (Cribbs, Brown 1995:15). The wording of the Pancasila is:

- Belief in God.
- National unity.
- Humanitarianism.
- Peoples Sovereignty.
- Social justice and prosperity.

The five principles were, and still are, taught in schools and is supposed to be the structure behind all governmental decisions. However, Pancasila has a very abstract and ambiguous quality leading to a wide range of interpretations. The abstraction has an inclusive quality as the wording is something few could question<sup>6</sup>, but a problem arose when the New Order insisted that only the government's own view on the principles was valid. Cribbs and Brown argue that by moving the principles from its ideological form to actual politics they lose their abstract and ambiguous form, and as a result lose the unifying potential that was the reason they were made in the first place (Cribbs, Brown 1995: 145).

This change from a vague to a more practical role happened in 1974 at Suharto's order. In 1978 it was determined that the Pancasila should be the "sole guiding principle for social and political activity in Indonesia" (Cribbs, Brown 1995 : 136), and in 1985 it was specified that all Pancasila should be the foundation of all mass organizations including religious organizations (ibid). The new and more specific version of Pancasila also put the responsibility for national interest with the government, giving more power to Suharto. The government would no longer allow conflict of interest between different parts of society since the society's unified interest was the real interest of everyone. All people therefore needed to succeed in their role and duties for the good of society as a whole. The farmer should put his energy into becoming a great farmer, and a mother should do her best to raise her children the best way possible, all for the best of Indonesia (Cribbs, Brown 1995: 136-137).

At the same time there was no real democracy, with the party Golkar (Partai Golongan Karya) dominating political life. The name translates to Party of Functional Groups, and just as the farmer should invest himself in farming, Golkar was meant to fill the political function in Indonesia, representing all functional groups in the country. Elections were held every five years, even if there was no real alternative to Golkar, and political oppression was standard to prevent opposition to the government. There was an increasing difference between rich and

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<sup>6</sup> Speaking in an Indonesian context, of course, since the first principle of belief in god is questioned by atheists in all parts of the world. With its time of origin and the use of this principle since the constitution was written, Indonesian view on religion is still normative. Everyone falls in a religious category, as the information is printed on all I.D. cards. As one informant told me; "Look at him! He never prays, and now he eats dog, and drinks palm wine too. He is a bad muslim. A muslim, absolutely, but a very bad one." Even if the man fell outside any principles that a muslim was supposed to follow, he could never avoid the fact that he was a muslim.

poor, and large scale corruption was common for anyone in a higher position (Cribbs, Brown 1995: 126-127).

To understand power relations in Indonesia it is important to see how valuable it is to have access; a state official who has the responsibility to give out logging concessions is also in a position to receive extra favours from people wanting the concessions, and the extra wealth can also be used to bump up their social status which in return can give access to more favours as people see their houses, cars or extravagant weddings and want to benefit from their wealth and position, naturally offering favours to secure this goal. From a top governmental level it was therefore very important to control positions and connections people might get on a local level. Not only would local officials have access to power, but the further they got away from the jakartan center of political life, the more likely it would be for them to nurture local beneficial relations and put their allegiance there. The New Order government feared that local power would give roots to rebellion and even separatism, and a strategy to protect themselves against this was to export civil servants from Jakarta to local level positions all over the country (Tanasaldy 2007: 354).

This also happened in central Sulawesi, and it was not uncommon to see javanese people in these positions even during my time in the area. However, the power relations in the province has a strong aspect of local agency. Even with the strong state structure and the countless reforms in the new Order, local interest groups and people played important roles for the province's political climate, and when change came to Indonesia and the political life restructured, the local power relations became very visible as people began to compete for resources (Aragon 2007: 40).

When economic crisis swepted Asia in the end of the 1990's, Indonesia was affected gravely and the economic growth that had been a symbol for Suharto's regime crumbled as large demonstrations were seen across the country, and a political crisis started for the country's leadership. In may 1998, after 32 years of ruling, Suharto resigned from his position and with him The New Order had to come to an end. The time that followed was characterized by political reformation and state decentralization. Many hoped that the new era would turn

Indonesia into a democracy but the decentralization that Indonesia experienced in this period did not mean that a stronger democratic practice was put in action, and neither did it mean that the strong state changed to a strong civil society (Klinken, Nordholt 2007: 1). The transition from Suharto's authoritarian regime to a new state manifested itself in changes, yet with strong continuity of the structure of The New Order, and the decentralization process can be seen as a consequence of its time, and "as a rearrangement of existing force fields" (Klinken, Nordholt 2007: 2). President Habibie, who was vice president under Suharto and became president temporarily after Suharto resigned, constructed laws of regional autonomy in 1999, effectively giving more power to local level officials, and the power vacuum that was created locally in Central Sulawesi accentuated ethnic and religious divisions in the area.

In Poso, a city located east in Central Sulawesi, the violence developed along these ethnic and religious boundaries turning the conflict into a horizontal violence between local groups, in contrast to vertical violence as seen in Aceh where the conflict was between groups of people fighting for independence and the central state trying to keep the province as a part of Indonesia (Sangaji 2007: 255). In Poso the violence erupted between protestant and muslim groups, with escalating retaliations between them (Aragon 2001). The ethnic and religious divides was also the explanation most of my informants used to explain the violent episodes that had occurred in Palu, the province capital, as most of these episodes occurred between muslim and Christian groups. One incident, concerning a warung (ind: a shop or kiosk) known for selling pork that was bombed a few years earlier, was explained by my friends that even if the muslim group behind the bombing knew that the Christians that frequented the warung could get pork elsewhere, the bombing was not just to remove the offensive act of selling pork, but also to remove the warung from a busy street in the city center. The presence of the shop was an insult in itself, since the markets and shops were dominated by muslim. To be able to sell in the local markets, or start a business, one usually had to be connected to the right people, just as was needed to get a good job in an office. To occupy the space was therefore not only a presence of an haram (forbidden) act but also a threat to the image of an all 'clean' street. It showed the presence of Christian power connections. When the decentralization laws restructured the local levels there was even more to gain for individual groups, leading to more heated struggles than before.

The localization of power that happened with the decentralization accentuated the old social landscape instead of accomplishing a "more fundamental transformation in the prevailing relations of power" (Hadiz 2010: 4). This was the case not only in Central Sulawesi, but all over Indonesia (ibid), even if the decentralization policy had different outcomes throughout the country. Andi Faisal Bakti's research from the Wajo district of South Sulawesi shows that instead of the establishment of democracy and better governance the decentralization and regional autonomy has reinforced the autocratic rule of Buginese in the area (Bakti 2007: 384). On Sulawesi (and across Indonesia) the Buginese are known as being well connected in elite circles, and are often found in central positions. In the city of Palu they were known to control the traditional markets, as certain individuals decided who could sell their vegetables there, and could use further connections to maintain this power. Still, connections between Buginese did not have the same strength as Bakti experienced in Wajo (or at least not visibly so).

There is always the aspect of individual agency to consider when describing state structures or even more local power relation. Even if many structures and relations undeniably affect the Mandiri village, I have found it more rewarding to try to understand how such structures were perceived by villagers themselves, since people acted on their own interpretations of what these structures were based on the information they have had available on the subject and what direct experiences they have had with state administration during their life. In Mandiri an important factor to remember is that information mostly spread by word of mouth as there was no access to newspapers and no phone signal, meaning that most of the information people received had been interpreted by the messenger (who again might have heard the news from someone else, thereby receiving that person's interpretation on top of their own). This had a way to enhance the particularity of Mandiri discourse, as most information was retold in relation to what was seen as important for the Mandiri context, which in turn gave the potential of giving particular interpretations of political decisions or state structures. Still, this brief outline of state history will provide a wider context in which to understand Mandiri's situation. How the state was perceived in Mandiri will be discussed in chapter 5, where perceptions of 'state' and hidden power relations will come in to play. Now it is time to move to the next chapter which focuses on Mandiri's own history.

## **Chapter 2:**

### **The Story of Mandiri**

When I first arrived in Mandiri, I met the leader of Forum Petani Merdeka, the organization that functions as a leadership in the village. Ran welcomed me into his house along with the man who has agreed to let me stay in his house for the majority of my time there, and together we discussed my research in the area and what Mandiri actually was. It was the first of many versions of the story of the occupation that I was going to hear over the next few months. We drank sugared coffee that stained my notebook as I wrote down all the details I could manage of the tale, a story well rehearsed and retold countless times before. The first days in the field was spent trying to understand the full picture of the story, but I quickly learned that the story was simply a front stage version (cf. Goffman 1959). As valuable as the story was, it was only the first step to understand the numerous perspectives on Mandiri.

As people got more used to my presence, and relaxed enough to invite me into their daily life, the stories got more elaborate, and discussions could last far in to the night with only a small oil lamp to illuminate the speaker's face. What follows in this chapter is a description of the occupation from a Pipikoro ethnic perspective, collected through countless discussions on the subject in the villages and supplemented with confirmed facts. I have found Adiwibowo's PHD thesis concerning the occupation very helpful to retrieve exacts dates and numbers, as these details often is left out in the stories told in the villages. The places where I have used Adiwibowo to support my on empirical material is clearly marked, as most of the information presented here has been collected through informal interviews in Mandiri and other places of interest such as a spesific resettlement village which will be described in detail later in the chapter. The majority of facts has, on top of being checked through Adiwibowo's work, been confirmed through NGO's involved in the area. It is important to note that this chapter is a lot more elaborate than the 'official story' I was told during the first weeks in the field. This story, presented in the introduction, was a formalized and structured tale of Mandiri's history. It involved a handfull of dates and points, all told in in the same manner and order. I came to the conclusion that the story was the product of Mandiri people needing to repeat the story on command if asked about the occupation. it became, in a way, an oppportunity to justify and reconfirm their existence while struggling to keep the land they had claimed as their own.



This ‘official story’ will be but a minor factor in this thesis and will be discussed in chapter five.

Resettlement projects were executed throughout Indonesia in the 1970’s and the following decade. The targets for these programs were for ‘Masyarakat Terasing’, which translates to “backward and isolated communities” (Li 2003: 5121). These projects were done to enable such people to change “cultivation techniques, cultural expressions, formal education, health care, religion and interaction within the broad community, etc” (Adiwibowo 2005: 108). In other words it was to ‘develop’ people in rural areas and include them more in the larger society, a plan that had potential to strengthen the state in Indonesia as a whole. For certain Uma speaking groups the resettlement happened in 1983.

Until 1983 the families I have studied lived in the Pipikoro area of Kulawi, several days walk from the nearest road. There was paths on the mountain slopes where the children would walk to another village for school, and where people would keep different types of plants and trees that required shade from larger trees, like Kopi (ind: coffee) in the drier soil, and Sagu (ind: sago) near water. On the slopes were also the kebuns (ind: gardens)<sup>7</sup>. Padi ladang (ind: dry rice) and jagung (ind: corn) could be seen on open areas with papaya trees standing tall and alone between them. Closer to the village there was pohon cengkeh (ind: cloves), ubi (ind: cassava) and various fruit trees where the children would gather treats while the adults work in the kebuns. Since the Pipikoro populations were Christian there was no food restrictions and people would hunt in the nearby valleys for the meat of wild pig, deer and crocodile. In the kebuns they would set up traps for forest rats, squirrels and large lizards. The large papaya trees were used to attract fruit bats who feasted on the overly ripe fruits hanging at the top. With sharp bamboo sticks their wings would be ripped (or they would be trapped in a net, a method requiring less work), and the bats would be put in cages (to be fattened) and brought back to the village.

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<sup>7</sup> Kebuns can be translated to gardens, but the use this word covers most cultivated land, also wet rice fields even if these are also referred to as Sawah. The phrase ‘Dia berkebun’ (ind) translates to ‘he/she is working in the garden/field’ and covers most farming activities. It is therefore more practical to think of the term in relation to land cultivation rather than a lawn.

There were several problems in the village which challenged life. There were difficulties with water, since the springs on the mountainsides had gone dry. The solution was to move the village a kilometre further south, even if it meant leaving behind houses and buried relatives. People transformed the old village to kebun and kept pondoks (ind: cabin or hut) there so they didn't have to walk all the way back in the harvest seasons. The largest problem, however, was the lack of school. As mentioned, the children had to walk to another village for school. This trip took more than a day, and created difficulties for families. Education was something they valued greatly because through it a child could become teachers themselves, or become priests in The Salvation Army, which would mean more income for the family and a higher status overall. The resettlement program did not only solve the local problems but offered free land, and because of this many families moved. Most were young couples, not yet properly settled with their own land in Pipikoro. They travelled to the lowland where the government had set aside land for the project. They were in the third wave of migration to the subdistrict, and the area experienced major social changes in this period.

### **New Horizons**

For the settlers the new land was several days away, and they traveled from the west of Central Sulawesi to the inlands. When they arrived they found only forest. The area was chosen by the government because of the Palu/Napu road that went through the valley and connected the area with more urban places. The resettlement land, however, had to be cleared by the settlers themselves. The wood from the clearing went to building houses, and the new land was suited for wet rice production. The climate was warmer than Pipikoro since it was at the bottom of a large open valley, most of the land newly opened because of the immigrants, and the area was mostly flat, so it was easier to grow vegetables and other foods than before. The rice was, in true Indonesian fashion, the most favoured crop. I was told that the wet rice, in the form of sawah fields, yielded more rice than the dry rice they grew in the mountains, so even if it required a lot more work<sup>8</sup>, it could give a family more food on less land. The flat valley was well suited for sawahs, and the families needed to learn how to grow wet rice, and to control the waterways, a practice that required co-operation with neighbouring farmers.

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<sup>8</sup> Whereas the dry rice could manage itself most of the time the sawah requires detailed precision in regulation of water levels to thrive and is therefore a very time consuming crop.

The new area required a lot of work before it could provide a good life. Roads needed to be built, the area needed to be mapped for hunting grounds and medicinal plants and the land needed to be prepared for crops. There were settlers from other areas already in the village, so the transition was easier for the Pipikoro group than it was for the first wave of immigration who arrived in 1971. With twelve years of experience the first settlers could share their knowledge with the new arrivals. The area had more than enough water, with a large river nearby, and there were even hot springs with ‘medicinal’ water where people could bathe.

The life was too hard for many families, and some chose to go back to Pipikoro, selling their new land to other relatives before they left. Everything in Pipikoro was structured and predictable. They had kept the same crops, and practiced the same celebration feasts for as far as they remembered<sup>9</sup>. Since the village population belonged to the same ethnic category and shared the same religion (the Salvation Army) the new life was extra challenging. In the resettlement village they lived together with people from other ethnic groups, other churches and other religions. Suddenly they had to be more careful about what they served to guests. For muslim guests, not only did all the meat have to be halal, but the most favored celebration foods like pig and dog had to be hidden to not offend the guests, and the pig pens had to be kept in parts of the village where there were no muslims. The dogs walked where they liked, that could not be helped. Thankfully the resettlement village was very large, and the majority was Christian, which made the transition easier.

Along with the other resettlement programs in the valley, there was also a later wave of migration to the area when the cocoa boom came in the 1990’s. Adiwibowo, who did fieldwork for his PHD in political ecology in the area, points out that the population in the subdistrict grew 8.8 % in the period 1998-1999 while the population in the overall district increased by 1.63 % (Adiwibowo 2005: 107). In other words, land became more and more scarce. In 1998 the district administration divided the largest resettlement village into three

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<sup>9</sup> Even if life in Pipikoro was described as static and unchanging, the area has gone through enormous changes the last century, with missionaries from The Salvation Army converting the villages and thereby changing ritual practises, introduction of motor vehicles, and changes in local power structures. The description of an unchanging quiet life was most likely based on the contrast between the new life and the old, as the hardships of creating a new life made people remember the things they once took for granted in their old village. For more information about the historical changes in Pipikoro I recommend “Fields of the Lord” by Lorraine V. Aragon (2000), which covers the subject in several chapters.

separate villages, one of these being the resettlement village where most of the Pipikoro immigrants lived.

### **Land Problems and the National Park**

The cocoa boom in the valley came, according to the families I spoke to, from a combination of high cocoa prices and a wave of immigrating bugis from southern Sulawesi. The bugis brought with them the skill of keeping cocoa trees, and taught this to people in the Palolo area, where the new settlement villages were. Most converted their land from sawah, coffee, etc. to cocoa trees, which gave a higher income and less work. The trees, when grown, need a lot less attention than the rice fields they kept. Cocoa only needed harvesting when the fruit pods were ripe, needed some trimming to prevent the branches from growing too close, and in more recent time pesticides<sup>10</sup>. A downside with the new wondercrop was that it needed more space. Every family needed to expand their land to meet the new demands.

At this point there was a serious problem among the people of the Pipikoro group. The new generation did not have any land and this caused their life to stagnate. As adults they should, by tradition, own their own houses and their own land. Instead several households lived in the same building and worked the same land, which caused stress within the extended families.

At the same time, in the 90's, the national park Lore Lindu started showing its presence more. During the seventies a logging company, PT Kebun Sari, worked in the area, and at this time villagers had permission to use land in the logging area to grow coffee and vegetables, and to collect plants. This practice continued, and became a problem when the national park was founded in 1981<sup>11</sup>, only a few kilometres from the resettlement village. It was first in the 1990's that people became painfully aware of the situation. Park boundaries crossed through cultivated land in the villages, and people were afraid that they would have

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<sup>10</sup> The use of pesticides increased rapidly in the 90's. Some people aired frustration concerning the chemicals as these were expensive and imported from Malaysia. The first years of the cocoa boom no pesticides were used, but after a while a disease known as kanker coklat (ind: Cocoa cancer) began to spread. This turned leaves black and brown and rotted the cocoa pods from the inside. Since all the cocoa trees on Sulawesi are clones, and therefore have identical DNA, the disease spread very fast throughout a cocoa garden and could ruin an entire family's livelihood in weeks.

<sup>11</sup> The area became a wildlife reserve in 1981 and a national park later in 1993.

to give up land because of the park. The Polisi Polestarian Alam (PPA), who functioned as guards for the park, began to prevent people from gathering rattan, hunting, getting wood, and medicine plants, from the national park. The coffee trees people had in the Mandiri area of the park were allowed to be harvested, but people did not have permission to clear the area of rumpun (ind: weeds) or replace trees when they grew old and gave less fruit. This limited life severely, since the national park covered all the land to the south and south west. Land in the east was cultivated and inhabited, and the west was mostly steep mountain. Western areas were used to some degree, especially during the cocoa boom since the land, even if it was steep, was good for growing cocoa. To gather rattan<sup>12</sup> and other forest supplies it was not enough, since it takes a long time for the plants to grow and therefore impossible to harvest enough for a large village from the limited area the west presented. It was also difficult to find the borders of the park, which they knew lay somewhere in the forest. Because of this people continued to use the park areas, and naturally, received sanctions from the PPA.

### **Corruption**

There were people in the resettlement village working with the PPA to prevent people hunting, gathering rattan, and logging. This was not only jobs but developed into deep friendships. The PPA kept offices in the villages, and were therefore in close contact with the villagers. Some people were allowed to collect rattan and other plants if they served the PPA, and some were allowed to cut down trees if they paid a certain fee. The favoritism and corruption caused the people who helped the PPA to withdraw their assistance and start to cooperate with people logging in the forest.

At this time several NGO's were doing surveys in the area, among them WALHI (Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia), a large national environmental NGO network. Their conclusion was that the resettled inhabitants had not received the 2 hectares of land that they had been promised. The land only counted 0,8 hectares, and the rest of the land promised to the settlers had been withheld by government officials. A lot of land had been sold to bugis moving in to the area, and some had been kept by organizations such as Local Internal Audit Office (Kantor Inspektorat Daerah), the Justice Office (Kantor Pengadilan Negeri), Local

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<sup>12</sup> A liane used for rope and as a vegetable.

Development Bank (Bank Pembangunan Daerah) with about 100 hectares each (Adiwibowo 2005: 115). The ones which awakened the most anger in the villages were the former governors Drs. Galib Lasahido, who had 175 hectares of land, and H. Abdul Azis Lamajido SH who had around 30 hectare. Another NGO, named YBHR (Yayasan Bantuan Hukum Rakyat) who worked with legal aid, calculated that 931 families in the four villages were without land (counted by one head of family per unit) and of these 220 lived in the Pipikoro resettlement village, and these counted 46 % of the village (ibid).

Before 2000 there had already been four attempts to occupy the area of Mandiri in the park, the two last ones involving resettlement village, and resulted in the clearing of dozens of hectares of land in the park. These last occupations happened in 1998 and 1999 and both times the PPA forced people to return to their villages. At the end of the 1998 occupation a large number of villagers from the four resettlement villages, and five additional villages (all in various levels of involvement in the land feuds) went to Palu to protest their situation, but the demonstration did not seem to make a difference. After the occupation of 1999 there were meetings and communication between YPAN (Yayasan Pusaka Alam Nusantara, which translates into The National Nature Heritage Foundation) and the Partnership Forum for Lore Lindu National Park (Forum Kemitraan Taman Nasional Lore Lindu), the park management, local government from the district, and the villages involved. Some issues presented was that villagers wanted the borders of the national park to be reevaluated since Mandiri had been in use before the park had been founded, and that the PPA and park management would cooperate with the local people to protect the biodiversity in the park (Adiwibowo 2005: 118-119). There was agreement on all the issues and people in the resettlement village were convinced there would be a solution in near future. Over a year later, there was still no change and villagers joined together with WALHI and YBHR and formed Forum Petani Merdeka (FPM, translated to Independent Farmers Forum) to continue to promote the villager's case<sup>13</sup>.

The 2001 occupation was the first of the occupations to have the support of NGOs behind them. They helped with legal aid, wrote documents and organized protests in Palu, and

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<sup>13</sup> The word Merdeka also has strong connotations to freedom, and the name can therefore be translated to Free and Independent Farmers Forum.

helped strengthen the FPM to become a forum where the villagers themselves could be organized and discuss problems. There was also a lot more media coverage and Mandiri case had become common knowledge for people in Palu. The discussions became split between people who believed the farmers had experienced injustice, and people who heard about the increased amount of logging in Mandiri and thought it irresponsible<sup>14</sup>.

In June there was a final decision on Mandiri where the villager's wish to stay was denied and they were offered replacement land elsewhere in the district. The PPA was asked by the governor of Central Sulawesi to make sure there was no damage or destructive behaviour being done in the park, a plea that most surely were meant for the Mandiri inhabitants -now defined as illegal squatters- (Adiwibowo 2005: 129). The occupants refused the replacement land, as it seemed to be of a low quality, and decided to stay.

The largest problem Mandiri had at this point was logging. Significant members of the FPM were logging at the time of the meetings, and this caused controversy, not only among the NGO workers, but also within the village communities. It seriously damaged the case the FPM was trying to promote since many were doubting that they had proper claim to the area. Few would dispute the fact that the villagers had received too little land to farm during the resettlement, and yes, there was an agreement between the villagers and PT Kebun Sari concerning access to Mandiri to keep coffee trees, but was the reason behind occupation truly unjustly treatment, or was the past treatment an excuse to expand logging activities?

### **The Problem with National Parks**

There was no lack of NGOs fighting against the national park, and saw it as "eco-fascist" (Li 2003: 5122). Many proclaimed that it was unsuitable to import a model based on 'western' nature and try to conform it to an Indonesian context. Whereas national parks and nature

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<sup>14</sup> My source of information on this are various people in Palu and Mandiri, but the sources are not of large enough quantity that I can verify that this was the overall perspective of the urban population, a perspective that would be quite impossible to achieve with anthropological methods anyway. It would be more exact to say that this was a perspective in Mandiri, in some urban groups involved or related to the occupation and its people, and certain individuals in NGO's who work (or did in the past) with Mandiri.

preserves in 'western' countries were uninhabited from the start, the situation in the Lore Lindu park was different.

About 66 villages were inside the national park when it was founded. These villages' situation was different to Mandiri since they were there before the park (opposed to claiming land later). The park had ignored their claims to the land, and imposed on their territory, giving the villages a strong case against them. With the help of different NGOs the villages resisted resettlement, and proclaimed themselves as indigenous of the land, and that their customary ways to keep the land were sustainable and helped conserve the forest. The way the villages protested varied, though. In the village of Katu in the south of the park the inhabitants were offered a resettlement program where they could receive a land compensation outside the national park. Since the village lacked road, and therefore also lacked electricity, some chose to take the offer and move to the designated area. The majority stayed behind and promoted themselves as having lived in the area for generations and therefore would not hurt the land by farming it. In reality, the people of Katu originally came from the south of Sulawesi and had at some point migrated to Central Sulawesi. This detail did not play a great part in the negotiation between the park management and the village. During my fieldwork the leadership of Katu village came to a temporary agreement with the park to keep the land around the village as long as no expansions would be made to the kebuns. The people who accepted the resettlement deal found the new area to have land of low quality and not enough land to support them, so they chose to open new land in the hills above the village, which is inside the borders of the national park<sup>15</sup>.

The villages did not have to be old to use the 'native' argument, since all of them were older than the park itself, but the problem was that they had been ignored in the first place. One NGO worker in Palu described it as "defining the villagers as part of the wild, not caring about their situation". He was right, since the villagers had not been considered before the park was formed (as mentioned, it was originally intended as a wildlife reserve). After the park had been established, the presence of people suddenly became a problem. As in most

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<sup>15</sup> I visited the Katu village several times during my fieldwork and I also spent time in the resettlement village where they had opened land in the national park. Katu's agreement with the National Park has also been described by Acciaioli (2009: 98).



villages there was logging (some villages removed forest to open land, in others there was logging to simply sell the trees) and hunting, which was an immediate threat to the park's biodiversity. In many of the villages involved, including Katu, the argument used was that the villagers were practicing their traditional 'law' in the forest and was therefore capable to maintain the forest and live in 'harmony' with it. One can say that the villager's defenders tried to promote an image of the noble savage by presenting themselves as at one with the land, with an allmost mystic knowledge of their forest.

The idea of the noble, wild savages living in the midst of lush rainforest as a mystic folk, taking care of nature as it takes care of them, is a well known symbol, and was also used in relation to the Penan studied by J. Peter Brosius in Sarawak in Malasiya. As the Penan was involved in an environmentalist discussion with several sides, and as logging threatened current livelyhood, the concept of the Penan became reified as forest-dwelling people, living with nature not against it, as wild figures who could not be tamed and therefore not having a choice if their home would be taken away from them (Brosius 2003). In Lore Lindu both villages and NGOs used this idea. As mentioned, the village of Katu used the idea that they lived on ancestral land to defend their position against the park. They also promoted themselves as a model society, having invested work in their school which had an esteemed music band playing bamboo instruments. They stressed they had a strong traditional leadership which would help preserve the land they lived on and prevent mindless logging. From an outsider's perspective one can wonder if the absense of 'mindless logging' was a result of strong traditions or from all the attention that the villages received from the confrontation with the park. If they had practised intense logging during this period of scrutiny they would surely had lost their case towards the park. It is therefore possible that the lack of logging could be a result of clever strategic actions from a strong leadership more than actions based on traditions. Still, I must note that I only have limited experience with the villages concerned as I only visited a handful of them and never stayed long enough to research any spesific motivations. Whatever the motivation was to have no logging, the result was the same; Katu, and other villages making similar claims to traditional leadership, had little or no logging activity, and could therefore present a stronger case towards the park. It seemed to work, as the manager seemed to have no choice but to agree with them and to declare them as a part of the area's ecosystem and therefore valuable for the park. The

villagers were glad they were allowed to keep their lifestyle and the park management were glad they could present themselves as ‘solution friendly’.

In one way the occupation of Mandiri helped the situation in these villages since it became easier to use the ‘indigenous argument’. The people occupying Mandiri wasn’t originally from the area so some people mentioned that the squatters did not understand the land they lived on, the same way a person from the city would have difficulties with farming. This could, according to the opponents of Mandiri, cause their intense logging; had people been native to the place they would never had violated the land in such a way. There were strong reactions to the occupation from one ethnic group in particular, the Pekurehua, claiming ancestral rights to the area, and when this group presented their case during the June-July meetings in 2001, the Mandiri case got even more difficult (Adiwibowo 2005). They were no longer simply inhabiting land they did not ‘originate from’, but they were also occupying the land of other petani (ind: farmers). Many of the occupation’s opponents proclaimed that the people in Mandiri had no right being there and should be forcibly removed.

Around this time people in Mandiri decided to hold a ceremony to open the land and clear it for use. This was to symbolically tie them to the land and to make emotional bonds with the area. Animals were sacrificed, and a feast was held. After this action they defined the land as their new home and they could from then on grow old there and bury their dead in the area. The ceremony showed that people had no interest in leaving the area and took their fight to a new level. In a way it was to introduce themselves as the new rightful inhabitants of Mandiri and therefore, in one way, remove the Pekurehua’s rights to the land. Note that the ritual wasn’t merely an opening of the land. Both media and the NGOs supporting the occupation were present for the ceremony, which Li interprets as a way to create similarities to the cases of indigenous groups. (Li 2003: 5123). There were also put up banners with the words “Beri Kami Lahan, Taman Nasional Alam” (ind: Give us Land, Peace in the National Park). The public nature of the ceremony indicates that it was performed for more than just land-initiation purposes, and the act did provoke NGOs working with indigenous groups involved in the National Park conflict (ibid)

## **The Role of TNC**

TNC, or The Nature Conservancy, was an American NGO that had been working with the four villages in the 1990's to help restructure livelihoods in the Palolo area. One of the key factors in this plan was butterfly breeding, buying larvae and selling the grown insects to make profits. Through this development project the people in the area would make a more stable income. The plan, however, did not bear fruits, and was abandoned by the villagers. TNC representatives spent a lot of time in the forests and in the national park, as part of a biology study, looking for and documenting butterflies<sup>16</sup>, and hired local people as guides when going on hikes in the park. Mr D, who was known as the leader of the project, became well connected in the resettlement village and his partner, a villager, became quite wealthy from their co-operation. During my fieldwork his house stood out in the village, with expensive wooden carvings and large glass windows. After a short time the leadership of TNC decided the organization was going to turn their attention more towards conservation, which meant the local development projects in Palolo would be abandoned.

The organization did not inform the villagers that the information they had gathered from the butterfly expeditions was used in the conservation material they published, which exposed the illegal logging TNC members had observed in the national park. The villagers who had helped with the biology project felt betrayed and built a grudge towards the TNC. Not only had they trusted them, but they had also showed the TNC their own homes, kebuns and families. On village level it was believed that TNC had lied from the beginning, that they always had planned to use them to document the illegal logging in the area, and when enough information had been gathered, they had left without saying anything about these projects. To be fooled in such a way made people feel bitter, and many uttered that they wanted to kill Mr D if he ever came back to the village.

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<sup>16</sup> Lore Lindu National Park was known for having a large diversity of butterflies.

The TNC incident combined with the trouble people faced in the start of the occupation left Mandiri people suspicious towards outsiders. The fear of being used again made people very guarded and particular about who they trusted. In 2001 TNC helped develop a zoning plan for Lore Lindu national park with the information they had gathered from the area. Since the plan had been developed without cooperation with the local communities and Mandiri, the reactions were hostile. Not only were the local communities not involved in the planning but they were also directly accused of damaging the environment, which again caused people in the resettlement village to be outraged. This time the TNC had not asked the villagers but had made assumptions. The plan demonized the local villages so it seemed like they were the main reason behind the degradation of the northern part of Lore Lindu National Park.

One of the NGOs working with the occupation accused the park officials and TNC of using the plan to try to finally have the Mandiri people removed from the area. This led to 300 members of FPM forcibly closing the offices of TNC and CARE (who cooperated with the butterfly projects) and accusing them of using the people in the area (Adiwibowo 2005: 150).

### **Logging and a Dangerous Leadership**

The logging escalated as the villagers settled in Mandiri. In the 2001 occupation about 1030 families moved to the area, which caused large areas of land to be cleared for farming. In the lead were the individuals who had assisted the PPA earlier, equipped with chain saws and a contact network in Palu. Now they worked with the other villagers, logging illegally, and selling the timber in Palu. From the initiative of the leader of FPM, Papa Lago, money from logging went to fund legal transactions and other expenses in the FPM fight to achieve rights to Mandiri. The leader was from the Pipikoro group and along with his two brothers he got deeply involved with the logging. Many people in the villages, especially women, were against the logging, so this caused a certain disharmony within the societies.

When I met with Papa Lago in Mandiri I had been warned that he was dangerously charismatic and very protective over people in the area. Nervous about how the meeting would go, I and Papa Lago's nephew had bought food, some pork, to help smooth things

along. It was dusk before the conversation started, and as daylight faded away Papa Lago's dramatic voice told the story of Mandiri with vigour. I quickly confirmed what people had told me; the man had a way with words, and knew how to get people to listen when he spoke. This led to him being chosen to be the leader of FPM in 2001. It seemed like a wise choice since he could persuade people with ease at a time when the occupation desperately needed people on their side. He could not only persuade people to follow him, he could also use his charisma to convince people about their cause. I was told that few people in the area could control a crowd the way Papa Lago had. But having him as a leader was not necessarily safe, or positive towards Mandiri's reputation, because Papa Lago was also deeply involved in the illegal logging. He told me of an incident that had been a vital turning point for the occupation, a point of no return for most of the settlers: the story of Papa Aldo.

This story started with logging. The timber depot was in Palu, which meant that the illegal loggers had to transport the wood on trucks down from the mountain on the Palu/Napu road, a trip paid for by the buyers. The loggers usually had permits from the forestry department which made it possible to present timber from the national parks as originating from other, legal, areas of forest. This way they could bring the timber all the way to Palu, and onto ships, without any problems from the police. Along the road there would be PPA officers stationed to check the paperwork of any trucks that transported wood down from the mountains. With the right papers the PPA could not protest to anyone doing this, but even without the right papers there were usually no problems getting through the road patrols since the villagers knew which PPA officers who could be bribed and could be informed by these where and when the road patrols would occur. It was well known that a large amount of the timber in Palu was illegal, especially after Mandiri started to get media coverage. The articles either presented NGO representatives speaking for or against the occupation, or mentioned illegal logging in the area. After the initial discussions on Mandiri died down, the articles became more and more focused on the illegal logging.

To avoid the PPA the trips to Palu were usually done at night. During one such trip in October 2002, six friends, including Papa Lago and Papa Aldo, were on their way to Palu with timber. On the way there they were spotted by the PPA and they were followed to the buyer's house by a patrol car. The friends recognized the officers to be earlier affiliates from

the time where they used to aid the PPA. Now the two officers held them at gunpoint. One of the men ran towards the officers and managed to take the guns away. It turned in to a brutal fist fight, and the gang of six had the upper hand. There were more officers in the car but they drove away quickly when the fight developed with parangs (ind: machetes). The two officers were beaten to an inch of their life, and the gang of six decided to drive them to the hospital. On the way to the hospital they met a police patrol who also told them the men had to be taken to the hospital. After having dropped the officers off, the gang drove out to a village near Palu and sat down outside an orphanage. Here they waited. It was clear that there would be consequences from the episode, so the group were on edge and listening for police sirens. Then the PPA came again, this time with reinforcements. The officers came closer until they were a metre from the gang. Suddenly they shot towards the group. Papa Aldo stuttered “sepertinya saya tertembak” (ind: I think i’m shot) and fell to the ground.

When the gang returned to Mandiri everyone there knew Papa Aldo had been killed. Tension and rage developed quickly in the discussions, and the next morning a large mob gathered outside the PPA office located at the outskirts of the settlement village in protest. The buildings were set on fire and burned to the ground. Officers and management present fled in panic and the property was destroyed. In another of the four resettlement villages a PPA office was also burned. Down the road from these buildings was the main office of the national park, and here the officers also escaped quickly even though there was no mob nearby. The buildings were left standing.

### **Ecological Consequences**

The main profit in the first years of the Mandiri occupation was illegal logging, which caused thousands of hectares of forest to be opened. One uncle in Mandiri told me that in the beginning, when Mandiri only had coffee trees, the valley was “dingin, dan pemburuan tidak sulit” (ind: it was cold and hunting was not hard). Since coffee trees thrive in the shadow of larger trees the forest in the area was mostly left standing at this point. When the 2001 occupation started to settle in, large areas of land was opened, and the cold temperatures disappeared along with the wild game. Nights became freezing and the days unbearable hot. The exception was for the people who cut trees or collected plants in the forest, since the

remaining forest helped to stabilize the temperature and protect the water resources. Cocoa trees need a certain amount of shade when young to protect itself from the boiling tropical sun, so when growing new cocoa crops it was common to put them under the shade of a larger tree the first years so it could grow strong. This was usually done with different types of fast-growing trees that quickly could provide the shade needed. When the cocoa had grown to a good size the shade tree was cut down and sold as timber. In Mandiri the natural forest could have been used as a way to shade the cocoa trees, but since inhabitants involved in logging made good money from the timber, the forest was cut down in such a speed that land was cleared faster than people could plant crops. Large open areas developed quickly.

Adiwibowo mentions that the Palolo valley experienced a large flood on December 13, 2003 (Adiwibowo 2005), affecting the four villages involved in the occupation and several more. I confirmed this with several people in the resettlement village, which of one person had his sawah fields ruined by the incident. The river running through the valley, from Mandiri, all the way down to the lowlands, had turned into a highway for mud and debri during a hujan deras (ind: a very heavy rainfall, typical of the raining season). The flood had come from Mandiri where the top soil had washed away into the river, which turned it in to an enormous brown wall that flushed down all loose material and structures near the river and transporting it down towards the valley below. The water damaged houses in the villages, injuring several people and destroyed areas of farmed land. At this time the occupation had been going on for over two years and the large opened areas had not been stabilized with growth, meaning that the fertile top soil had been left unprotected. With the ensuing heavy rainfall, a flood was inevitable<sup>17</sup>.

The flood caused yet another round of heated discussions on Mandiri, and another round of publicity in the local medias. The inhabitants feared the incident would cause more focus on the illegal logging and force involved parties, i.e. the PPA and the police, to retribute. Shortly after the flood Papa Lago participated in a radio show in Palu where he publicly declared that he worked with illegal logging, and if he or any of his friends face legal consequences for this

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<sup>17</sup> During my fieldwork the people I talked all agreed that the flood was caused by Mandiri, since so much top soil had dissappeared from the area. Also, Adiwibowo's thesis was published merely two years after the flood, and with him being a political ecologist, I can only assume that his conclusion that the flood originated in Mandiri can be bucket up with proof.

he would reveal the names of the individuals in the police, PPA and government who also were involved in the logging (Adiwibowo 2005). The public stunt could avoid these opposing parties to attempt any immediate action towards Mandiri since this would bring attention to the corrupted members of the institutions. By playing this hand Mandiri was safe for time being.

### **Life in Mandiri**

Inside Mandiri life was dramatic enough in itself. The inhabitants had to start their lives from scratch again, after just 20 years in the settlement village. Young people would finally have their own land, and older people would have more land to farm. As mentioned, the first few years several thousand hectares of land was cleared to give room for the settlers. I was told that the original idea had been to clear only the two hectares per family which had been promised to the people who had chosen to resettle to the Palolo area. With 1030 families who had decided to come along to occupy the area this meant 2060 hectares to fill their demands. This was quickly discarded as the logging was very profitable. According to Adiwibowo, only 63,5 hectares was cut down after two months, but by the end of the first year, ten months later, 3400 hectares had been opened (2005: 5).

After Mandiri people had settled down properly, they experienced other people migrating to the area. Mandiri had gotten a reputation of being a free area, and many chose to seek their new fortune there. When they arrived they met with the FPM who decided if the people could stay or not. Already from the beginning the FPM had decided that the land in Mandiri would not be sold, but rather go by a system of *Ganti-rugi* (ind: compensation), in other words transferred from one 'owner' to the next where the price would be a simple land compensation, instead of an estimated value. This practice can also be seen as a 'compensation for loss', as Acciaioli has described it in Lindu, an area west of Mandiri (Acciaioli 2009: 91). The practice was used because the future of Mandiri was insecure. They did not know how long they would be able to stay in the area, and to allow to sell and buy land would give an opportunity for business where people could buy land cheap in the clearing period and sell it for profit when (or if) the settlement had become more controlled by the government and not allowed to open more land. There was also a fear of wealthier



individuals buying land from people causing another land crisis to occur. If someone wanted to live in Mandiri they had to 'buy' the land from someone who wanted to leave, but they could only do that after the FPM had agreed that the person could be a part of the settlement.

I am not sure if the rules set by the FPM were put in practice the first years. Even if they had stated rules for the area it did not mean they were used. The inhabited area expanded rapidly, and the political fight was fueled by money from the illegal logging, so control of cleared areas could easily have been lacking. I know the Ganti-rugi system was used when one of Papa Lago's brothers decided to sell his land and move back to the resettlement village, but I never managed to find out the exact year of this transaction. Since the occupation had been going on for over a decade during my fieldwork it was difficult to confirm the actual practice of rules throughout the period. However, I was informed by the leader of FPM that the Ganti-rugi system was in place when I arrived.

With the new stream of immigration Mandiri became more ethnically varied. From the start most of the population were Kaili Da'a and Pipikoro origin, with Da'a being the clear majority. The new arrivals changed the landscape with different types of architecture and different churches. Several mosks were erected along with many churches, most of them being Bala Keselamatan (The Salvation army) since this was the church of the majority of inhabitants. The occupation grew to fill eight kilometres of the road through the national park.

### **Conflicts and New Leadership**

Papa Lago's role in Mandiri was very interesting. Not only was he involved in the planning of the occupation, attending the meetings and voicing his opinions, but he was also the leader of the FPM right from the start. In the resettlement village there was a saying, that Papa Lago and his two brother were like a triangle; one had brains, one had brawns, and the last had both. Papa Lago was both strong and charismatic. He was smart enough to use a situation to his advantage, and to see new opportunities when they arose. When people in the resettlement village decided to start the occupation he started to persuade more people to

come with them. He had the ability to make people listen when he spoke, which led to him being chosen to lead the FPM when it was founded.

As mentioned, Papa Lago played a key role in the illegal logging that developed in Mandiri. Not only was he in the group that assisted the PPA, but he also helped to link the illegal logging and the NGO payments. With the help of Papa Lago and his friends Mandiri was built on logging. His skill in manipulation was also shown in the way he used the names of the corrupt police officers, PPA and government officials to protect Mandiri after the flood.

For the people in Mandiri his role seemed more ambiguous, however. Most of the people I spoke to acknowledged his leadership, but it was clear that not all his actions were seen in positive light. He was there when they needed a leader, but there were many sides of him that never were accepted. The illegal logging in itself was controversial, with people protesting against it and many feared that it could damage Mandiri's cause. With his connection to the NGOs and logging companies Papa Lago also got more money to spend than his peers in the area. People, when asked about the situation, said they saw the money and the ways he spent it and thought he was corrupted. There was a fear that he had accepted deals with outsiders to receive benefits. The villagers became bitter by seeing him, the leader of FPM, having money in his pockets and by watching him and his brother build houses of cement and with metal roofs when most people lived in houses of wood. The fact that he was related to a relatively wealthy (and former noble) family line did not help the situation. The concept of nobility was no longer practised in Pipikoro (Sørum 2003: 85) and as far as I know it had never been practised among Pipikoro people in any of the resettlement villages. This being said it is possible that knowledge of a person's ancestors might change someone's behaviour towards them, and therefore there is also a chance that Papa Lago's leadership was more easily accepted on the count of his heritage. However, these are mere speculations as I have not had the opportunity to investigate this. For more information regarding the historical nobility of Pipikoro I recommend Lorraine V. Aragon's "Fields of the Lord" (2000).

The suspicion of corruption started to alienate people from Papa Lago, but it got worse. During these incidents he left his wife and married another woman. In the eyes of people

raised in the conservative church of the salvation army this was unforgivable. To marry, for Bala Keselamatan, meant to bond with that person for life, and to choose to abandoned a marriage was to abandon one's responsibility. In the villages divorce was possible, even if it was avoided if possible. The titles of a person changed after marriage, and by the birth of their first child they would be referred to as Mama and Papa (ind) followed by the child's name, or Tina and Tama (uma language) followed by the child's name. If a divorced was granted and a person chose to remarry, his or her past would be present in their title<sup>18</sup>. This was the case of Papa Lago, as his title reminded everyone of his two wives. To this he said that if it was his fate to have two wives than so be it, he could do nothing about it.

Next to Papa Lago's house there was a piece of land that he chose to build a church on. This church, a house of The Salvation Army, was given to the religious organization, built in concrete with a metal roof and painted in bright colours. The donation of a whole building spoke of Papa Lago's position in Mandiri, since such a building represented an enormous expense. After he married his second wife, the church was almost abandoned. Any attendance to mass would represent a loyalty to him, and nobody wanted to associate with a person breaking the laws of the church.

Papa Lago did not like people talking about his life, especially about his failures. When the rumours started to spread around the village about his two wives he reacted badly. His brother, Papa Skanok, helped him to beat up some people talking behind his back and they both got arrested. During his jailtime<sup>19</sup> Papa Lago's influence on Mandiri practically disappeared, and he moved his life to Pipikoro, where his second wife lived. During my fieldwork he spent his time between his Mandiri wife and his Pipikoro wife.

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<sup>18</sup> For more information on Pipikoro marriage customs I recommend chapter 2 of Lorraine V. Aragons' "Field of the Lord" (2000).

<sup>19</sup> As mentioned, it was very difficult to get exact numbers, dates or years of events, because it sometimes wasn't a priority and otherwise exact dates had simply been forgotten. I never got to the bottom of when Papa Lago had served time in jail nor did I find out exactly when he married his second wife (even if this has to have been sometime during Mandiri's existence). The difficulties I had with recording dates of events is partly why I have partly relied on Adiwibowo's thesis for statistics and dates.

After Papa Lago left his position the leadership of FPM was taken over by others. One significant figure was Sakua, a leader of the Kaili Da'a from one of the other resettlement villages. He was just as charismatic but didn't have connections to the logging companies. With Papa Lago out of the picture it was easier to affiliate with new NGOs and resources without fear of being associated with logging. Mandiri could start fresh. A second person from the Pipikoro group also stepped up to the role, and with the new leadership Mandiri was more secure. Without new leadership the FPM could control their image more and present themselves as peaceful and environmental. The end of Papa Lago's leadership ended in many ways also a play of masculine dominance, a struggle to regain control and pride over oppressed masculine identities. This is what I will explore further in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 3:**

### **What makes a man**

When in Mandiri I found that one of the most important aspects of the occupation was the masculine role and how its different aspects affected the community. Many of the factors that triggered the the occupation was of massive masculine importance, and at the time the only way to fulfill a man's role for those affected was to turn to rather unconventional solutions. In this chapter I will explore how the motivation behind the occupation can be understood in terms of masculine realization, drinking circles, and a small society's expectation towards young men becoming adults. First, after chapter two's historical perspective, I will give a light description of Mandiri at the time of my fieldwork. After this description the chapter will dive into some of the male spheres involved by first exploring the ideal image of a man in the Pipikoro group, then go deeper into some exclusively masculine spheres.

#### **Mandiri in 2012**

When I arrived in Mandiri for my fieldwork, most of the drama surrounding the occupation had calmed down. Having lived there for eleven years people had settled in and got on with their lives. The area was still not a legal 'village', which meant they lacked rights to things like school and a hospital clinic, but the FPM were working towards a solution. They had managed to stay there for so long that the government in Palu and Palolo had become accustomed to them, and since there were no confrontations between the inhabitants and PPA or police, the idea of legalizing the area as a village was close to reality.

The logging was still going on, but at a much slower pace. The FPM had set a limit of 6500 hectares for Mandiri to clear. This was enough land for the inhabitants to live on for the future, and with an exact number to be enforced, the relationship with the national park could be held on good terms. If this limitation will be held is not yet clear. According to the FPM the trees cut down during my fieldwork was for local use only, to build houses and work structures. They had forbidden any commercial logging, which meant that to organize this would result in severe sanctions. Any individuals who tried to sell on their own would receive the same treatment.

The cocoa trees had grown to full fruitbearing size, and was the main income for the inhabitants. The houses had become more permanent, and the first Mandiri generation had been raised there. There was still no school, which meant the children either played with their friends or helped in the kebuns during typical school hours. Some had already buried family on Mandiri land, among them Papa Lago who had buried his mother on the land behind his house in 2011. To bury their dead in the ground there was a sure sign that they would refuse to leave if their case would finally be lost, as the dead signified a permanent location for family in that very spot. Here it is important to note that even if Pipikoro people resettled to a different area, their dead was not left behind when they travelled to the new area. A large part of the village refused the resettlement, and quite a few returned from the resettlement area, ensuring-intentionally or not- that there were enough people left to tend graves . The graves also signified a belonging to Pipikoro land, which never could be erased. Families could have graves in Pipikoro, Mandiri and in the resettlement village, without it contradicting any loyalty towards those areas. By burying people in Mandiri one could say that people added Mandiri to the list of lands they had connection to.

The FPM worked hard to realize the legalization of the area, and during my stay there was a confrontation with the provincial governor. Only days after I had arrived in the field they received a letter from the governor stating that the occupation had to end and that the FPM's case had been finally denied. This led to several letters from FPM and a protest in Palu with Sakua standing strong as a leader speaking to the crowd. As mentioned, Papa Lago's role in Mandiri was practically non-existent, with him spending more time in Pipikoro than in the National Park. The FPM meetings were now held on a weekly basis with new leaders, Sakua being one of them.

### **The Masculine Role**

I was told that in Pipikoro tradition the expectations to a man were strict. Not only did he have to have work, he also needed to perform this work outside of the house area. The Pipikoro group had exclusively been petani up until the resettlement and the larger majority still relied on farming as their main form of income and subsistence. This affected the

perception of 'proper work'. All adults worked in the fields and gardens during Siang (from 10.00 to 15.00 o'clock), and where women sometimes stayed in the house at this time to tend to domestic obligations or infants, men had no such duties and had no reason to stay in the house during the siang hours. If a man did stay in the house he would be reprimanded by the women or teased because of his behaviour. The only time I saw men in domestic areas during siang was when they were doing house repairs, or during days where the cocoa pods had been harvested and the beans were drying in the sun. However, in the latter case most men went out visiting other households or participating in village meetings. There was always a reason to be out of the house.

As most people depended on the land to provide for themselves and their families, owning land was seen as essential for status and to have a place in the village. To become an adult a young man of the Pipikoro group had to have land. Achieving this was a priority in families, since giving land to the son put him to work and made him in charge of his own harvest, thereby making him fit for marriage. The land was not only to provide for him but also for his wife who would work alongside him in the gardens. Aragon has noted that uxorilocal marriage is the norm in the parts of Pipikoro that my group originated from (2000: 66-67), but I found that even if strong matrilineal affiliation was common, it was preferred that a young couple created their own household on land received from either side of the family. One son or daughter, commonly the youngest, would live in close proximity to the aging parents to take care of them, and would inherit the house on grounds of this responsibility.

Some friends who I frequently associated with in the villages were in this position, young men with land of their own. They were all in their late teens or early twenties, not yet married, and with the exception of working in their gardens they were free from most obligations. They would visit any aunt or uncle and sleep on mats in Ruang Tamu (Ind: reception room, living room)<sup>20</sup>. There was strong affiliation within the Pipikoro group. Every adult woman was an aunt (in Indonesian: tante) and every adult man was an uncle (in Indonesian: om). To use these names were a sign of respect and used for anyone older or with

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<sup>20</sup> This is the front room of a house, where guests are received and formal matters are tended to. It is the most public part of any house. To be defined as a close friend, family or a trusted acquaintance a person would be invited into the kitchen. The Ruang Tamu was also the place where relatives or guests would sleep if there were no bed rooms available.

higher status<sup>21</sup>. If someone were of the same age and status they were simply referred to as cousins.

In every house a young cousin was welcome, and one could expect to be fed or be allowed to sleep there if there was need. My friends could march in the door of cousin Ake's house and shout "Cousin! Feed me, I'm hungry!" Food was always there to eat and after the meal they would smoke kretek-cigarettes<sup>22</sup> and sleep.

Most men in the villages smoked, my young friends being no exceptions. The habit was most visible in drinking circles where one or two men would bring the sager (ind: palm wine) and others would buy cigarettes so that the contribution would be shared. Of the Pipikoro group only the men smoked as it was seen unfit for a woman to do so. This is not only the case of Pipikoro or Sulawesi, but for Indonesia as a whole. From a survey done in 1980 it was calculated that 85 per cent of Indonesian men smoked, compared to less than 1,5 per cent of the women<sup>23</sup>. In the Pipikoro group there were women who smoked, but those who did hid their vice and only smoked among trusted friends and family. The rules on drinking were more lax than smoking, and a woman could drink a glass of sager in the privacy of her own home or the home of close family. To drink in public, however, would risk her reputation and she would be seen as a dirty woman, in other words a woman who didn't follow the right path of a Christian. There was a firm belief that an indecent life, to break God's rules, would give misfortune to the individual and his or her family. In the past the punishment would come from Pue (Uma language; the owner, owners), but with conversion to The Salvation Army the God referred to was a protestant one. Acceptance of The Salvation Army's God was a relatively easy one, since it in many ways followed the system of rules and an angered god as they were accustomed to. The change from animal sacrifice to donating money to the church was a bit more complicated. To read more on this change and interpretations on The

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<sup>21</sup> This can be contrasted to the more common Indonesian titles used when speaking respectfully to someone, Bapak (ind: father, mr) and Ibu (ind: mother, mrs). Both in villages and in Palu these titles were only used in formal occasions.

<sup>22</sup> Most cigarettes sold in Indonesia is kretek, which is tobacco mixed with clove. Most smokers I encountered described it as a healthier option to pure tobacco as the spice was believed to extract poison from the tobacco when smoked.

<sup>23</sup> Reid (1984) specifies that the number of men smoking is unrelated to income levels, as the percentage shows how many men would smoke if they could afford it. Since tobacco, in 1980 and during my stay in Sulawesi, presents a large expense for low income families, the number doesn't accurately represent reality of smoking.



Salvation Army's role in Pipikoro I recommend Lorraine V. Aragon's "Field of the lords" (2000).

One cousin loved having me around her pondok since I were a woman who didn't gossip, and didn't judge her smoking and drinking. We would sit behind the small pondok and look at her husband work on the kolam (ind: pond) behind the building. Her children would run around and play with the fish they recently found in the kolam, while the adults would drink saguer and smoke in the shadow of a cocoa tree. The pondok was by the side of the road, just on the border of the national park, and at the front of the house they had put up a small warung where they sold foodstuff they had gotten from Palu, which included small bags of instant coffee, salt, candy and cigarettes. Every once in a while a motorcycle would stop and shout for the "IBU!" and our cousin or her husband had to tend to their customers wishes.

The pondok had a veranda on top, which was not common in the area. The veranda was roofed and had a view of the entire valley below. This was very practical for hot days where the breeze would ease the suffering of siang hours and quickly remove the heat when the work day (and with it the hottest hours) ended. On this veranda we could find cousin Vesti sleeping. We would crawl up the small bamboo ladder and sit around until he woke up, then share our cigarettes and bring the large jug of saguer out of hiding.

Vesti, aged 19, was known as a bad boy. Instead of working in his kebun he had a tendency to drink saguer from the siang heat to evening. Once an Om joked that the only time Vesti would go to the kebun was to extract saguer from the enau trees<sup>24</sup>, though he preferred to have someone else bring it. There were often someone who brought saguer from their own kebuns, but this rarely happened early in the day since people were busy working on their cocoa trees.

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<sup>24</sup> The enau palm was a palm that was grown for production of saguer which was a product of the fermented sap. The branches were used to make thatched roofs.

I was told that in the past Vesti would lash out when he got drunk, and that the fighting had given him quite the reputation within the family. Still, he owned land and had a house of his own. The property became his when his mother died and his father had married another woman. The father had left his house to Vesti and moved to a different house in the village with his new wife. Left on his own Vesti would drink in excess and air his frustration with violence.

When I asked about Vestis situation to others in the group the reply was that whereas a mans death would leave a family in mourning, the death of a woman would leave the family in ruins. A mans duties in a family could also be performed by a woman, this being chopping firewood, tend to the kebun, selling the crops, and so on<sup>25</sup>. A man, however, could not be responsible for taking care of the hearth, prepare food for the whole family, and take care of the children. He could perform these duties from time to time, but if he was alone in the household and had to perform these duties every day he would seem effeminate and weak. It would cause him to lose honour.

The woman was the center of every household. She would get up before her husband to lit the hearth and cook the morning coffee and boil the rice of the morning meal. When he got up they would drink coffee, eat together as a family, and then take off to the kebun to work on the cocoa trees and everything else that was growing in their gardens. When they brought back the vegetables for their evening meal she would again light the hearth and prepare the meal.

The difference between men's and women's responsibilities made it harder to adapt for men who were shut off from aspect of their male role. As the men had no land it was difficult to realize the expectations their families held, and there was no real way of fulfilling a man's role. Without land to tend he could not have proper work, and with no proper work, how would he be fit for marriage? As time passed people learned to manage with less land than

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<sup>25</sup> An important exception here is hunting, as this was strictly for men. But hunting had decreased since the national park had been founded, not only because of restrictions from the PPA but also because a lot of wild game had retreated due to loss of habitat to logging.

expected, and men had to find other ways to realize themselves. One of these ways was logging.

### **Masculine rituals: drinking circles and status symbols**

Here I will go deeper into a social sphere where I found most of the stories of Mandiri's past, and where I found that men continuously reconfirmed their past actions and the resilience they believed they represented. There were aspects of daily life limited to men, such as drinking circles, which provided a social sphere where conversation could flow freely, stories could be told, and where friendships would be strengthened. Problems could be drowned in drink or be resolved through discussion. Here people did not talk about Mandiri using facts or numbers, but rather with emotion, hope for the future, and pride for past achievements. There were no negative feelings for the controversial past Mandiri was known for, since the past simply was seen as a reaction to the circumstances, a symbol of the pressured situation they had found themselves in. The fact that they were still in Mandiri could be seen as reason enough to celebrate, as they had built new lives for themselves when little help was to be found. Still, drinking circles where the past could be celebrated was also reinforcing Mandiri's bad reputation, as rumours and reports of drunken fights and drunk driving reached Palu.

Living in a country with one of the largest populations of Muslims in the world, the Pipikoro group was outnumbered as Christians. This did not stop them practicing pig farming or producing palm wine. The sager held a very important role, as most Pipikoro men drank alcohol, and drinking occurred in a daily ritual in sore<sup>26</sup>. People would come back from work in the kebun. The heat would subside slightly and men searched for their friends to see where the next drinking circle would be. They would call each other's cell phones or walk around the village searching for their friends. Some men were more likely than others to have extracted sager during the workday, which made the search easier. When gathered they would sit in a circle, either in a house or on a pondok in the kebun, and play domino with small cardboard cards they had bought in nearest warung earlier. A single cup was sent

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<sup>26</sup> Indonesian for evening, typically defined by the time of day when the midday heat disappeared and people would stop working in the kebun and return home.

around the group from the man who sat next to the large can of saguer, a 5 or 10 liter plastic jug filled with pink sweet liquid.

Saguer is a palm wine that can be found on most of the Indonesian islands, even if the dear child has many names. It has the strenght of beer and is extracted from the enau palm. When gathered from the tree it can only stay drinkable for a few days before it goes sour and become “food for the fish”, as one uncle described it. The Pipikoro group always extraced it the same day as it was drunk, as it was known to go sour overnight<sup>27</sup>. The fermentation was done inside the tree itself, and was triggered by breaking branches at certain points and then leaving the tree to build up sap pressure around the break. After a certain period of time<sup>28</sup> the fermentation has reached its peak, and was ready to use when tapped. After it was extracted a mix of herbs and roots (called buli in Uma language) was added to give it a more bitter flavour. This taste was sought after and gives the drink its pink colour. Every man who made his own saguer also had his own buli, and some men were famous in the village because of their buli mix. It was an artform to find the right blend of bitter and sweet. If the finished product was good people would compliment it by saying “Ini pahit, Om” (this is bitter, uncle) and cheer him.

If a man had many enau trees he could use the excess saguer to make a distilled alcohol called cap tikus (ind: mouse brand or mark of mouse), which would keep for longer. It had the strength, taste and apperance of weak vodka, and was usually mixed with a non-alcoholic drink when consumed. In the villages it was more common to sell it than to drink it, since two bottles of low quality cap tikus sold for the price of a chicken. If there was no distillation-equipment to be found the alternative was to make red sugar, or palm sugar, where the saguer was boiled down to a thick sirup and then to solid lumps of red sugary mass. In this process you could start in the morning by digging a large hole in the ground where the fire was set, and boil the fluid for hours over the flame. In this situation the man usually had enough saguer to get himself and his friends drunk in the process.

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<sup>27</sup> There were chemicals that could be added to the saguer to make it last longer, but this was often toxic and only added to wine produced for selling purposes. This was not practised by the Pipikoro group.

<sup>28</sup> The time of fermentation varied with temperatures, the biggest general difference being between the highlands and lowlands.

In Pipikoro the tradition of making saguer was long and a generation ago it was the typical drink in the village, presented at every meal or, during work in the kebun, or if people were thirsty. They rarely drank water as it was known to make you sick. Their old village had been located on top of a mountain, and as mentioned in chapter two there was no proper water source close to the village. The only way to get water was to walk down to the foot of the mountain where there was a river, and bring the water back up. This river was also as toilet and place for washing clothes and utensils. When they moved the village it became easier to rely on the water springs but still, during my time there, the water was still scarce and there was difficulty getting enough water for household chores. In recent times a development project had installed toilets in some of the houses, but not all households had enough water to make the toilets flush correctly<sup>29</sup>. Along with the new access to water, drinking water was becoming the new staple, and this water was always boiled and kept in containers for the day. Coffee was preferred, but was rarely drunk without vast amounts of sugar and before sugar had become widely available in Pipikoro, few had been keen on the bitter drink the missionaries consumed.

Even if coffee and water became more popular the custom of having saguer for every meal was important for some families and continued in the resettlement village. One tante remarked that earlier her husband would refuse to eat if there was no saguer to be had. He had left Pipikoro in his youth and found his wife when he lived in the resettlement village. When they moved to Mandiri they planted many enau trees in their newly cleared land. For the first few years there they lived on boiled bananas and cassava, and the saguer for every meal was a comfort since the rice they desired was out of reach.. However, the habits changed when her husband was told by the doctor to stop drinking.

Like many before him his organs had been damaged from the drink. There was several men in the villages that were forced sober because of excessive drinking. This was no hindrance to participate in the drinking circles, however, as most had enough courtesy not mention their

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<sup>29</sup> For the sake of good order, I am here referring to squatting toilets.

sobriety. The cup of sager was discreetly passed on to the next person, and the drinking continued.

When sitting down to drink there was an unspoken rule to not carry a parang. It was to be removed and placed outside the circle whilst they drank. This was because it symbolised a lack of trust to be armed while drinking<sup>30</sup>. This even included the small parang customized for sager making that some men prided themselves with. In the circle it was important that everyone was of equal status, and had equal respect.

One way this was expressed was through cigarettes. Whenever a social gathering would occur, cigarettes would be a part of it. The habit of smoking was relatively new, and the old generation (the grandparents of the young adults and the newly married youth) had seen the transition from betel-nut chewing to the tobacco consumption that characterized the social interaction. The betel-nut was said to give a mild stimulation and would therefore invigorate people during meetings and keep minds sharp. The ritual consisted of chewing areca nuts (known as pinang) together with lime and leaves or fruits from betel vine. The chewing turned the teeth bright red, and the grounds outside the houses to a dark colour, since the betel was spat out once its effect had worn off.

The role betel filled in the past was not simply stimulation; it was a vital part of social interaction. A betel set was put in front of guests or during village meetings, and to refuse to present or receive betel during such an interaction “was esteemed a deadly insult” (Reid 1984: 531). The role of the betel chewing was similar across the Islands and was also used in ritual aspects of funerals, healing rituals and marriage. In certain areas of southern Sulawesi the betel chewing started after the transition to adult status, after the teeth-filing ritual which assured their new place in society (Reid 1984: *ibid*).

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<sup>30</sup> Note that another important factor was that if someone lost their inhibitions and started a fight, a parang would quickly turn a drunken brawl to murder. Luckily, I only heard stories of such incidents.

Tobacco came with european traders in the 16th century, and the plant quickly became a popular crop in the ares of trade. The use of tobacco followed, smoked mainly in pipes. The first documented bungkus, a sigar or sigarett made with a maize or banana leaf wrapper, was in 1658, even though the pipe became and mantained itself a status symbol in places like Java and Batavia. The word used in Indonesia today for smoking (merokok) and tobacco or sigarett (rokok) comes from dutch (roken) which shows a certain influence in the new social habit(Reid 1984: 535-536).

When tobacco became more common for the Pipikoro group it was rolled up in different types of leaves to form a thick sigar. In more recent times these have been replaced by mass produced sigarett brands imported from Palu. The families that moved to the resettlement village did not continue the habit of rolling cigars, and since the sigarett became cheaper, and the disposable income increased, there was no longer a need to grow tobacco for personal consumption. In Pipikoro I only saw a few old men smoke cigars. The smoking of bungkus or sigar was short lived in the area, as even in the city of Makassar in south of Sulawesi, sigar smoking had spread to only the richest circles around 1900 (Reid 1984: 538), and when the mass produced ones became available a few decades later it slowly lost popularity again.

Tobacco, in it's various forms, had taken over the role of the betel nut in social interaction by the middle of the 20th century, and many places it also began to replace the nut in rituals and seremonies. By the time Reid studied the Sa'dan Toraja located in South Sulawesi in the 80's, they substituted sigarett for betel during their death feasts (Reid 1984: 540). Even if the uses were similar the new stimulant differed from the old in one significant aspect. Whereas both women and men chew betel, only men smoked tobacco. There was a period where the tobacco was chewed with betel, but when smoking became the dominant way to consume the new stimulant women were excluded from the practice. Reid points to the dutch habits of smoking as a possible explanation, since only the dutch *men* smoked and the fashion of smoking came from european influence (Reid 1984: 539). The new habit was based on a gender segregated image, and would continue as such a practice up until present time.

Since the Pipikoro area experienced missionaries as early as the beginning of the 20th century, I imagine the strongest image constructs of tobacco was formed through these dutch individuals. This can be assumed since the bungkus or sigars had achieved a significant role in the area, which fits the contemporary fashions of when the missionaries arrived. With tobacco transforming the male social sphere, it was more acceptable for women to continue with betel chewing. The areca trees which grows the pinang nut used to chew betel were also grown in the resettlement village and in Mandiri, but the practise of chewing was not very common.

During my fieldwork it was only the oldest in the village that kept a betel set. A man who was nearly hundred years old would sit in his window and spit the red betel liquid out on the grass below his house, and a grandmother would walk between her two houses clutching her walking stick and a pouch where she kept her betel accessories. She would chew with her few good teeth and tell all the children and young people that the betel kept the teeth healthy, and was good for the stomach.

The young men in the village all smoked, but even if people could smoke when they wanted, the most ritualized behaviour of smoking was to be found when people sat down to drink. Just as betel nut chewing had been an element of social events in the past, sigarettes was an essential part of drinking sessions. When there was drink to be had the typical routine was to pool together enough money for a few packs of the cheapest brands. These were placed in the middle of the circle for everyone to enjoy. When there were no more sigarettes a volunteer was sendt out for more. If someone was short on money someone else would cover for them, but it was done discreetly. The money would be transfered to the buyer without anyone looking and nobody would mention it. If someone in the circle were wealthy they would usually take on the expences, however, this was also done subtly, as to not break the good feeling in the circle. Just as the rule that banned parangs was there to symbolize friendship and, sharing the sigarettes in this way presented equality in the group. As long as the drinking session lasted, any difference between the participants was downplayed, smoking the same tobacco and drinking of the same cup.



In the the resettlement village there was differences in disposable income among, and this mostly presented in housing and clothing. The wealthiest had cement houses with ceramic tiles on the floor and new clothes from the market or from Palu. The families with low income had wooden houses, and in between were various degrees of cemented houses, the most common being a cement floor with wooden walls and and a metal roof. When planning drinking circles, such differences were not important since a floor and a roof or even a grassy field was sufficient for an evenings enjoyment, a practice that helped enforce the equality of the event. Cigarettes, however, was a way to express difference in these interactions. More expensive brands were seen as privately owned and were kept beside the owner, unlike the cheaper brands that were in the middle of the circle and for everyone. If anyone wanted to try the more expensive brands they first asked for permission (which was always given). This practice was rare in the resettlement village and Mandiri, since only a few people could afford the more expensive brands, and most drank with family where there was no need to express difference between the participants.

In Palu the practice of 'private brands' was more common, and it was unspoken rules on what brand to smoke. On my monthly travel to Palu for visa-renewal I would interact with the urban members of the Pipikoro group, along with people from a wider variety of ethnic groups. Here it was a discussion of taste and preference for the individual, since the disposable income was greater. Marlboro, being one of the most expensive brands on the market, represented something more international and luxurious than e.g. Sam Sue which usually was smoked by farmers (or so was the perception of the urban dwellers).

The favorite drinking spot in Palu was with cousin Fieram. He worked at a tobacco distribution company and spent his time driving a truck around in the villages and beyond, selling cigarettes to warungs in the areas. Every time we met him he would give out free packs, often the newest brands on the market, and we jokingly described him as the tobacco candyman. The access to cigarettes and his job in the city gave him certain prestige among the men. At his house he would do the same, putting a few packs in the circle when the drink was passed around, and everytime he came back from business trips in the mountains he

brought sager with him. People would gather at his house, where he had built a large roofed pondok outside, and drink until they fell asleep on the sitting mats.

Fieram had special cap tikus which he brought out when guests were entertained; two large pitchers of alcohol, one containing different medicinal herbs and the other containing the penis of a crocodile and a deer fetus. By Pipikoro tradition this was for medicinal use, but in Fierams house it served multiple purposes, including impressing guests.

The fetus he had acquired himself through hunting in the areas around the resettlement village, but I never got to the bottom of the crocodile penis. Both were objects of strong symbolism. The fetus was difficult to find, as the hunter had to kill a pregnant deer to get one. Because of this it was seen great luck to the hunter and it would give him magic to obtain it. The crocodile penis was seen as equally rare but also as a symbol of male virility. Together they were seen to enhance a mans sexual performance and strength. The cap tikus in the pitchers was seen as stronger than other types and would get you drunk faster. I am not sure if this saying was based on the objects added to the alcohol or the fact that Fieram only used grade A cap tikus in his pitchers.

Since the circumstances around Fierams house were different, so was the behaviour in the drinking circles. Here Fieram would take the role as the host and the equal status around the group was therefore challenged. Not only did he provide the drink and the cigarettes, but he often also presented his guests with pantola, which simply means food to go with the drink. This was present in most drinking circles to prevent people to become too drunk. It could consist of any food found in the house except for plain rice since this was thought to get people more drunk and give a horrible hang over the next day. The pantola could vary from cassava or bananas to chicken heads, bat or lizard. It was always fried in oil since it was the preferred way of preparing food, and because it would make the food heavier/richer and therefore soak up more alcohol.

Most commonly the pantola was an animal that had been hunted, or cheap meat like chicken heads. This way it was no large expense for the supplier and would still be seen as luxurious since it was meat, a rare delicacy in the villages. Of course, this favoured men who hunted, as an uncle who had a skill to catch bats. Not only did he sell bats outside his pondok, but he also prepared them for pantola when people came along.

If there was no food around, or if the drinking took place outside, it was common to buy small packet of nuts or fried snacks from the nearest warung. However, if the drinking was part of a celebration the pantola could be of more rare food stuff. If there was a wedding in the family or a Christian holiday there could be access to pork or dog meat which were seen as luxury foods. Dog were especially sought after since it was seen as very potent. One uncle had told his son that “dog meat will make you strong. It will make you grow up”. The dark gamey meat was usually fried along with numerous spices in a dish called RW, which I was told originated from Manado in Northern Sulawesi. Before influences came from the north, dog was not eaten by Pipikoro people, but during my fieldwork it was sought after as a celebration food and as a christmas feast. Still, it was rarely food that was center of attention when drinking saguer. To find time to drink in the afternoon helped wash away fatigue, and, as one cousin said after his fifteenth cup, “makes you forget your troubles”.

Even with the old saguer traditions in Pipikoro communities, drinking was controversial for most families. This was not only because Sulawesi had a strong majority of muslims, but also because the church was negative towards alcohol consumption. Still, I found no equivalent sosial event which held equality and respect in such high regards. The closest thing would be the FPM meetings held in a Bantaia building, a roofed platform for village meetings. These buildings had in the past served as temples and was described both as temples and as meeting houses by the people I asked. The name Bantaia had been described by Walter Kaudern, an ethnographer who traveled through Sulawesi (then Celebes) in the years 1917-1920, and writed that a “Bantaja was a certain type of temple” he found in the Palu valley (the area of the province capital), and that the more typical name for a temple was Lobo (Kaudern 1925: 400). It is worth mentioning that Mandiri also had a Lobo, though I never participated in a meeting here. In the Bantaia all participants sat on the floor of the building, all on the same

level, in a circular formation. During the meeting the participants would be served tea and coffee for refreshment. In the past I was told that saguer would fill this role, along with betel quids.

As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons why I have chosen to explore the drinking circles was because of how freely people spoke of their past during these sessions. This was where people were equals and respected, and where people could speak of their past actions without worrying about the rest of the world, and as a result, this was where I found Mandiri's past to be validated the most. People were proud of their actions and what they had achieved in spite of so many trying to prevent them. In some ways drinking circles was a way to celebrate a victory towards those who stole the land, and those who disagreed with the escalating logging that had been practised. One uncle would tell the story of how he got a tattoo, during a trip to Palu, just at the time when tattoos were new in the area. a sailor's tattoo with faded ink looking nothing like the new flashy tattoos the young men wore on their skin. One cousin leaned in and said "Only preman (ind: bandits) have those tattoos. He has lived a wild life". Another uncle would brag about how he had caught a crocodile while hunting, while yet another would brag about a fight. It seemed like drinking circles was the way to confirm the wild past, as if bringing the logging era with them into their present. It seemed fitting, in some ways, as drinking was controversial like the logging had been, even if the controversy was of a different type than the one loggers had experienced. This controversy surrounding alcohol will be explored in the next chapter, but first we need to take a step back from the drinking circles and try to see them in relation to other types of social gatherings.

For men drinking circles had the potential of being the centre of social life. Here friendships could be started or strengthened, and contributions such as pantola, saguer and cigarettes could lubricate future deals with business associates. There were other arenas for social interaction men could participate in, but none was exclusively male like drinking circles. Whereas hunting also were for males only, the presence of the national park prevented men to hunt as they liked. When asked people told me there was no hunting in Mandiri, and I also saw no evidence of hunting while being there. The people I asked said it was because they lived inside the national park, and I assume this was part of the cooperation with the park

management although I have not had this confirmed. In the resettlement village hunting was practised, but it was not overly common and therefore not practised by most. I am not sure if hunting was rare because of the presence of the park, lack of wild game, if people preferred domestic meat. The park certainly had its affect on hunting practices, as no hunting was allowed within its borders, but I also believe that there had been a decrease in wild game for some time. I was told that the infamous Sulawesi Babirusa (*Babirusa Celebensis*), the unique 'pig deer' which is found only on Sulawesi, used to roam the woods around the resettlement village and the area which now is Mandiri, but that the animal had disappeared years ago. Some further investigation revealed to me that the Babirusa, at the time of my fieldwork in 2012, could only be found in the northern part of the island. Animals like wild pig and deer was the common prey during my time there. One aunt once bought a wild pig from a hunter for a feast she was having, and I noticed that while slaughtering a domestic pig was an affair that required a large amount of people for butchering and processing, the wild pig was a fraction of the size of the domestic pigs in the village and could be processed by 5 people in a relatively short amount of time. While I helped chopping the pig into thumb-sized pieces the aunt explained how the wild pig always was leaner than tame pigs, had stronger flavour, and that it was more delicious. I never figured out if this was only her private opinion, or if it was shared by most people in the village. There were very few houses where I observed people eat game, which was not surprising since so few people hunted. Since the practice was so rare I was also never able to observe or discuss it with any practising hunter, and I can therefore not say if hunting had the same notions of equality and respect that I witnessed in the drinking circle, or what significance hunting had to the masculine identity. I can also not exclude the possibility that there could be secret (or hidden) hunting communities in the villages which I had no access to, but since people openly described certain people as 'hunter' if I asked it is unlikely that this is the case.

Other than hunting, it was difficult to define arenas for socialization for men only. When discussing unisexed arenas, more options become available. Aside from socializing in private houses, where whole families, neighbours and friends, could gather before or after work, there was also a traditional market once a week in every village (including Mandiri) where people could socialize and meet with people from the area or from afar, including buginese (bugis) traders (see chapter 1) who travelled from village to village and kept the same spot in

the market area every week. One arena which was mainly male was football, as each village had one or more team with only male players. However, even if matches were relatively frequent, and a team would practise once a week, it could not compare to the potentially daily participation of drinking circles, leading the latter to be a more dominating part of men's social life. From the stories I was told, logging seemed to have been a strong community of masculinity, with only male participants, strong cooperation and companionship, but as logging no longer was the centre of business in the area it was not viable as a social arena. Drinking circles, however, remained and flourished, and since drinking circles had a long tradition we can safely assume that they were practised during the logging era too. Maybe the drinking helped strengthen the logging community during Mandiri's first years, as they definitely seemed to help maintain memories of logging days during my time there. By losing logging the men involved also must have lost an important sense of community and purpose, and it seemed to me that drinking circles could be a way to regain some of that community and help live through memories of their successful past. It was as if the feelings connected to logging, such as community, independence and pride, had transferred to drinking circles.

If we go back to the concept of controversy, there is one last arena of socialization that needs mentioning: the church. This was a social sphere more commonly associated with women, but it was not unusual to find men socializing in these circles. The next chapter will go deeper into the church environments.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Dimension of Alcohol and a Christian Minority**

While trying to understand how alcohol was perceived by outsiders, it is important to note the religious factor in Mandiri's situation. In the highlands of Central Sulawesi there is a larger concentration of Christians than in the lowlands. The distinction between highland and lowland in Sulawesi can be seen as a tendency typical for larger areas of Southeast Asia, where people inhabiting the lowland have different social forms from the highland people (George 1991: 537). Whereas the lowlands are almost exclusively muslim, the highlands are mostly Christian protestant. The lowlands also constitutes about 90 per cent of the population on Sulawesi, and with an average of 22 people per square kilometre it leaves the mountains scarcely populated (Aragon 1996b: 352). The Pipikoro group was converted by missionaries from The Salvation Army early in the 20th century. These missionaries traveled through the Kulawi area, experienced great success with the conversion, and founded a system for general education. If the local communities accepted their faith, they did not have to convert to the same food restrictions as their lowland counterparts, and these type of restrictions "encapsulate one of the primary objections had to Islam." (Aragon 1996b: 357).

During my fieldwork all of the priests were indonesian, and quite a few were native to Sulawesi. It was a dream for many parents to have their child become a priest. It meant their child would no longer work hard hours in the kebun, but rather participate in the frequent church meetings, Ibadah, which were held every night at different houses, with the household providing snacks and coffee for the participants. In crisp white shirts the priests would lead the Ibadah and stand as an authority-figure in front of the rest of the congregation, as a symbol of moral purity and right living.

The system that the founder of The Salvation Army, William Booth, had created, had a structure similar to an army. He had made himself the head of the large 'corps' who travelled to the colonies to spread the true word of god (Aragon 1996b: 356). In Indonesia this corps manifested itself in a system of welfare and safety for members. Since the majority was poor

the church could provide help to pay for unforeseen expenses, i.e. to rebuild a burned down house, to help pay for funerals, or to cover surgery and hospital bills. In the villages I lived in, this system was seen as a great strength as it was the only insurance people had. It also gave a form of empowerment, since most were Petani and therefore had low social status. With the church they were part of something bigger, and could look up at the large rich cathedrals in Palu as if it also represented them. As Aragon argues,

*“Christianity can serve as a focus point for political unity among small-scale segmentary populations, thereby aiding them in their negotiations with national majorities already affiliated with other world religions” (Aragon 1996b: 360).*

In other words could the church strengthen them in relation to outsiders. Being members of Bala Keselamatan (ind: The Salvation Army) people could be united through gatherings and seremonies. Church membership not only entailed attending Sunday mass, but also to attend the daily Ibadahs that were held in the villages. During both mass and Ibadah participants gave tithe to the church in a small plate passed around the room. The sum was a mere 2000 rupiah for most people, more if one could afford it (A priest could lay down 20 000 or 50 000 rupiah, which was a lot more than most people in the villages could afford<sup>31</sup>). The money people gave could be seen as a type of insurance since they knew they could receive help from the church if they needed it.

In Mandiri the church was important for many families. The church ibus were well known and respected. They were central in helping organizing the Ibadahs and to help with the new church buildings which were under construction. My Tante in Mandiri was one of these Ibus, which meant I came along to the Ibus' meetings, the Ibadahs in the evenings, and to mass at dawn. We would wake before sunrise and tend the hearth so we could boil water for coffee. After drinking the coffee the cold from the night was chased away<sup>32</sup>, and we would walk down the Palu/Napu road towards the church. This walk was several kilometres, meaning that we walked past many houses on the way. Some villagers would join us when we walked past, others would be sitting on pondok platforms near the road to watch the parade with a cup of

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<sup>31</sup> During my fieldwork the exchange rate was ca 1.500 rupiah per 1 NOK or 15.000 rupiah per 1 GBP.

<sup>32</sup> Mandiri was cold in the night (cold here measured from a Sulawesi standard) and even if drinking coffee in the morning was custom in most of the villages the coffee in this area was seen as more necessary since the mornings were so cold, and one could wake up 'mulengi raghi' (Uma language: very cold).



coffee in their hand and a saroeng wrapped around their body to prevent getting cold in the morning mist. We would walk past the church next to Papa Lago's house and continue to a church further down the road. This church was not yet finished, meaning it had no walls, but it had a metal roof and some chairs so it could be used for meetings. It tells a great deal of Papa Lago's loss of position in Mandiri that his church would not be used. In my time there I never saw it open.

To go to church was important for social status. The participation said a lot about how the members lived their lives. According to Aragon the church originally focused on recruiting 'lower class' individuals, among them alcoholics. The Salvation Army thus has a rule against alcohol and tobacco (Aragon 1996b: 356), and this is also practised in Sulawesi, but this was practised differently depending on occupation and status. The priests needed to be completely abstinent towards the substances. I remember a moment in Palu, where friends were gathered under a metal roof between two brick houses to avoid the sudden rainfall. A beer had been bought to calm the effects of too much chili (in Indonesian: terlalu pedis, too spicy), while cigarettes were shared between us. The young man home from his theology studies also smoked, which led to a good round of teasing. "Nanti, tidak bisa merokok lagi" (Ind: later, you can never smoke again). His smoking had to stop when he became a priest. As for alcohol, he did not drink at all.

When it came to the regular members of the church the rules were the same, even if they were more lax. The more respected members were the ones who held a 'hidup bagus' (Ind: a good life), in other words the ones who kept away from the substances. The view on cigarettes and alcohol was negative, even if it was the general way of life of the Pipikoro group. Most men smoked, and most men drank, but the men in the crisp white shirts with the Salvation Army logo did not. This created a difference in the villages. These men did not participate in the typical drinking circles in Sore, but were rather seen in the Ibadahs along with a majority of women. Here it was typical to see the male school teachers<sup>33</sup> since they did not drink to give a good example to the children.

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<sup>33</sup> In the resettlement village, not in Mandiri since the latter did not have a school.

The conflict between the world of drinking and smoking, and the ideals set by the church, was rarely confrontational, but it showed another problem of the Mandiri image. Since the area was known both in media and in Palu for drinking and violence<sup>34</sup> it was a great concern for the religious people within the Mandiri community. The drinking was more known than many positive aspects of the area, and gave a continuing ‘confirmation’ of the bad behaviour that had become known through people like the head of the Lore Lindu National Park<sup>35</sup>.

The women of Mandiri protested the alcohol through church and this was expressed in certain church meetings held only for women. Here the priests held fiery speeches of the dangers of alcohol, with cheers coming from the women listening. The weight of the family was put on the woman, they said, if the man left his house to drink with his friends; she had to struggle to cook the food, to take care of the children, and to take care of the hearth, while he was enjoying himself. It was the woman who was the most hardworking, while he spent their hard-earned cocoa money on saguer and sigaretttes. It was not rare for the saguer a man had gathered to not be enough for him and his friends for a festive afternoon or evening, resulting in everyone pooling together money to buy a can from certain houses in the villages known to produce to sell. A can of saguer together with a pack of sigaretttes cost the same as the price of one kilogram of cocoa beans, almost as much as a chicken, and was enough to put a strain on a household’s economy. Naturally, when the men sat together to drink, smoke and enjoy the afternoon sun, the voices of women were far away. Any reprimands given did little to change the communal spirit that drinking circles gave.

It is important to note that the view on alcohol wasn’t a strick dichotomy of god and bad, or feminine and masculine. There was few absolutes when it came to different social spheres. Men could be well known drinkers, yet would still participate in church on Sundays like everyone else. Men could be dedicated in church, wear the white crips shirts on Ibadahs, yet still enjoy a drink in the evening or afternoon. Men could avoid going to church, and also avoid attending to drinking circles. At the same time women who participated in anti-alcohol

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<sup>34</sup> See quote from the head of the Lore Lindu National Park in chapter five.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

church groups would rarely if ever, prevent a man having a drinking circle in his own home. She might send a slightly sour look in her husband's direction, but she would never question his action. In such a situation the reputation of the household was more important than a quiet evening, and if she were to confront her husband, he would be humiliated in front of his friends. To argue against drinking circles would also mean that they argued against the old traditions, since saguer had been a part of Pipikoro life for as long as they could remember.

I have mentioned in chapter two that there were a fair amount of women against logging. There are both similarities and differences between the reaction to logging and the one to alcohol. Both were exclusively male social spheres, a possible liability to family or society, and mostly out of the woman's control. But as the intensive logging only lasted for a few years, the drinking circles had always been there. It seemed to me that some of the behaviour patterns from drinking circles had gone into the logging practice. During drinking circles men would use family money to fund the session. While logging accumulated profit this money had a tendency to go to more expensive cigarette brands, store bought alcohol, and bigger motorcycles. In other words it funded the masculine identity. When the logging decreased men held drinking circles like they always had, only with less money. There is a possibility that women, protesting logging, was not only protesting against how damaging it was to their community and its reputation. It might have been a social loop-hole to be able to protest against the same type of habits they saw every day. By protesting against logging, they voiced their frustration on men in general.

Still, here one should note the difference between simple consumption of alcohol, and to participate in drinking circles. As mentioned earlier, a woman could also enjoy a cup or two of saguer on special occasions such as during harvest festivals, or when family visited from other villages. But this type of drinking was very different from the drinking circles. A woman should never get drunk, and therefore should never have more than a glass or two 'to taste', a friend said to me. She would also be drinking in the private areas of the house, more notably the dapur (ind: kitchen area), where only family and good friends mingled. One could say that the different drinking situations were different spheres, as a drinking circle was in a way like Goffman's (1959) front stage, presenting saguer as masculine and the woman as a

mere observer, while back stage, in the private area of her own home, a woman could enjoy the drink without the risk of losing her reputation. This way alcohol could be a part of a woman's life, and therefore not exclusively in masculine spheres, the same way the church could be a large part of a man's life, even if it had a notable majority of women among its heavily involved members. Drinking circles, however, were an exclusively masculine affair and untouchable by women.

### **Alcohol, Islam and an Urban Context**

Women's church groups were not the only ones against drinking, as it was also provocative for the muslim minority in Mandiri. With the later immigration to the area more conservative groups of muslims arrived, along with more moderate muslims. In Indonesia, with islam being the dominant religion, alcohol is non-existent in the daily life of most people, and therefore something associated with others. There was great frustration in the Pipikoro group since the majority of the province population were muslim, since certain practices, like alcohol production and pig farming had to be hidden to prevent offence. People were well aware that alcohol as a symbol was seen as primitive, a source of violence and fights, and a pleasure for the weak soul. But since alcohol served a strong role in social interaction and celebration in the Christian communities, it was not practical to abandon drinking in favour of stimulants such as coffee. Note that coffee did play a major part in social interaction, especially in gatherings organized by the church, but as saguer and coffee filled different functions and symbolisms, it was not ideal to have one replace the other.

There were many stories circulating about the darker sides of alcohol. One such story was told to me during a wedding of a friend's friend<sup>36</sup>. It was held in a village in the lowlands near Palu; a resettlement village with several ethnic groups. We followed our friend, the groom, from his neighbourhood in Palu to his bride's village. Dressed in his traditional clothes for the ceremony he rode in the front of a rented car and drank imported wine from java to settle his nerves. We arrived at a building that was part of a newly build church and watched the happy couple struggle in the midday heat to go through the first of the two

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<sup>36</sup> This was a Christian wedding.

seremonies, one being traditional based on their ethnic group's custom, the second a more "westernized" ceremony taking place in a rented building in Palu where a white dress would be worn and a cake would be cut.

After the first ceremony was finished, a group of men had sat down outside the church to drink cap tikus. Here the conversation digressed to an incident that had occurred in the village. Being a resettlement area, with several ethnic groups in the same place, a hate had developed between two ethnic groups and one night, fueled by alcohol, it had erupted into fighting with one side attacking the other with parangs and stones.

Having finished off the cap tikus we traveled back to the grooms house to dance until dawn as was tradition, but we were informed that there would be no dero<sup>37</sup>, a popular dance, because the groom's house also were in a conflict area. The concern laid with the muslim inhabitants since our Christian wedding would cause aggression if we continued to drink alcohol and dance all night. It would seem as a provocation towards the neighbours, almost exclusively muslims, who would see it as flaunting excess drinking. The night was past in silence, even if some dero music was played in front of the house for the three teenagers who dared to dance. The groom and his friends sat hidden in the driveway with cans of beer, while the families and children held a party indoors. Had it been in one of the Christian villages or in a Christian neighbourhood the music would carry all the way through the area, but instead it barely reached the street. It woke none of the neighbours.

There was no lack of local conflicts in Central Sulawesi, but the aspect of alcohol was only mentioned when there were Christians involved. Similar clashes in muslim villages received other explanations. Mandiri had many reports concerning violence and fights which undermined the FPM's efforts to present themselves as a peaceful village. Drunken fights leading to stabbings were not uncommon, and there was a few fatal accidents caused by

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<sup>37</sup> Dero was the most popular dance at the time, and most teenagers had access to a dero track on their cellphones or radios. The dance was a traditional dance from the city of Poso, and had been made popular with new techno versions by local musicians.

drunk driving in the area, all adding up to give the area a reputation of chaos. Combined with the illegal logging it became difficult to defend the people living there.

The free flow of alcohol in Mandiri became well known in student groups and among the young members of NGO's, leading to pit stops for drinks and discussions when traveling in the area. The idea of rule breakers and rebellious squatters appealed to many of them, and it became a symbol of resistance against a corrupt state. Alcohol in the form of cap tikus was to be found in student groups and NGO headquarters in Palu, and when friends got together in the evening drinking circles would followed the same rules as in the villages<sup>38</sup>. Here the religious factor was dealt with in a very simple manner. If muslim students were partaking, there were two alternative actions. One, if the muslim students were long time friends, everyone knew if they drank or not and knew if they wanted a drink. Two, if the muslim students were there for the first time the polite way to respond was to not offer them a drink, but to let them take the first step to ask for it, effectively removing the risk to offend them if they upheld the rule of avoiding alcohol. It was difficult to ask any muslim directly if they drank or not, or what it entailed for them to drink in relation to their background, without risking offence. Questions concerning religion were usually discouraged as these quickly reminded people of local conflicts and the usual stance between Christians and muslims. In the drinking circles everyone was equal, and differences were toned down.

The drink of choice in the city was cap tikus since it was difficult to transport large amounts of sagueer in to the area. The cap tikus had the benefit of being distilled, and thereby providing a higher alcoholic percentage in relation to storage space. Since it could keep for a longer period of time, the stores in Palu could rely on the product not going off before they could be sold. There were certain households and warungs in Palu who sold them, and since cap tikus was illegal their location were well kept secrets. There was always a small discussion about where the cap tikus should be bought and which route was best to avoid police. There was one particular street known as Jalan Tikus (ind: mouse street) named such since it helped people sneak around several police control spots. The street was safe for

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<sup>38</sup> My experience with students in Palu were mostly with anthropology and sociology students, even if people from other studies also mingled with the groups. It is important to note that these social spheres were outside my primary area of study (Mandiri and the resettlement village) and are presented here for comparative reasons.

bringing the alcohol back to the right neighbourhood, and gave the opportunity to drive without a helmet, which was also illegal.

A couple of people were sent out to the warung, and small plastic bottles of clear liquid appeared from under the counter and into a discreet backpack or bag. Sometimes beers were bought for the women who didn't like hard liquor or to mix with the cap tikus to remove the flavour<sup>39</sup>. Grade A cap tikus was very expensive, so the liquor was usually of lower quality. Alone, the taste of low quality cap tikus was foul, so the beer or soda helped to make the drink more palatable. One friend said the best cap tikus was made through a bamboo distillery system. This liquid would not have the bad residue found in metal or plastic systems.

Drinking circles in the city allowed participants with a wide variety of backgrounds. In the villages, however, alcohol was only found in Christian areas, and could be source of great conflict in villages with several religious groups. In Mandiri, where so many ethnic groups were represented, the alcohol consumption caused friction. People who were members of more conservative muslim groups clashed with Christians who tended enau palms. On one such occasion a muslim man had threatened a man who had gathered saguer. The muslim man had told him that it was against god's law to make alcohol and that he should stop his actions immediately. The discussion got heated, and the man who had gathered the saguer decided to go to FPM to present his case. The problem was quickly resolved. Since Mandiri was founded by Pipikoro groups, they had written rules concerning the area based on rules they had followed back in Pipikoro, and this rule stated that men were allowed to gather saguer. The rules favored the Christian groups, since they were the original settlers, and muslims were a minority in the area. This was not a problem that affected daily life, since most of the residents in Mandiri were joined in the communal struggle towards legalization. The muslim man had to accept the forum's decision, even if the subject remained heated after the final meeting.

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<sup>39</sup> In the city it was easier for women to drink, since it was easier to sneak away in the large urban space. This opportunity was a great advantage for female students.

When discussing Mandiri in Palu, internal feuds were rarely mentioned, as few people had access to this type of information. Most impressions were based on news reports and second hand sources, even among NGO workers. The liberty found in city life easily removed people from the reality of petani life. Where villagers had to work hard in the kebun to feed themselves and their family, an education at the local university and an office job in the city gave opportunity to an easier life. With short-term projects in villages it was easy to assume that the image presented by contacts or village leadership was true, especially with deadlines looming and increasing pressure to perform and achieve goals for their organization. If young NGO-workers found themselves in a village for a project, they would often sit among themselves to drink, sharing ideas with each other, instead of socializing with villagers.

### **FPM and Image Managing**

In relation to internal feuds, it is important to note that the group who officially represented the village (and decided what their desired image would be) was FPM. The forum was the Mandiri leadership, their voice and face to the outside world, and the people who made political decisions. Once a week the forum met in the Bantaia, a large meeting house built on top of strong poles, where they sat down in a large circle and discussed the week's matters for hours on end. I found it difficult to penetrate FPM's social pattern. After participating in my first FPM meeting, I had difficulties with the NGO member mentioned in the introduction, who suspected me of hiding my relation to the REDD project, and unfortunately I never got as close to FPM as I wanted after that affair. However, the actions of FPM were well known throughout the village<sup>40</sup> if one wanted the newest update on the matter of the legalization. When people in the village discussed Mandiri's image, a lot of focus was put on its negative aspects while very little was invested in actual problem solving. It seems everyone knew of the difficult situation regarding their reputation, be it FPM members or other villagers. Some took it upon themselves to convince me that any negative rumours were false, that there was no logging in Mandiri, and that the villagers were just like any other petani in the area. When meeting with FPM in the start of my fieldwork I was told that by FPM's rules any person who cut down trees without permission had to pay a fine of one cow. As far as I know this penalty was not executed during my stay in the village, nor did I hear of

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<sup>40</sup> As mentioned in the Introduction, I also had contact with the current and former leaders of the occupation and FPM, both in daily life and through interviews.



any specific illegal logging occurring. There was logging, but this all seemed small scale and for personal use, which FPM had allowed<sup>41</sup>. At the same time FPM were very clear on the fact that no more than 6000 hectares of land would be cleared in the park, and I can neither confirm or unconfirm that they have taken into account logging for personal use before making this claim.

FPM worked to improve their image regarding logging both to visitors in the village, and through demonstrations in Palu. The latter was, as far as I know, the only presentation of Mandiri from an insider's perspective that could be experienced by the urban population, and therefore the most vital (if not only) way that FPM could control Mandiri's image. I did not participate in such a demonstration myself<sup>42</sup>, but from what I was told, the tactic used during these events were to focus on the injustice the Mandiri people had experienced, and that they would refuse to move from their new home. As far as I know the speakers did not mention or tried to confront any rumours about violence, lawlessness or drinking.

In Mandiri, while speaking to FPM members, there was also no focus on any problems concerning drinking or violence, and I got the same impression from the other villagers. It seemed that the main tactic on these subjects were to have them disappear in silence. One reason for this might have been that drinking already was a form on non-subject by being an act mostly done in private, and mostly around good friends. One needed to become friends with at least one drinking participant to be included in a drinking circle. The church, although against drinking, targeted the act of drinking and not specific areas known for drinking. Another reason for not mentioning the subjects might have been my gender and position. By being not only a foreign researcher, but also a young unmarried woman, it might have seemed improper to discuss the matters unless I brought them up myself. On one single occasion was the concept of violence mentioned, and then only indirectly. On my first day in Mandiri, when meeting with the leader of FPM and my host family, I was informed that it was probably wise that I didn't venture out of the house after dark unless I had my Tante to

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<sup>41</sup> 'For personal use' was anything from getting material to build or repair houses, or retrieve firewood. This was seen as necessary to maintain a decent living standard for the inhabitants.

<sup>42</sup> There was only one such demonstration while I was there, during which I was visiting a different village. While the event had been planned for some time, the exact date had not been set since the circumstances, a confrontation with the governor, kept changing.

follow me. Note that this might, again, have been because I was a young woman and they were responsible for my safety, but I also noticed that I didn't have this form of 'curfew' in any other villages (f.ex. the resettlement village). I didn't see any notable signs of violence in Mandiri, even if venturing after dark, neither did I hear any stories of violence other than those from the past, during my time there.

The third reason the subjects were not mentioned, which I find most probable, is that they weren't seen as an issue, as Mandiri people had the same drinking habits as any neighbouring (Christian) villages. Yes, the area was known for drinking, but this reputation might have originated in other villages, as it was not uncommon for people to travel up to Mandiri to drink in the evening. They might not even go as far as Mandiri, but rather stop on the way if they found familiar faces. Still people would say they had "gone to Mandiri". If the reputation surrounding drinking or violence wasn't an issue among the villagers, then it would explain why it has not been a big priority among villagers or with the FPM.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **The Complexity of Mandiri**

In this final chapter I will try to conclude the earlier ponderings and tie up the threads I have presented. As mentioned in the introduction I found a great deal of miscommunication between the groups involved in the Mandiri conflict. Outsiders did not understand the motivations behind the occupation or the logging, and without realizing the empowerment Mandiri people received through their actions, there was no way of creating a solution or negotiation that would be accepted by all sides. Here I will explore the conflicting communication and interpretations and how this is affecting Mandiri.

I found the power aspect of my field very fascinating, and the dynamics I discovered covered several perspectives that I realized was important to understand the progress of Mandiri. Some power dynamics was limited to the local face to face interaction in the village, others were built on economic interests in the area and involved wealthy individuals with no former connections to the villages. The latter could continue to exist even if the economic base became ‘damaged’ or disappeared. Other aspects were power dynamics between interest groups in the province capital, some present in village life others not, and some groups were national and only present in the most abstract sense for my group.

One notable dynamic was the imagined (and real) presence of the state, which affected most of people’s actions, and categorized all individuals and village units in a true Foucaultian fashion. The Pancasila principles mentioned in chapter one was taught in schools and memorized by all students. Even if Mandiri didn’t have a school, all adults living there either had formal schooling before they moved there or had knowledge of Pancasila and other state ideologies in other ways. The patriotic pride of being a part of Indonesia was strong and in the young generations this pride was formed by the school system. Uniforms coloured like the Indonesian flag, singing the national anthem every morning and the pancasila principles painted on the main wall of every school gave the feeling of belonging to something larger than oneself, as if all local differences had disappeared. When discussing Indonesia as a concept with my young friends I seemed to get the same speech about the countries greatness

no matter what angle I tried to discuss it from. “We have so much ethnic diversity, so many languages”, “Our nature is the richest in the world”, “Indonesia is a great nation and the people here are good”. The speech seemed separated from the everyday reality of local ethnic feuds, the hatred some of my Christian friends felt against Islamic groups, the complaints about corrupted leadership, and logging potential and its wealth. The national feeling seemed very detached by the way the spoke, as if the relation described between them was an abstract notion, an idea of a state.

By contrast the older generation did not convey an idealistic image of the nation. People older than 35-40 years of age rather described the state in relation to rules, registrations, forms and rights. For them state seemed to be different leaderships at different levels and public or legal implications applied to the villages. An example is the interpretation of the new digital registration of I.D. cards that was put in force in the area during my stay. Papers needed to be filled in and delivered to the village leadership. This change meant that they had to retrieve official forms from the village head, fill them in, get scanned copies of all former I.D. papers, school papers and other documents (this meant getting to a local print shop, one being in the resettlement village), and to deliver the papers and copies back to the village leadership before a certain date.

Very few people in the village had any knowledge or understanding of computers. Not only were computers very expensive and therefore out of reach for most, but the unstable electrical system in the resettlement village and the complete lack of electricity in Mandiri made such an investment highly impractical. As a result the comprehension of computer systems and digital registration systems was limited, but it was clear to all that the new system would make it easier to find information on any person when dealing with formal matters. This was not necessarily seen as a good thing.

If we try to see this new digital registration in light of Foucault’s concept of power, the idea of categorizing all the villagers, documenting their lives, occupations and family ties, is an obvious strategy to control these groups. In “Discipline and Punish” (1979 [1977]), Foucault describes how all information about prisoners was registered in files and how their

development was monitored (Foucault 1979 [1977]: 250-251). Bentham's Panopticon might have been a good model for the closed environment of a prison, but the idea of being monitored from 'above', being seen at all times, has easily transferred to any social context. With the digital registration the villagers not only felt monitored as any information about them had to be updated at the kepala desa's office (ind: village head), but as few properly understood how computers worked, the alienation created by the monitoring system mystified the process. How could this information be accessed on several computers? And if it can be accessed at several places at once, who can get access to their information? The vagueness of the system and the acts of giving away one's own information to this untransparent source provoked an underlying feeling of inferiority in some of the families I spoke to. They had to provide information and give it away, and even pay for the registration and all documents themselves. The benefit of the new system was easily lost. One aunt said she was frustrated, as she organized the different documents on a table in her dapur. "The fee is different depending on the household, and we have to pay more than average. This is very unfair". Since some of the families struggled to earn enough money to buy rice, the added burden of an I.D. registration had them lending money from family or neighbours to pay the cost.

Naturally, Mandiri landed in a more difficult position with the registration. Being an illegal occupation they had no official status as 'desa', village, meaning that they were left out of any official categorization. They did not exist in the systems, except for being a thorn in the government's side. If we view them as an anomaly, the reaction and responses from government officials makes more sense. As Mary Douglas famously described the matter out of place finds itself in a position where it is outside any normal place in society, and its ambiguous status presents it as a threat or something magical (Douglas 2006 [1966]). Mandiri stand out from a system where everyone preferably is placed in their respectable desa and is documented in their right way. About a month after the incident where Papa Aldo was shot and the PPA offices were burned, the head of the Park Authority, Banjar Y. Laban, expressed his opinion during a press conference;

*"This brutality exhibited by the group of people who have occupied [Mandiri] can also be seen in their own fighting among themselves over the past few months. These skirmishes have resulted in several deaths and numerous injuries. Their brutality has also been apparent in their clearing of the forest, which has triggered the anger of the*

*customary community of Sedoa Village, who feel that their traditional territory in the [Mandiri] area has been wrongfully cleared without any authority. The most recent evidence of this brutality can be seen in the wanton burning of the state building around the Lore Lindu National Park”* (Press release from the Head of the Lore Lindu National Park Authority, October 25, 2002, quoted in Adiwibowo 2005: 161)

The way Laban paints an image of violence in Mandiri gives a clear idea of subjective interpretation. As the head of the National Park he would certainly have knowledge of the Papa Aldo incident, but he still uses the opportunity to stamp the office burnings as simple acts of brutality, and reasons this with their way of life as they also are “fighting among themselves”, and are apparently even clearing the forest in a ‘brutal’ way. There is a certain feeling of ‘savage outlaws’ to his description, leading me to assume that he places them in a role as distinctive ‘others’, a threat to an area with otherwise proper and orderly inhabitants. The people of Mandiri has “triggered the anger of the customary community” by invading their territory, and is otherwise an uncontrolled force in places they shouldn’t be.

Being an anomaly, Mandiri can be seen as threatening towards the state’s supremacy. If they manage to ‘get away with’ what they are doing, it would reflect back on the institutions responsible for the area. From Laban’s perspective they can be seen to have attacked his responsibilities. By living in his park they undermine the principles the park was founded on, such as to preserve the biodiversity, wildlife and forest. Of course this undermining looks past the fact that the park’s own police has helped with the logging in return for a certain price. It is clear that Laban and the rest of the park’s leadership would benefit from the settlers being presented as the ‘evil’ part of the conflict, as brutal and violent and misplaced. Being seen as bandits would weaken their cause, and make it easier for the other parties of interest to have them removed without strong reactions from other communities.

By the fact that they in many ways lived ‘outside’ of society, Mandiri created their new identity as a lawless group, founding their new life on logging and creating their own rules of

living<sup>43</sup>. Even if FPM worked hard to establish the area as a place of reason and to defend their case, the rumours of violence flourished in Palu, leading people to see it as anything from a ‘wild west of Central Sulawesi’<sup>44</sup> with violence and lawlessness, to a free haven where the saguer would flow freely and one could simply claim land where one wished. This ideal was a view I mostly found in young NGO-workers, while the view of Mandiri as dangerous and filled with bandits was more commonly found.

There were many discussions on what to do with Mandiri in my time there. As the ‘problem’ of Mandiri continued to exist, so did the discussions concerning it. However, the outsiders’ arguments were often very different from how people in Mandiri understood their situation. Instead they were like tales of an exotic world in the mountains, where bandits roamed free and one would be robbed the moment one stepped into the territory. “Are you living in Mandiri? But that is so dangerous! You must be brave”, one girl said to me. Others warned me that I would be attacked, or even raped. I found these warnings to be nonsensical, but I can understand that people living in urban space are left with a rather horrifying image when the few news that reaches them usually contains knife fights ending with death, people driving drunk only to crash and die, or illegal logging performed by tattooed villains.

If we go back to Foucault we can read that he sees the individualization forming from the new system of discipline as a subtle form of power. Here the prisoners he describes are separated, scrutinized, documented and examined at the same time as the power group, the ones on top of the hierarchy, became less visible. The individualization that the prisoners experienced locked them in a position where information goes one way only, away from them, leaving them as a mass, yet divided into separate units and controlled in their own separate spaces (Foucault 1979 [1977]: 192-193).

Here, just as with Douglas’ theory, the anomaly stands out as something dangerous, but with the system Foucault describes the anomaly also stands out more since the norm, the

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<sup>43</sup> FPM had in the beginning written down rules that would work as a guideline for the new society.

<sup>44</sup> Coined by an NGO informant in (Palu) while we shared bottles of cap tikus with friends on the floor of the organization’s headquarters.

institution, does not accept elements incapable of having a role of function. Mandiri becomes a problem when it becomes an anomaly outside any function of the state systems. They disrupt the Parks function of preservation, they do not exist as a properly defined 'desa', and most important, the mere act of occupying national park land was a direct challenge towards any groups of power involved.

Even if Mandiri had a strife with the PPA and the park management, and had their land confiscated by government representatives during the resettlement project, there was an overall positive attitude towards the state and its institutions. Even if they were known in Palu as rebels and outlaws, there was no wish among Mandiri people to continue living life in the social periphery they had ended up in. Most of them wanted to be included and recognized as a 'desa', to have assurance that the land they now lived on could be officially recognized as theirs so they did not have to live with the threat of being evicted, and to know that their children could live on the same land as they had been born and raised on. "Life here is hard, because we do not get any help from the government", one aunt said as she came over for early morning coffee one day, "If we got the desa title, we would be treated like all other desas". Many families were poor and saw that so many people in neighbouring villages had more luxury items than them. This enhanced their feeling of living in hardship and poverty. Other people had houses of concrete while they built their houses on bamboo stilts, others had new motorcycles and could invest in ceramic tiles for their houses. The I.D. registration was another example of this, as everyone in Mandiri had to go to neighbouring villages to register themselves. As the Mandiri population is spread along the Palu-Napu road, the settlers had to go to different villages to register, depending on which kilometre of the road they lived on. It was a reminder that they, according to the government, were living in a place where people weren't supposed to reside.

In their role as a curiosity they gained a lot of attention. Anything they did was scrutinized by governmental groups or the press. Every negative episode was blown out of proportion and used as an example of their 'brutality', as Laban described it, or as 'the land of freedom' as the young NGO-workers dreamed of. It was no wonder that so many people in Palu were afraid of Mandiri. Even if there probably was no more violence than other places in Central Sulawesi, the attention made it seem unsafe and filled with savages, forming a negative



image that has become enhanced again by the knowledge of not having a traditional desa structure. The rules that FPM had written down were not well known outside the occupation, and as these were not presented in any news or publications on Mandiri, people in Palu or in villages further away seemed to continue to see the settlers as lawless rebels. FPM have started to fight this image by profiling themselves as peacekeeping and sensible. They believe that if they present themselves as law abiding and reasonable citizens there is a greater chance that they will receive the legalizing 'desa' title, and finally be placed in a proper category just as everyone else. One example of this is the promise FPM has done to keep Mandiri land to a maximum of 6500 hectares (see chapter three), a promise which can transform the village from a place of uncontrollable land-clearing, to a set unit to be used in maps and in any necessary registration. However, I believe the wish for a 'desa' status has more to do with the normalization-effect than with actual rights, as the new title will give little change in government aid, so the economic situation for the inhabitants will be the same. The motivation is not to gain wealth but to secure a proper place in the state system. With legalization they will achieve the strongest argument against resettlement they can hope for, because with it comes state confirmation that they have the right to stay. Not only will it confirm the land and their houses as their own, but it will also be a recognition of their decade long struggle to achieve this.

Being the center of attention in a political feud, there has been many organizations and interest groups wanting to get involved in the subject. Local, national and international NGO's have worked with them or showed them interest. Tania Li did research there, as mentioned (Li 2003), and Soeryo Adiwibowo wrote his PHD in political ecology on the occupation (Adiwibowo 2005). By having been scrutinized by so many different groups, the official 'story' of Mandiri has been told and retold until it has become a static tale of events. Every time a new possible informant was told that, "yes, I study the occupation and the people here" what followed was always the same rehearsed story, often down to the exact wording. Even if static storylines were a tendency I found in many of the stories people told me, the Mandiri story was in a completely different league. While talking to the different FPM members, the story echoed the ones I had been told by NGO-workers in Palu, and I was wondering if the official story was the product of endless discussions the FPM had in their Mandiri Bantaia or was formed by the NGO's who helped them plan and execute the occupation. What was clear was that the story had been a result of a need to have an 'official

story'. There had been many people asking many questions during the occupation, and the identity of the area has been shaped under this scrutiny. The feeling of being analysed and examined was prominent with some people, as these were nervous about presenting the 'right' version of Mandiri to me during interviews or small talk.

If we go back to Foucault's idea of discipline we find that *examinations* are one of the core methods that make the individual an object of power (Foucault 1979 [1977]: 192-193). The individual is analyzed and documented, and is made therefore transparent for groups of power. The continuous examination that people in Mandiri went through might have forced people to create the official story as a defence against outsiders, especially since any slip in explanations could have been used against them. The situation is similar to the one described by John Chr. Knudsen in "Cognitive Models in Life Stories" (1990), where his study of Vietnamese refugees in refugee camps showed that the life stories documented by officials were not mere social facts but chosen and constructed from the individual's past, a survival strategy to escape the camp. The official story of Mandiri is not a life story, but as the people living in the area were in a defensive position, the effect is the same. A word for word retelling of a story presented by the leadership removes the individuals' responsibility of the situation, and therefore relieves them of the angst surrounding their role in it.

As Petani the people of the area were lowest of the social hierarchy in an Indonesian setting. This does not say much, if we keep in mind that the large majority of Indonesians find themselves in this category. It did, however, give a feeling of being the ones always being exploited by others. With little wealth and even less political influence, the feeling of being subjected to power instead of wielding power was the norm. There were exceptions, of course, such as notable figures like Sakua, Papa Lago and others involved with FPM, who had no problems challenging authority in any form, despite a lack of formal schooling. Sakua alone had an impressive life story, as he had been involved in political life for years and had even travelled abroad on several occasions, all without a formal education.

For the majority life was centred on cocoa gardens, family life, church or mosque, and friends. The idea of climbing a social hierarchy was difficult at best, and usually impossible.

A new difference that separated the middle class from the petani of Mandiri was education, as it was the sure way to achieve an office job and with it a higher position. The price to pay for a university degree was millions of rupiah, a mere fantasy for petani with income that barely could cover domestic expenses. The investment of a motorcycle was the highest most could go, leaving young people being trained to work with cocoa. With no real opportunity to change their situation, the most symbolic way they could protest the land stealing after their initial resettlement-project was to continue to occupy the land in the national park. And the official story became a barrier that hindered strangers to enter their land and life, as the words told little about the storyteller's real life.

Even if the occupation can in some ways be seen as a 'rebellion' against the state, it was anything but. The examinations, the registrations and the way they fight for their cause, are all within a certain frame work, and the frame itself is never protested. Instead of rejecting the recent I.D. project, they went through the trouble of travelling far to achieve it. At the same time the FPM cooperate with several NGOs to improve their situation with the ultimate goal of becoming a legal desa and receive the official land rights for the hectares they have opened. The occupation itself started with the lack of land, and the FPM saw the opened land they have in Mandiri as a substitute for the land that they never received. After they have claimed what was promised but not given, the injustice have in some ways been corrected, and there is no longer a wish for compensation. At the moment all the FPM want is a resolution to the problem of being 'illegal', and the logical solution to this is to become legal.

In many eyes, however, the situation is not so easy. Most of the work the FPM have done to present Mandiri as a just candidate for a 'desa'-category has been fruitless, as the full picture of the occupation has been lost in translation to most people outside the villages. It is the criminal aspect that is known; the logging, burning of office buildings and violent episodes, and the people of Mandiri seem intent to be hostile and out of control, refusing to follow reason or to accept any compromise from negotiating parties. This image was a dangerous oversimplification, as using such a polarized image in political discussions could prevent any solution to the conflict. By not understanding the real causes and motivations behind actions,

government officials have no way to resolve the matter, as the parts involved seem to misinterpret each other, and base their counteraction on these conflicting interpretations<sup>45</sup>.

Motivations turn in to actions and actions become symbols. The symbol of Mandiri was violent loggers. But the motivations that triggered the actions were born from an impossible situation. We can go back to the time before the occupation, when the land problem put pressure on households, and men who were supposed to have gained their own land and be defined as adults found themselves in a situation where all the usual ways of achieving honour was out of reach. At the same time illegal logging gained popularity amongst the villagers. Unlike the land problem, the logging could provide young men with the things they were being deprived of such as work, money, adventure and strong friendships based on cooperation.

In the period of 1999-2002 people on the district level benefited more from legal-administrative and political changes in relation to the logging industry. The regional autonomy that came with the reformasi meant that authorities had no real opportunity to sanction foresting business (McCarthy 2007: 153). With this new local level access, outside actors could use a local individual or group to receive permits, and work in this person's territory. In McCarthy's case from Kalimantan he also noted that these "front men of concessionaires [were] operating cooperatives in villages areas without involving fellow villagers or making sufficient compensation for exploiting their adat property" (McCarthy 2007: 163). The front men, apparently, worked completely independently of the village groups. This also happened in Mandiri as the loggers worked not only independently of their village leadership, but also in land that was outside the resettlement village's area. As the National Park was outside their social sphere, it was easier for the men to create a new one, where the people with the best connections with buyers in Palu became wealthier than others, and where PPA became an enemy that threatened their new life.

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<sup>45</sup> A resolve would also depend on the right people actually wanting a resolve. As long as the situation is at a stand still and receives little public attention one can assume that limited state resources will be used on other matters. In this kind of situation the only ones benefiting from a resolve would be the people living in Mandiri.

If we combine the feeling of relief loggers felt when finally finding a niche to feel proud in, with the realization that land actually had been stolen from them and that they had been treated unfairly by the government, the idea that all actions were justified was strengthened. With new found confidence it was easier to take up the fight against how they were treated. One uncle described as “having no choice but to act as we did”, when we first discussed the logging activities. Even individuals who disapproved the logging and all the trouble it caused mentioned that it was the only real action to take if they were to see any solution to their situation. “We took power into our own hands, because nobody would do it for us”<sup>46</sup>. The discussions changed in drinking circles, as the rules of conversation allowed for more free speech. Away from wives and obligations men could boast their egos and discuss all good times. Times of women, fights with the police and of logging, and all the other adventures they had when young. During a drinking circle, the same uncle pointed out towards the open Mandiri valley and, with more pride than before, concluded his opinion with; “nobody would do it for us, and when you see what we have accomplished, you understand that we didn’t need them to”.

The allure of the logging trade was never discussed by officials in Palu, or by any of the NGOs involved. The simple explanation is that there was no direct interaction between the two contrasting social spheres of loggers and NGOs/officials, and there was certainly no wish to give excuses to ‘criminals’ by justifying the loggers’ actions. With no communication between the different parties, there was no mutual understanding of logging. The focus was on punishing the loggers and that the motivation behind logging was the easy money. There was no attention to the way logging helped people gain status that was desperately needed. This, naturally, lead to further polarization between the loggers and the interest groups trying to prevent them from logging.

The feeling of pride and independence was strengthened when they decided to occupy Mandiri. The leaders of the occupation were the same people who had worked as front men for the logging companies, the same people who had cleared the land in Mandiri and had started kebuns there to support themselves. Known to be bandits, having burned PPA

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<sup>46</sup> Wording of the uncle mentioned above.

buildings, beaten police officers, and spent time in jail, the men did not help to brighten the image that had started to form around the occupation. Their reputation, rugged appearance and tattoos, not to mention internal conflicts (like Papa Lago's loss of popularity), further complicated the situation.

As these symbols threatened to consume the image of Mandiri, it is no wonder that FPM have worked so hard in trying to present the settlement as law abiding and acceptable for a desa status, since the only way to remove themselves as a anomalic symbol is to become a part of the same category as everybody else. Only then will the attention wane and only then will they have any hope to make people forget the connection to illegal logging. They need to stop being associated with the criminal image.

In "Political Symbolism" (1979) Abner Cohen writes that "power relations are objectified, developed, maintained, expressed or camouflaged by means of symbolic forms and patterns of symbolic actions" (Cohen 1979: 89). If we choose to see the elements of Mandiri's reputation as symbolic forms in this sense, some of the actions become more logical. As mentioned, all groups interested in removing the people of Mandiri or keeping the occupation illegal, benefited from a negative image of the occupation. Here a strategy was to focus any discussions or news articles on logging, violence or indecent behaviour (such as drinking). A significant character within forest conservation in Palu did this by trying to get me to 'admit' that Mandiri still had a lot of logging, even if the FPM kept saying there was no logging on the basis of profit. By having the capacity to control most of the information flow in Palu, certain power figures could control the image of Mandiri as a theatre stage, keeping the leverage on their side. It is, however, important to mention that with the great number of NGOs residing in Palu, it was much more difficult to control information than it was during the New Order era. The NGOs who was involved with Mandiri have helped to keep the image balanced, even if there were also were NGOs who were against the settlement (such as TNC)<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> Here it is important to remember that the occupation started after The New Order ended, and that they have received assistance from NGO's continuously through their illegal settlement.

Cohen focuses on political implications, since he believes most of the relevant symbols to a political situation are non-political, and that it is vital that the symbols themselves remain ambiguous. Their relation to the political aspect is obscured, which empowers them. “The most dominant symbols, are essentially bivocal, being rooted, on the one hand, in the human condition, in what may be called “selfhood”, and on the other in the relations of power” (Cohen 1979: 87). Thus we can understand that the continuous promotion of Mandiri’s negative aspects plays on something more than its negative aspects alone. By proclaiming violence and ‘brutality’, interest groups plays on fear, alienation and other basic human emotions, obscured in the symbols themselves so the actor promoting it can hide in the ambiguity of his example. Or, as in Laban’s case, he or she can use the symbol (office burnings) as an introduction to more ambiguous remarks (general brutality).

In Mandiri I found that people’s everyday life was full of small actions carrying strong symbolism in relation to the conflict and people’s opinions on it. Some of these continuous actions represented the place’s conflict more clearly than anything for the villagers since there was little access to newspapers or other information sources. The actions could be seen with own eyes, either it was a threat to their position there, or a support. Even if there were no school in Mandiri people had decided to buildt a small building large enough to house a handful of children, about 20, from the surrounding area, and which functioned as a daycare for very young children and as a form of school for children who had reached school age. With its improvised play ground represented hope towards a more established future, even if it only was open a few days a week and the teachers had difficulty reserving enough time to keep the school functioning. People saw children play in the field in front of the building, as the building was visible from the road, and the children attending could be seen with their uniforms walking to and fro school along the road. The school showed the potential of all the Mandiri children to go to school, which was the main goal of all the families I spoke to, and by see the children walk by their houses people were reminded that the goal was achievable. By the time I was rounding up my fieldwork and preparing to go back to Norway, there was also a health centre being constructed, which would give a symbolism similar to the school building, as it showed progress in establishing Mandiri as an actual village.

The strongest symbolic action of Mandiri was without a doubt the burning of the PPA offices, an action which triggered numerous consequences. During my time there it was no more than a glorious tale from the past, as the ruins had all but been devoured by the jungle. Some liked to remind themselves and the ones around them about the incident if driving past the portal that once lead to the buildings, but the best way it was kept alive was through the constant repetition of the 'official' story about the occupation's origin, especially since neither the portal nor the ruins are on Mandiri land and therefore not a part of everyday life. Strangely enough the strongest reminder of the incident was through the actions of PPA officers, as their avoidance of the area marked a significant difference from the neighbouring villages. As the road was the closest connection between the Napu valley and Palu, the officers had to use it to patrol the boundaries of the park, but they never stopped in Mandiri unless they were forced to by floods, mudslides or if they ran out of fuel. People knew this, so the officers' presence was comical as it only showed cowardice and therefore a Mandiri victory. The sight of an officer in uniform triggered jokes and stories to be told, boosting moral for people sitting by their houses watching the traffic.

Even if it no longer is a continuous action, the symbol that has been used most against the settlers is the logging. There is danger in underestimating the complete transformation of the area as the logging escalated. As mentioned in chapter two, 3400 hectares of forest was cleared during the first year of the occupation (Adiwibowo 2005: 5). Earlier, taking the road to Napu meant that all you would see nothing but trees all the way to the valley on the other side of the park. After the clearing, the land was completely bare, with tree stumps scattered around and the first fast growing crops that would sustain the people who had settled. For the first time people could see the open valley that was Mandiri, all the way past to the mountains on the other side. The temperatures rose and wildlife retreated to more remote areas. The mudslide that happened in 2003 gave the logging even more bad attention, and as the naked landscape was the first people could see it was also the main argument for what caused the flood. Even if mudslides are quite common in Central Sulawesi, the rapid change in the area was more visible than in any other populated area people knew of, leading to a certain shock every time villagers drove up to the park to see the changes. The logging changed the area faster than anyone could have imagined, giving authorities little, if any, time to remove the settlers before the changes became permanent in the landscape. Maybe this was the intended result, a way to mark their territory, to state their claim to the land, the same way the opening



ceremony the settlers held would give them a permanent home in the area. With no trees in the area, what would be left for the national park to claim back?

The landscape was a lot less dramatic during my time there, as the land was stable with cocoa gardens as far as the eye could see. People were used to the view through Mandiri and the landscape itself was not up for discussion in the media while I was there. However there were other symbols that presented themselves stronger than the open landscape, symbols that clearly defined Mandiri as different. For once, you could see men drinking. This was not unusual in a Christian settlement, but it was seldom done as openly as it was in Mandiri. At first I thought it was because of the structure of the settlement. With everyone living beside the main road there was no centre of the village, so naturally the socialization was done where people could be reached. This was in pondoks build beside the houses and by the road, where people could sit for hours and discuss. Here people could sit and smoke, drink coffee in the morning, and sager after work. When sitting by the road neighbours could see you and join, and the pondoks were rarely empty. It did, however, feel like a big step to drink sager in a place like that. After all, the road was open to all travellers on the road, a public place. It was the only place I had seen people drink alcohol in public.

The only way to make sense of the behaviour is to view the action in light of how the settlers viewed Mandiri in itself. They had conquered the land and made it their own, with a past that was coloured by actions deemed illegal by others. But the land was theirs, in spite of all hardships. Just as the stories of pride and self-sufficiency was told during drinking sessions, the act of drinking itself was also a symbol of victory, a sign that nobody could take their way of life away. As I have mentioned in chapter four, alcohol was viewed very negative in Indonesia and by the Muslim majority. To drink sager was a part of the pipikoro group's history, and to be able to produce the drink and keep practising drinking circles was a source of pride to most of the men I met in said circles. Men in Mandiri had taken the drinking practise to a different level. In line with the notion that no one could take their land away, they chose to drink in the open instead of hiding, directly defying anyone who would dare to tell them not to.

In chapter three I have mentioned how drinking circles functioned as a way to confirm, or re-live, stories from the past, as this was where stories of logging thrived. If we combine this with the fact that they chose to not hide their drinking, which they would have done in any other village, the drinking circles presented some of the defiance that the logging had represented. As long as the logging had prevailed, men could actively define their place in the area through labour. By cutting down trees they changed the landscape and established their place in Mandiri. After the logging waned, drinking circles might have been the place where men continued to establish Mandiri independence. The circles had all the right symbols: it was part of the tradition of those who founded Mandiri, was of a pure masculine social sphere just like the logging, and it had a danger factor by being controversial. In other words, drinking could fill the gap that logging had left.

When logging managed to compensate for the difficulties relaizing the masculine role, the relief was not temporary. By finally claiming land they felt they were owed, and clearing the land on their own, men had in some way raised the stakes of the situation. Yes, they finally had land to work, but they were not yet recognized as owners of the land, meaning that they would have to keep maintaining their stand and keep their spirits up for as long as it was questioned. Logging created male-only social spheres where they could confirm themselves. The work gave money, fueling their battle against the park management and hostile NGOs, at the same time as the continuous action of changing the landscape must have given an empowering feeling to the men who had spent so much time feeling suppressed and frustrated. When the logging decreased, the men had to find other ways to confirm themselves and their situation. The only other masculine sphere was drinking circles, and as these also had been practised during the heavy logging period, the habit of telling stories about wild logging trips was not new. Most likely, the stories has been originally formed during drinking sessions immediately following the incident itself, during a celebration drink after a successful trip or while sharing a bottle of cap tikus in Palu. Therefore it is a good chance that the drinking circles filled the role that logging once had, by being the place where people could continue to confirm actions and pasts.

The pride involved in the drinking rituals, its strong symbolic and historic meaning along with its daily confirmation on men's lives, did not make it easier to relate to the rest of society. As a result the two views on sager, the external negative one and the internal positive one, creates polarized reinforced actions. The settlers' pride of their ethnic history and more recent fight to stay cause the drink to be glorified and more visible than before. The visibility combined with rumours of large amounts of excess drinking from the area caused fear among outsiders and people in Palu, eventually leading to stronger protests towards Mandiri's existence and the lifestyles practised there, which again leads to more defiance among sager-producing settlers and more pride in drinking. The polarization was fueled by the lack of communication between the parts, meaning that the bigger picture always deluded people who wanted to minimize misunderstandings.

The reason behind the conflicting interpretations of the situation were, from my perspective, that the different parties had limited understandings of each others reality, Mandiri life being the most distorted. Not only was Mandiri located in a rural area but it was also very guarded towards outsiders. As a result few if any of the people in charge of sanctioning the villagers could see the reactions or consequences of their actions. Also, few realized the differences between the Mandiri people's perspective on themselves in contrast to the urban idea of the settlement. The pride of representing the Christian customs (or as some said, custom of the orang gunung asli, original mountain people) was obvious as a symbol since production of sager was included in the rules that the FPM had written down for the area<sup>48</sup>. These customs also happened to provoke the urban muslim majority.

The ones who profited most from this polarization was the people who wanted Mandiri's reputation to worsen, but it was by no means a conscious political strategy. It was merely a series of events that helped reinforce the construction of an 'other', and can be seen as going hand in hand with Fredrik Barth's theory on ethnic boundaries where he moved away from the thought of any ethnic 'essence' and introduced a view of continuous reproduction of

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<sup>48</sup> I refer here to the episode where a muslim man refused his neighbour to gather sager in Mandiri mentioned in chapter four.

boundaries between ethnic groups happened through confirmations on an internal and an external level (Barth (Ed.)1994 [1969]). Even if Mandiri's situation is more than a simple polarization between ethnic groups, as Mandiri housed a variety of ethnic groups, the principle was still the same, as two groups became polar opposites in a conflict over resources and symbols, the occupying minority and interest groups wanting them gone. Here the process is indirect. The construction of the boundary between those living in the occupation era and the ones against it was not so much defined by the boundary of Mandiri itself, but the symbols that the groups created to represent each other. Where the alcohol caused a distancing effect towards muslims, it gave pride and solidarity amongst many of the settlers. The occupation was, in a simplified manner, Christians vs muslims, minority vs majority, petani vs city-dwellers, and the more dichotomies that came to represent the occupation, the stronger the walls between the different social groups became. And the stronger the walls, the stronger the solidarity was between the settlers themselves.

Even if the use and interpretation of the symbols, such as the drinking, rebellious Christians in the mountains, reinforced a negative stereotype in the city, the Mandiri settlers benefited from the polarization in one sense. Being a village with so many different ethnic groups and stories, with several waves of immigration and no history connecting them to the land or to a common denominator, the polarization, sometimes demonization, of the occupation and Mandiri inhabitants helped to join them as a group and strengthen their cause. A perspective I experienced in every household in Mandiri was the conviction that they belonged there together. For every day that passed, the stronger people felt that it was their own land they walked on, and their own lives was being shaped by the defiance needed to withstand the threats from outside. It was under such a discussion of independence and resistance that Papa Lago said, his deep voice penetrating his house on Mandiri land; " Anak saya tidak buta. Dia bisa melihat"(ind: My child is not blind. He can see.) They had fought and survived for so long, no government or other group of power could ever force them to leave. In his eyes, they could see through any tactic or problem, because they were were their own masters; an independent Mandiri.

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## **Appendix**

This is a list of Indonesian words used in the thesis, and includes translations and explanations. Every word is also translated the first time it is mentioned in the thesis. The words are listed in alphabetical order.

*Bantaia*: a roofed platform for village meetings

*Bapak (pak)*: father or Sir

*Cap Tikus*: a form of distilled palm wine. Literally translated to mouse brand or mark of mouse.

*Cengkeh*: cloves

*Dapur*: kitchen area

*Enau trees*: the enau palm was a palm that was grown for production of saguer which was a product of the fermented sap. The branches were used to make thatched roofs.

*Ganti-rugi*: compensation.

*Ibadah*: worship, or religious service

*Ibu*: mother or ma'am.

*Jagung*: corn

*Kampung*: village, or as in this case neighbourhood

*Kebun*: the word can be translated to gardens, but the use of this word covers most cultivated land, also wet rice fields even if these are also referred to as Sawah. The phrase 'Dia berkebun' (ind) translates to 'he/she is working in the garden/field' and covers most farming activities. It is therefore more practical to think of the term in relation to land cultivation rather than a lawn.

*Kepala Desa*: village head, leader of the village.

*Kolam*: pond

*Kopi*: coffee

*Masyarakat Terasing*: backward and isolated communities

*Om*: uncle

*Padi ladang*: dry rice

*Parang*: machete

*Petani*: farmer

*Pondok*: cabin or hut

*Preman*: bandits

*Ruang tamu*: reception room, living room. This is the front room of a house, where guests are received and formal matters are tended to. It is the most public part of any house. To be defined as a close friend, family or a trusted acquaintance a person would be invited into the kitchen. The Ruang Tamu was also the place where relatives or guests would sleep if there were no bed rooms available.

*Rumput*: weeds

*Sagu*: Sago

*Saguer*: palm wine

*Sawah*: wet rice fields

*Siang*: from 10.00 to 15.00 o'clock.

*Sore*: Indonesian for evening, typically defined by the time of day when the midday heat disappeared and people would stop working in the kebun and return home

*Tante*: aunt

*Ubi*: cassava

*Warung*: a shop or kiosk