PILKADA IN EAST SUMBA: AN OLD RIVALRY IN A NEW DEMOCRATIC SETTING

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June 2005 was the month of *pilkada*, local elections, in seven provinces and 159 towns and *kabupaten* (districts) all over Indonesia.[2] For the first time in history, Indonesian citizens could elect their own district head, mayor, or governor directly. It was the most recent step in the process of decentralization, and one of the most remarkable powers that Indonesia's central government surrendered to the regions since 1999.[3] The Indonesian weekly news magazine, *Tempo*, wrote in its special issue on these elections

> For many people this is a cause for cheer: now is the time for people to speak out and choose their leaders themselves. Others are horrified to see the negative excesses of local elections: clashes between supporters, money politics, and the emergence of antagonistic figures. Excesses are inevitable, but general elections are better than none at all. Without *pilkada*, corrupt leaders, their money politics,

[2] *Tempo*, June 13, 2005, p. 15.
[3] Michael Malley, "New Rules, Old Structures, and the Limits of Democratic Decentralisation," in *Local Power and Politics in Indonesia: Decentralisation and Democratisation*, ed. E. Aspinall and G. Fealy (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003), p. 102.

and conflicts remain. Times have changed—the era when regional leaders were assigned by Jakarta has ended. Now is the moment for people to speak.[4]

This quote is far more optimistic concerning the possibilities for the establishment of democracy within Indonesia than recent academic literature, for in academic literature the general conclusion up to 2004 seems to be that old political-administrative elites have effectively remained in control. Vedi Hadiz argued that "old predatory interests incubated under the New Order's vast system of patronage have successfully reconstituted themselves within the new [democratic] regime. Through new alliances, they have effectively captured the institutions of democracy."[5] Judgments such as these prompt us to ask whether the established elites and interests will also be able to get voted in as *bupati*, governor, or mayor in the new decentralized districts and provinces.

The type of decentralization currently underway in Indonesia is a devolution of administrative power to the *kabupaten* that is heavily subsidized by the central government, which has maintained its control over the main sources of revenue in the regions.[6] The central government keeps 75 percent of these revenues and distributes the other 25 percent to the regions in the form of a general grant, *Dana Alokasi Umum* (DAU, General Allocation Fund). The district government—made up of the *bupati* and the local assembly—has autonomous authority over spending this budget. With enhanced regional autonomy and the increased budget, the position of *bupati* has become very attractive.

The most significant innovation affecting the 2005 *pilkada* is that *bupatis* and mayors are no longer chosen by local assembly members, but directly by the voters. The question for those aspiring to be *bupati* is no longer how to win the support of assembly members, but how to win the votes of the electorate. So it becomes important to investigate the candidates' election campaign strategies under these new conditions. Do the entrenched political-administrative elites succeed in capturing this latest institution of democracy, too, or does a direct election open up opportunities for new candidates? These are central question for this article, which can only be answered by empirical research. This article contributes to the documentation of and debate on the development of democracy in Indonesia by examining the case of *pilkada* in East Sumba.

The island of Sumba is part of the province of East Nusa Tenggara, which is the poorest province in Indonesia. Sumba itself consists of two districts, East and West, with 193,000 and 367,000 inhabitants (in 2002) respectively.[7] Agriculture is the main source of living for 85 percent of the Sumbanese working population, including real farmers, but also many people who have no better alternative—even in spite of their secondary schooling or university diploma—than to work in their gardens and fields

[4] *Tempo*, June 13, 2005, p. 12.
[5] Vedi Hadiz, "Power and Politics in North Sumatera: The Uncompleted Reformasi," in *Local Power and Politics in Indonesia: Decentralisation and Democratisation*, ed. E. Aspinall and G. Fealy (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003), p. 119.
[6] Henk Schulte Nordholt and Gerry van Klinken, "Introduction," in *Renegotiating Boundaries: Local Politics in Post-Soeharto Indonesia*, ed. H. Schulte Nordholt and G. van Klinken (Leiden: KITLV Press, forthcoming 2006).
[7] Data from "Sumba Barat in Figures 2002" and "Sumba Timur in Figures 2002" of the Badan Pusat Statistik (Statistical Office) in West and East Sumba, respectively.

and say that they are *tani*.[8] The dream of educated, but underemployed, workers is to secure a paid government position. Those Sumbanese who have succeeded in gaining government employment redistribute a large part of their income to relatives, thus serving as their source of social security. Sumbanese *bupatis* control the population's major job opportunities: they decide in tender procedures for public investments, act as the authority issuing licenses, and control the allocation of the regional budget. *Pilkada* was therefore extremely important in Sumba.

District Head Election Procedures

The idea to have direct elections of regional[9] heads of government emerged as part of the revisions of Law 22 of 1999 on decentralization in 2004. The revised Law, number 34 of 2004, effectuated in September, also said in section 233 that in all regions where the current term of the district head (*bupati*), mayor, or governor would end before June 2005, direct elections would be held in June 2005. Both West and East Sumba are included in this category, which ultimately comprised a total of 159 districts and cities, and seven provinces. The date for the elections on Sumba was set for June 30, 2005.

During the New Order period, regional heads had been proposed by the regional assembly, but appointed by the Minister of Domestic Affairs in Jakarta. Since the regional autonomy period started in 1999, members of the local assembly (DPRD, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, Regional People's Representative Assembly) have been given the authorization to elect the regional head. This action gave the members of these assemblies power over their region's head of government. Before the election, candidates had to win the assembly members' votes, and that dependence fostered corruption. Former Minister Ryaas Rasyid concludes that, since 1999, almost all regional heads of government elections have been associated with "money politics," but that the allegations concerning this type of corruption have never been proven.[10] Although this phenomenon is widely known, it seems to have resulted in no negative consequences for the perpetrators. Nankyung Choi discusses the role of "money politics" in an article on the 2001 Yogyakarta mayoral election.[11] The term "money politics," according to Choi, "is preferred by many Indonesians, including scholars and even ordinary citizens, to differentiate from the corruption of the authoritarian past."[12] Since decentralization policy brought power—and funds—to the districts, local assemblies have emerged as "the new locus for money politics."[13] Choi argues that

> legal restraints regarding the practices of "money politics" still play a negligible role and, more significantly, many local party politicians have shown an

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[8] *Tani* means farmer, and respondents in a census who are registered as *tani* make up the category of the working population occupied in the agricultural sector.

[9] The term "regional" is used here as a translation of *daerah*, which can refer both to the provincial level (*daerah tinkat 1, propinsi*) and the district level (*daerah tingkat 2, kabupaten*).

[10] Ryaas Rasyid, "Regional Autonomy and Local Politics in Indonesia," in *Local Power and Politics in Indonesia: Decentralisation and Democratisation*, ed. E. Aspinall and G. Fealy (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003), p. 66.

[11] Nyankung Choi, "Local Elections and Party Politics in Post-Reformasi Indonesia: A View from Yogyakarta," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 26,2 (2004): 280-301.

[12] Ibid., p. 280.

[13] Ibid., p. 296.

inclination to equate their expanded power with correspondingly increased financial rewards.[14]

The new system of direct elections has turned the candidates' attention from assembly members toward the electorate, on the one hand, and to the central and regional boards of political parties, on the other. People who want to become candidates have to take four preparatory steps. Firstly, they have to find a political party that will nominate them as an aspirant candidate. Only the political parties that hold seats in the regional assembly are authorized to nominate candidates for regional head. For a single nomination, support of at least 15 percent of the assembly seats is required, which makes it necessary for small parties to form a coalition. Secondly, the political party will create pairs of candidates—a regional head and his deputy— because only pairs can enter the elections. Thirdly, the political party's board will choose between aspiring pairs and select only one of them to stand as the final candidates. Fourthly, each pair will have to pass the screening of the general election committee (KPU, Komisi Pemilihan Umum) to make sure that they meet all criteria outlined in section 58 of Law 32 of 2004. These criteria refer to, among other issues, the candidate's health, age, and educational level, his or her criminal record, and his or her reputation and knowledge of the region. The candidates also have to submit an overview of their personal assets and wealth to the General Election Committee and agree that they will raise no objection to these data being published. Finally, they have to obey the procedural election rules, which require, for instance, that they submit their nomination on time and refrain from engaging in campaign activities before the official campaign period, which is scheduled only fourteen days prior to election day, with a rest of three days in between.

Money politics in these elections involve payments to the political party boards to assure their willingness to support certain candidates. A newspaper editorial commented that this practice is more and more regarded as a standard "political cost," giving such bribes a more acceptable and neutral name.[15] To raise these fund, every candidate is surrounded by investors, who are euphemistically called members of the success teams (*tim sukses*). Political parties generally create campaign teams to assist the candidates in their election campaigns. In Indonesia, Golkar is the most successful party in that respect, since "it is still the best organized political machine—it had thirty-two years of history and is much better off than other parties financially."[16]

Once a pair's official candidacy is assured, they will divert their attention to the electorate. The challenge is how to shape their political identity in a way that will attract as many votes as possible.

Previous Election Strategies and Voting Behavior

Hans Antlöv and Sven Cederroth have published a qualitative study comparing voting behavior during the last New Order elections in 1997 with behavior during the

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[14] Ibid., p. 297.
[15] Max Regus, "Pilkada, kapitalisasi politik dan banditisasi kekuasaan," *Pos Kupang*, April 15, 2005, http://www.indomedia.com/poskup/2005/04/15/edisi15/1504pin1.htm, accessed on May 25, 2005.
[16] Leo Suryadinata, *Elections and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), p. 207.

first free elections in the post-Suharto era, in 1999.[17] They highlight how intense political rivalries at the local level in the 1997 elections were surprisingly similar to rivalries during the elections under the more democratic government in 1999. Cederroth argues in his chapter on Lombok that the type of power struggles characteristic of traditional petty kingdoms have been perpetuated, now in the guise of modern political parties. Cederroth concludes that

> there is one factor which takes precedence above everything else when determining political loyalties—and that is the tendency for people to associate themselves with a locally important person, to become part of his following. In fact, the political system can be seen as consisting of layers of patrons and their clients in concentric but also overlapping circles—from petty officials on the hamlet level all the way up through the village, the subdistrict, the district, and the provincial levels.[18]

Cederroth apparently concludes that any candidate who could claim traditional authority combined with membership in one of the largest political parties—primarily Golkar—had sufficient clout to be recognized as a "locally important person." Candidates need knowledge of local culture to find the most successful formula to be regarded as a rewarding patron. They can either act as traditional leaders, or shape modern political identities by publicizing their affiliation with certain religious or ethnic groups. A third possible strategy is to apply "money politics" to the electorate. Buying votes directly, or buying sympathy, distributing "gifts," creating reciprocal obligations or promising rewards in the future, all fit within the spectrum covered by the term "money politics." In the following cases from Sumba, I will explore these various options and assess candidates in terms of their respective performances as a (quasi-) traditional leader and/or as a modern leader, and will consider each candidate's reputation—as long as hard evidence is not available—as a champion or critic of "money politics."

Candidates

There were four pairs of candidates involved in the June 2005 elections to select a regional head in East Sumba. In both East and West Sumba (in West Sumba, five pairs of aspirants were competing for election), the candidates could generally be categorized in this way: first, there was the incumbent *bupati*, second, the incumbent deputy (*wakil bupati*), third, the main rival of the incumbents, and fourth, one or more outsiders. In the previous term, 1999-2005, the *bupati* and his deputy were members of different political parties, reflecting the division of seats in the local assembly. Because now political parties proposed candidates in pairs, the incumbent *bupati* and his deputy were rivals in the 2005 *pilkada*. In both districts, the main rivals of the incumbents were politicians who had attempted to win the district head position in previous terms as well. The outsiders were politicians of Sumbanese origin who had successfully pursued a career outside Sumba, in Kupang or on Java, in the bureaucracy or in business. They now felt attracted to their home island's top governmental

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[17] Hans Antlöv and Sven Cederroth, eds., *Elections in Indonesia: The New Order and Beyond* (London and New York, NY: Routledge Curzon, 2004).
[18] Ibid., p. 104.

position, which provides high local status and a financially rewarding position. See chart below for a list of candidates.

All the candidates originated from Sumba, had university degrees, had pursued a successful career, were modern Indonesian citizens, and were Christians, as are the majority of residents on Sumba. The candidates differed in age, style, and in their professional positions. They could also be distinguished from one another in terms of traditional leadership criteria, according to their areas of origin, and by how voters on Sumba assessed them in terms of the benefits they would bring to the region and to the particular voters themselves.

The candidates' strategies differed according to their position or standing in this election. The incumbents tended to stress their successes during the previous term of office; the incumbent *bupati* could make greater claims in this regard than his deputy. They also represented the vested interests, promising stability—continuity with the previous term—and therefore, implicitly, little change. The rivals, whether old or new, resorted to opposition strategies. They had to show how the incumbents had failed in certain areas and had to be able to demonstrate how they themselves would manage to derive the legitimacy of their leadership from sources other than the complex of vested interests and entrenched local bureaucracy. The rivals relied more than the incumbent *bupati* on their appeal as traditional leaders, on their personal charisma, or on their capacity to be innovative leaders.

List of Candidates in East Sumba's 2005 *Pilkada*

no.	Candidate for *Bupati* and Deputy	Characterization	Political Party	Abbreviation
1	Drs. Lukas Mbadi Kaborang	Main rival of the incumbent *bupati* in previous term (1995-1999)	PPDK	Lukman
	Ir. Emanuel Babu Eha	Incumbent deputy		
2	Drs. Langu Pindingara	Outsider, bureaucrat on Java, associated with business	PKPI	PinRef
	Drs. Refafi Gah	Previous member of provincial parliament in Kupang		
3	Ir. Umbu Mehang Kunda	Incumbent *bupati*	Golkar	MeGi
	Drs. Gidion Mbilijora	Local bureaucrat, *bupati's* staff member		
4	Dr. Alphonsius Anapaku	Outsider, specialist medical doctor in Kupang	PDI-P	Sius
	Ir. Ignasius Kalukur Lidjang,	Outsider, technical specialist in Kupang		

Tradition and the Legitimacy of Contemporary Leadership

Following Cederroth's conclusion on leadership in Lombok, we note that in Sumba, too, people apparently are inclined to join the following of a powerful patron. Therefore, an aspiring district head should fit the local image of a powerful patron. Power refers to the ability to control and use human resources, material resources, and "ideational resources," including ideology, symbols, and information employed by leaders to convince others of the legitimacy of their authority and thereby enhance the leader's ability to acquire additional material and human resources.[19] Ambitious politicians use these resources and manipulate the process to acquire more such resources, aiming ultimately to acquire more power. Webb Keane clarified the exact shape of these resources on Sumba, when he described the popular perception of leaders (nobles, *maramba*) in Central Sumba:

> When people talk about nobles, they often talk about their wealth and, by extension, their generosity and protectiveness—and their danger when angered. ... The activities that most distinguish a noble in practice—setting up great tombs, holding feasts, maintaining dependents, negotiating dynastic alliances, and sponsoring the marriages of others—require not only supporters but wealth as well.[20]

The supporters mentioned in the quote above are people who benefit from the noble's generosity and protection, including those who are dependent on the noble, receive material contributions to and help for their ceremonies, and are invited to attend the noble's feasts and be a member of his group. The activities mentioned here all belong to traditional life on Sumba. Most of the candidates in the June 2005 elections still gathered supporters by promising to fulfill these roles. Watching the election campaigns in June 2005 in Sumba, an observer might conclude that each candidate's main strategy was to outbluff the others through the sheer numbers of people attending his campaign events, as the crowds numbered between a thousand and twenty thousand people per event. Supporters are the human resources of power; no leader can do without a constituency; and voters are necessary if one seeks to be elected *bupati*.

Whether a candidate is considered suitable to be regional head is also a matter of his traditional identity. This identity depends on a person's position in traditional kinship structures, his social rank, and his traditional domain of origin.[21] Kinship structures along the patrilineal line compose hierarchies within a domain, with layers delineated according to rank. The highest position is that of nobility, and within the nobility, the most powerful position is accorded to the oldest of brothers within a House who can trace the shortest blood connection to the main founding father. Lower members of the same hierarchy form the natural constituency of the leader. The map

[19] Donald V. Kurtz, *Political Anthropology: Paradigms and Power* (Boulder, CO, and Oxford: Westview Press, 2001), p. 31.

[20] Webb Keane, *Signs of Recognition: Power and Hazards of Representation in an Indonesian Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), p. 58.
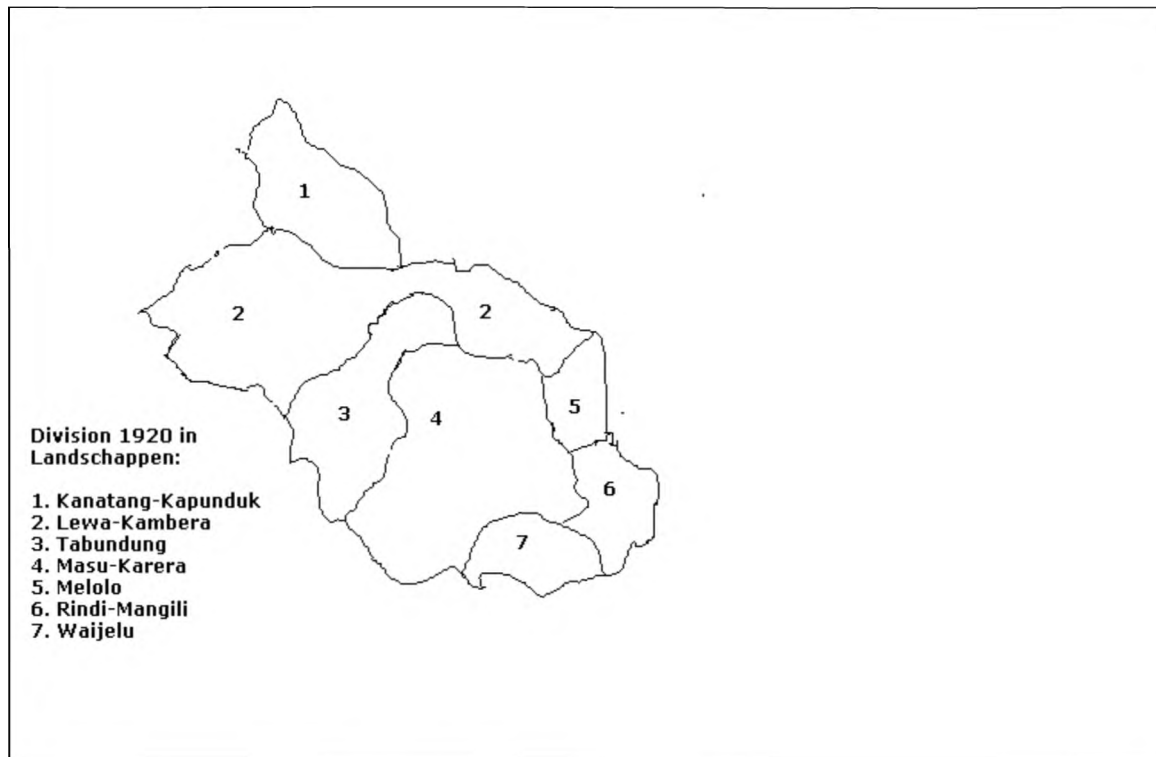
[21] Rodney Needham describes the characteristics of a domain on Sumba: "The integrating force within a domain is the hegemony of the main village and of the leading clan of that village. This clan owed its power to its ancestral spirits, and the unity of the district or domain was manifested in the attendance at sacrifices and ceremonies performed at the main village by the dominant clan." Rodney Needham, *Mamboru: History and Structure in a Domain of Northwestern Sumba* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 6-8.

below shows the traditional petty kingdoms in Sumba that the colonial government united in 1920 to form seven subdistricts (*landschappen*).

The four candidates for district head of East Sumba are all closely associated with their domain of origin: Lukas Mbili Kaborang originates from Karera, Umbu Mehang Kunda from Rindi, Pindingara from Tabundung, and Alphonsius from Lewa (but he grew up in Mangili). Only Umbu Mehang is undoubtedly of noble descent. Other factors defining the candidates' identities include the position and occupation of their fathers, and place of origin, occupation, and status of their wife's family. Part of each candidate's credit is based on his parents' fame.

Sumbanese leaders traditionally find their political followers by relying on kinship and marriage alliances. The phrase "politics of kinship" on Sumba refers to how hierarchies, rules, and morality of kinship are used for political ends. Politics of kinship is a style and strategy that is not confined to relations with real kinsmen, but which also can be used to create a new "we"-group, in which rules of generalized reciprocity apply.[22]

Map 1
East Sumba Traditional Domains Consolidated
into *Landschappen* in 1920

Division 1920 in
Landschappen:

1. Kanatang-Kapunduk
2. Lewa-Kambera
3. Tabundung
4. Masu-Karera
5. Melolo
6. Rindi-Mangili
7. Waijelu

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[22] Marshal Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine, 1972), p. 193.

A funeral on Sumba provides a good illustration of the ways in which kinship politics are used to create constituency. Traditionally, funerals are the most important ceremonies in this society, since they involve establishing relations with the divine ancestors. A good funeral, with a proper tomb and sufficient amount of livestock slaughtered for the deceased to "take along to the land of the spirits," has repercussions on the living: it will improve their welfare. A funeral is the only ceremony for which people are not invited, but instead are just expected, to attend. A large crowd of guests contributes to the quality of the funeral. Funeral ceremonies last for days or longer, and during these ceremonies there is plenty of time to linger and chat with other guests. Especially the night wakes before the funeral are perfect occasions for youth to gather and socialize.

The incumbent *bupati* of East Sumba, Umbu Mehang Kunda, was very active in attending funerals in East Sumba during 2004. When he made an appearance, a line of Jeeps would drive up to the site of the ceremony, resembling a traditional party of guests (*rombongan adat*). The *bupati* always brought a contribution for the bereaved family, either money or livestock. Rumor said he had a special budget item designated for these occasions, called "the tactical fund" (*dana taktis*). Traditionally, such a gift is expected to be reciprocated in the form of a pig, but in an election year, the payback involves, instead, political support for Golkar. Members of the politician's retinue conduct themselves like kinsmen—as if the politician were a relative of the deceased person—and the strength of this type of politics lies in the reciprocal economy. Sumba's large barter economy is ruled by the morality of exchange,[23] which, in this example of the funeral, is used to create ties between people in order to put them in a relationship of mutual obligation. But this process only works when corresponding norms are widely socially accepted. The morality of exchange, which values generalized reciprocity within the "we"-group as part of Sumbanese tradition,[24] is an ideational political resource.

Wealth on Sumba used to be measured and expressed in terms of livestock—water buffaloes, horses, and cattle—and, especially in the humid rural areas of the island, in the capacity to produce food (which required a combination of paddy fields and labor). Wealthy men organize large feasts to prove their capacity to produce food, create surpluses, and display their power to get other people to contribute. The size and shape of their families' tombs are also very important indicators of wealth and status. Material resources are required to construct such tombs, and once they have been built, they stand as potent symbols of strength and status. Modern types of indicators of material wealth—symbols of power—are the size, shape, and number of houses owned by a family. According to present-day norms, a successful Sumbanese should have several houses: one in his home village, one in the Sumbanese town where he resides when he is on Sumba, and one in Kupang or on Java. His houses on Sumba are preferably built along the main road, and combine typical traditional Sumbanese stylistic elements—like peak roofs—with "wealthy" building materials: plastered stone walls, tiles for decoration, tiles on the floor. A person's style of dress can also act as a symbol of power. The uniform is the symbol of State power. Those who wear a

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[23] J. A. C. Vel, "The Uma-Economy: Indigenous Economics and Development Work in Lawonda, Sumba (Eastern Indonesia)" (PhD dissertation, Agricultural University, Wageningen, 1994), especially chap. 3, "The Morality of Exchange."
[24] Ibid., pp. 62–66.

uniform are associated with the network of people who have access to funds and jobs and all kinds of privileges that are out of reach for ordinary people. The election candidates who want to stress their affinity with Sumbanese tradition wear (semi-) traditional clothing.

Charisma and Rhetoric

Benedict Anderson's classic article, "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture," points out the cultural differences that complicate a Westerner's attempt to understand what Javanese power is, who is powerful, and why. He argues that, "The contemporary Western concept of power is an abstraction deduced from observed patterns of social interaction; it is believed to be derived from heterogeneous sources; it is no way inherently self-limiting; and it is morally ambiguous." By contrast, "the Javanese see power as something concrete, homogeneous, constant in total quantity, and without inherent moral implications as such."[25] Anderson suggests how a discussion on these concepts from the Javanese side might start with: "Westerners have a concept of *kesakten* quite different from ours: they divide it up into concepts like power, legitimacy, and charisma."[26] Applying these distinctions to an analysis of power on Sumba, we find that a traditional concept comparable to "power" is *ndewa*. D. K. Wielenga touched upon this matter for Sumba in a short essay written in 1925 in which he describes the similarities between the philosophy of the famous physicist, Thomas Edison, and "the Sumbanese" with regards to power, life, and energy.[27] Very shortly summarized, this view accepts that all life on earth is identical and all beings live because they are occupied by power—life, energy—which in Sumbanese language (Kambera) is called *ndewa*. This power originates from outside the human atmosphere, according to Edison, as a glowing ball of energy, from which tiny parts are scattered and create life wherever on earth they land. According to the Sumbanese, the souls of their deceased forefathers will eventually reach the ultimate God, who crushes their souls and sprinkles them out over the earth, returning *ndewa* to the earth and bringing life force and vitality to whatever object it touches, including trees and stones. Vitality and fertility are signs that a human has received *ndewa*. If a person dies and his relatives organize a very fine funeral, slaughtering a fair number of livestock and providing him with a proper tomb, then the living can expect to get more *ndewa*.

Wielenga's reflection might sound inapplicable to the subject of political power and leadership in contemporary Sumba. It is very relevant, though. Umbu Dingu, the current secretary general of the Protestant Christian Church of Sumba, member of Anakalang's aristocracy, told me that he had been invited by several political parties to be a candidate for their party in the 2004 elections. As the highest official of the most important church on Sumba, he was likely to appeal to many voters, who would see him as the leader of their church. When I asked him whether he has any other special qualities that would qualify him as the perfect candidate, he told me about how he can

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[25] Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press [1972], 1990), pp. 22-23.
[26] Ibid, p. 20, note 8.
[27] D. K. Wielenga, "Beschouwingen over het leven door Edison en door den Soembanees," *De Macedoniër* 29 (1925): 33-38. Wielenga bases his description of Edison's ideas on "an article in the American journal *Nash* of May 1924."

make tombstones move, a clear sign of possessing (a large share of) *ndewa*. *Ndewa* is a personal attribute, which can be recognized by its effects and symbols. It is the core of charisma, and it is the only resource that cannot be actively acquired by potential leaders. A Sumbanese leader needs this type of charisma if he wishes to rise to the level of *primus inter pares*. Charisma will convince the audience his leadership is legitimated by ancestral powers; it appears in positive results in negotiations and is strengthened by the use of traditional symbols.

Charisma is a personal attribute that legitimizes leadership. On Sumba, charismatic leaders are typically excellent orators. The style of rhetoric that works best is culturally determined and changes constantly. In 2004-2005, political rhetoric in local election campaigns on Sumba, and in the lobbying campaign that advocated the creation of new districts, consisted of a combination of Christian sanctimonious talk, New Order jargon, quasi-ritual speech, colloquial talk, and fashionable television language, appealing to different groups or different identities in the audience. Joel Kuipers's opening statement in his book, *Power in Performance*, which explains that on the island of Sumba a vibrant form of ritual speech is required in all ceremonial events,[28] could have been part of a manual for election campaigns.

Lukas Kaborang, the accustomed rival of the *bupati*, is no master of ritual speech, but he has adopted its style. The style of "a real man," a traditional type of leader, is fierce, competitive, and masculine. This is the style of the "angry man" (*kabani mbani*), a term in which the word *mbani* refers to "anger, daring, threatening, rage."[29] The anger involved is not emotional, but is instead institutionalized public anger, meant to show that the person involved is central and masculine, capable of defining and exemplifying the social order.

Contemporary Leadership Criteria and Voters' Assessments

Sumba is part of a larger world, not just an island by itself. As a region of Indonesia, it is connected to the rest of the world through mass media and communication facilities, and through direct engagement, as Sumbanese travel back and forth to other areas. The large majority of the people on Sumba are Christians, either Protestant or Catholic. The number of people with university degrees is growing, and rose to 2 percent of the population in East Sumba in 2002.[30] Thousands of these relatively well-educated Sumbanese live elsewhere in Indonesia or even abroad, and nearly all of them stay in touch with their home island, where their relatives care for their ancestral villages and lands. They are the sources of information concerning a high standard of living that is within reach on Java or Bali, creating the ideal for many Sumbanese residing on Sumba. The path leading to this ideal is through education and bureaucratic careers. Successful Sumbanese are recognized by data on their resume that prove they have advanced along this path.

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[28] Joel C. Kuipers, *Power in Performance: The Creation of Textual Authority in Weyewa Ritual Speech* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), p. ix.
[29] Joel C. Kuipers, *Language, Identity, and Marginality in Indonesia: The Changing Nature of Ritual Speech on the Island of Sumba* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 48-49.
[30] "Sumba Timur in Figures 2002," p. 140.

When I asked voters in the months before the assembly elections in 2004 to explain their assessment of the candidates to me, apart from categorizing them according to place of origin and identity in terms of kinship relationships, they would stress past and present professional positions (preferably in the state bureaucracy), social status, fame in general, and, in particular, the candidate's reputation concerning his motives to become assembly member, supported by reports of his prior accomplishments and honesty, or, alternately, his alleged record of corruption.

Place of origin and kinship relations indicate the accessibility of a candidate, and past experience was said to reveal whether the candidate would be likely to invest more public funds in the assembly members' or the district head's home area. Past and present positions reflect a person's professional success and access to the higher levels of bureaucracy and funds, and thus help measure the potential abilities of the candidate as a broker between the electorate and higher levels of power and money.

For district head candidates, the voters' assessments were actually no different. The pairs of candidates adopted or confirmed their profiles in opposition to the others: Lukman was the pair that cared for the poor and agriculture, MeGi the pair that would maintain the current policy of economic development centered around town and industry, Sius would give a high priority to health and agriculture, whereas PinRef would be the best partnership for attracting outside investment and caring for the interests of the Muslims in Savunese[31] communities.

The former district head of West Sumba, Umbu Djima, outlined the criteria for the position based on his own experiences. He presented a normative, Sumbanese-elitist perspective:

> The best District Head is he who (1) is guided by the Lord, (2) is wise and able to design intelligent strategies, (3) deploys a humble attitude that makes him accessible, (4) is honest and not sensitive to corruption, (5) is a good manager who knows how to delegate, and who will not let others (e.g. his wife) manipulate him, and (6) has plenty of self-confidence.[32]

The antonyms of all these criteria are often heard when people disqualify certain candidates: that one does not go to church anymore and gambles with youngsters, the other is too arrogant and unable to cooperate with anyone, the third is angry and emotional all the time, and so forth.

State Legitimacy and Violence

The district's head's power is also a matter of the material resources he controls. In East Sumba, the government is the largest source of funds, business contracts, and salaries. The government's budget increased from 150 billion rupiah during Lukas Kaborang's term as district head (1995-1999) to 900 billion in the last period (1999-2005), when Umbu Mehang was in charge. In 2002,[33] the total government budget was 146 billion, of which 93 percent consisted of funds originating from outside the area,

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[31] From the island Savu, located between Sumba and Timor.
[32] Interview with Umbu Djima on June 22, 2005; also, *Tambur* 17, June 7-20, 2005.
[33] Figures in this section are derived from "Sumba Timur in Figures 2002," Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Sumba Timur, Popinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur (2003).

with the share received from Jakarta—the General Allocation Fund—figuring as the most important budget income item, at 128 billion rupiah. East Sumba's government used 65 percent for its own routine expenditures, most of which is dedicated to salaries. The Regional Gross Domestic Product of East Sumba in the same year was 458 billion rupiah.

Government jobs are extremely important on Sumba, since it is very hard to find other salaried employment on the island. According to the official statistics of East Sumba, in 2002 only 9 percent of the working population had a regular position with a salary. Those who hold these positions use their monetary income mainly to support their extended families, especially with education, housing, health care, and weddings.

In 1998, competition over access to government jobs incited mass violence in Waikabubak, the capital of West Sumba.[34] The *bupati* at that time, Rudolf Malo, was accused of corrupt practices at the annual exam for new civil servants; it was alleged that he had favored his own kinsmen over other, more qualified, candidates. The demonstrations protesting these alleged actions were subsequently inflated into a conflict between two sub-ethnic groups in West Sumba, both of which were supported by the two main political rivals at that time, the *bupati* and the chairman of the local assembly. Sub-ethnic rivalry is age-old in Sumba and can be easily ignited, as was the case in 2002-2003 during the campaign for creating a new district in West Sumba.[35] During the New Order period, potential conflicts of this sort were suppressed under the policy that restricted any reference to SARA—ethnicity, religion, race, or class—in order to guard the unity of the nation. During the *pilkada*, the General Election Committee set a strict campaigning schedule, separating the candidates' meetings geographically to avoid clashes between supporters. Also, it was in the candidates' best interests to avoid inflaming sub-ethnic divisions, and instead to create a unifying and inclusive political identity. For this reason, every candidate chose a deputy from a sub-ethnic group other than his own.

State legitimacy of leaders is supported by the local bureaucrats: all people employed by the government and, in particular, official civil servants (*pegawai negeri sipil*, PNS). Bureaucrats make up a major share of Sumba's educated elite, since winning a government position is the goal of education on Sumba. Together the bureaucrats form a strong network of vested interests, still closely linked to Golkar. Election law explicitly prohibited civil servants from participating in any election activities.[36] Therefore public discussions concerning the district head elections had to be conducted without public contributions from this educated elite group. They could voice their opinions through others who were allowed to express their support openly, for instance (unemployed) youths, retired civil servants, private entrepreneurs, farmers, NGO workers, and so forth. The bureaucrats also refrained from participating in the election gatherings, except when a candidate happened to be a very close relative.

[34] Jacqueline Vel, "Tribal Battle in a Remote Island: Crisis and Violence in Sumba (Eastern Indonesia)," *Indonesia* 72 (October 2001): 141-158.
[35] Jacqueline Vel, "Creating a New District in West Sumba," in *Renegotiating Boundaries: Local Politics in Post-Soeharto Indonesia*, ed. H. Schulte Nordholt and G. van Klinken (Leiden: KITLV Press, forthcoming 2006).
[36] Law 32 of 2004 about Regional Government, section 79 and 80.

Bureaucrats were not only motivated to maintain a low profile by the law prohibiting their involvement in district head election politics; their private assessments of risk would have also inclined them to keep quiet. Those who openly support a candidate who then fails to win the election might well put their professional positions at risk. The district head cannot easily dismiss civil servants, but he can certainly block any upward mobility in their bureaucratic career.

East Sumba's Two Big Men

Two men in East Sumba have been competing for the position of district head over the last ten years. Lukas Mbili Kaborang won the first round in 1994, when he was a bureaucrat in the provincial capital, Kupang. Of the five candidates proposed by the assembly in East Sumba, Pak Lukas[37] was named first on the list that the governor sent to Jakarta for approval. He was elected with eleven votes, compared to nine for his major competitor, Umbu Mehang Kunda, and none for the third candidate, and he served as district head from 1995 to 1999. After the 1999 elections, Umbu Mehang— until that moment representative of the region in the national assembly in Jakarta— won the election among assembly members by a one-vote margin and was appointed as district head from 1999 to 2005. The struggle between the two old rivals, East Sumba's big men, forms the core of current local politics in East Sumba.

Lukas Mbili Kaborang is the older of the two rivals.[38] He was born around 1938 in the domain of Karera. He does not belong to the nobility of this area, yet refers to his area of origin as if it were his personal territory. His father died when he was still young, leaving the family in poverty. In his campaign speeches, he related this first part of his life to stress his knowledge of and commitment to the poor on Sumba (according to the regional Human Development Index, more than half of East Sumba's population lives in poverty). Lukas left the island to go to school on the island of Sumbawa when he was still young. He returned to Sumba when the first public secondary school (SMP Negeri) was opened in Waingapu, and graduated in 1960. In those days, educated Sumbanese were rare. Lukas wanted to get a job at the civil service, went to Kupang to try his luck, and had already found a job at the governor's office by December 1960. He married a Timorese woman. While continuing his education and his work, he became active in politics. He became a regional board member of Parkindo (The Christian Party of Indonesia), regional secretary of the Christian youth movement, secretary of the Christian Farmers' Union, and in 1966 also the general chairman of the Kupang branch of the Christian Students' Movement of Indonesia. In 1971, he ceased his political activities when Suharto merged all political parties into three main streams, with the Christian parties being joined under the nationalist umbrella. His bureaucratic career flourished and enabled Pak Lukas to study in Surabaya; finally he graduated in 1983, at age forty-five, from the Undana University in Kupang. Since he was a bureaucrat, he was automatically made a member of Golkar, and he became an active member in Kupang. He campaigned to become district head in East Sumba in 1993, asserting that his excellent connections to

[37] Lukas Kaborang is usually referred to as *Pak* (Mister) Lukas , and will not be called "Umbu" since he does not belong to the nobility.
[38] I thank Johan Bokdam, who interviewed Lukas Kaborang about his life history on July 7, 2004, and was willing to share this information with me.

the provincial bureaucracy and governor could be instrumental in attracting more attention and funds for Sumba. Lukas Kaborang had been away from Sumba for thirty years, and was unknown to most of its population, yet he was elected, and during his term as district head, he earned fame as an active and honest ruler who visited all the villages and was interested in agriculture.

Umbu Mehang Kunda is not a populist type of leader. His strength lies in his ability to make compelling arguments and, most of all, in creating a strong supportive network. Umbu Mehang belongs to the nobility from Rindi and is closely related to the *raja* of Rindi. He is a generation younger than his main opponent, as he was born after World War II. He studied in Salatiga on Java and married a wife of Chinese-Javanese origin. He was member of the National Assembly in Jakarta, aligned with Golkar, from 1987 until 1999. As a result, his political links with Jakarta are substantial. He is also famous because of his extensive business network, which he has used to attract industries to Sumba—the new drinking water plant is the latest example. An incumbent district head and a good businessman, he is regarded as the wealthiest candidate. He is the boss of the current Sumbanese bureaucracy, the patron who holds power over the jobs and security of the region's civil service workers.

Umbu Mehang has long been associated with corruption, not only on Sumba but also in prior periods, when he was a member of the national assembly in Jakarta representing Sumba.[39] These allegations have never been proven, however. Rumor about his "money politics" in the last elections for district head are well known in Waingapu. Although Lukas Kaborang was well respected and popular as incumbent district head in 1999, Umbu Mehang still won that election by one vote, allegedly because he bribed assembly members.

In the months before he was allowed to begin his official 2005 campaign, Umbu Mehang openly denounced any form of money politics, accusing other candidates of this practice.[40] During several village gatherings, which were called "family meetings" and which took place on May 5 and 6 in Lewa subdistrict, Umbu Mehang scorned the lack of self-respect implicit in the practice of vote buying and added that he would only be proud if chosen "because the voters appreciate what I did during the last five years as district head,"[41] but did not mention any concrete accomplishments.

Political Parties and the 2005 Elections

Even these two big men cannot manage without political parties. Both Lukas Kaborang and Umbu Mehang were Golkar members until 1999. After his defeat in the 1999 district head elections, Lukas Kaborang left Golkar and retired. With the national elections in 2004 coming up, he was invited by several parties to stand as their candidate, since he was still popular in East Sumba and could attract many votes. He eventually chose the PPDK (Partai Persatuan Demokrasi Kebangsaan, The National

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[39] He is number 84 on the list of parliament members who were suspected of Corruption, Collusion or Nepotism; the list was composed by Gerakan Serjana Jakarta in 1998. See http://www.hamline.edu/apakabar/basisdata/1998/06/02/0067.html, accessed on August 12, 2005.
[40] http://www.sumbatimur.go.id/mod.php?mod=publisher&op=viewarticle&artid=122, accessed on June 5, 2005.
[41] idem: pertemuan keluarga di dusun Pada Njara Hamu desa Kangeli dan desa Umamanu (5/5) dan di dusun Mbidipraing desa Watumbelar kecamatan Lewa.

Democratic Unity Party), a new party set up by political analyst Andi Mallarangeng and the former Minister of Regional Autonomy and Administrative Reform, Ryaas Rasyid. Prof. Rasyid was also Lukas Kaborang's former teacher, and the PPDK reached out to the regions through the network of Rasyid's former pupils. PPDK was one of the few political parties that tried to honor regional autonomy and practice bottom-up democracy.[42] One consequence of this policy was the liberty offered to Lukas Kaborang, who was not only offered the number one spot on the PPDK's list for the regional assembly elections in East Sumba in April 2004, but was also appointed local chairman of the party and allowed to invite his choice of candidates to complete the list. The regional assembly elections were an overwhelming success for Lukas Kaborang and his PPDK: they won six seats out of twenty-five in the assembly and were the second largest party after Golkar (eleven seats). PPDK's victory was not a national phenomenon, since this party did not reach the necessary electoral threshold to compete for seats in the national parliament. Apparently, the victory in East Sumba was more of a personal success for Lukas Kaborang than a victory for the political party that put him first on its list.

Umbu Mehang's candidacy for Golkar was essentially preordained, although a formal selection process within the party was required to perfume his accession with the scent of democracy. On the official Government of East Sumba's website, there is a short report of a meeting of Golkar's youth organization (AMPG, Angkatan Muda Partai Golkar) on October 2, 2004, in which they discussed regional head candidacies. All members favored Umbu Mehang as their candidate, but for the position of deputy, eleven names were mentioned. It is interesting that five of these eleven candidates eventually became candidates for other parties. Apparently personal characteristics were more important than party affiliation. This is even more obvious in an article in the local newspaper, *Tambur*, published in the November 16-23, 2004 issue, which lists *figur-figur balon*[43]—people with known aspirations to become regional head or deputy—according to the geographical areas from which they originate, without mentioning their political party affiliation.[44] In March, Golkar's regional board sent the names of five pairs of candidates to the provincial board "for verification," and had three of them returned with approval. On April 5, 2005, Golkar's subregional party chairmen's council selected the partners Umbu Menhang and Gidion Mbilijora with a 81 percent majority vote.

Two other political parties were entitled to propose a pair of candidates for the elections: PDI-P and PKPI (Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia, Indonesian Justice and Unity Party), both of which controlled four seats in the regional assembly. PDI-P had initially wanted to have Lukas Kaborang as its candidate, but he preferred the PPDK candidacy. PDI-P only came up with one other candidate for regional head, Dr. Alphonsius Anapaku, a medical specialist (gynecologist) in Kupang. His father was a well-respected health worker in Lewa, not a nobleman, and his mother a Savunese. He grew up with relatives in Melolo. For the position of deputy on the PDI-P slate, two names were proposed. First was Ir. Ignasius Kalukur Lidjang, a researcher at the Institute for Research on Agricultural Technology Naibonat in Kupang, who had

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[42] Tony Sitathanm, "Indonesia: Politicizing the Gatekeepers," *Asia Times* online, January 8, 2004. See http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/FA08Ae)%.html, accessed on May 15, 2005.
[43] *Balon* is an abbreviation of *bahkal calon*, meaning an aspiring candidate.
[44] *Tambur* 7, November 16-23, 2004, p. 3.

graduated in soil science from Gadja Madha University in Yogyakarta. Second was Semi Lobo, a member of the central board of the party in Jakarta. The chairman of the provincial PDI-P board praised the three candidates because of their loyalty to the party. Subsequently Semi Lobo withdrew from the campaign, however, so it never became clear whether the PDI-P slate for East Sumba was decided on the provincial level or in Jakarta. The PDI-P pair was not very well known in East Sumba, and so it invested substantial funds in posters and other promotional materials that were visible all over East Sumba. On paper, this pair looked like a team that would be quite competent in developing government healthcare and agricultural services, and would attract voters who were inclined to shift their allegiance away from the vested elite. Alphonsius and Ignasius had been classmates at secondary school, and during the campaign they were called by the shared pieces of their names: Sius. It is possible that PDI-P chose to field this new candidate not only to contest this particular election, but also as part of a strategy to prepare for the 2009 elections. In 1999, PDI-P had gained a strong position as East Sumba's second party, but it lost in the 2004 parliamentary election and kept only four seats. A new candidate could help to restore the party's image.

The fourth party to propose a pair of candidates was the PKPI. It had won four seats in the April 2004 elections for the district assembly in East Sumba. That small victory had largely been due to the popularity of several local leaders. Ir. Umbu Manggana, working for the mining service of East Sumba, was the PKPI's top candidate for regional head, with Drs. Kristoffel A. Paraing as his deputy. Umbu Manggana is middle aged, of noble descent, and used to be head of public works in East Sumba until Umbu Mehang shifted him to another, clearly inferior, position after he had openly criticized the district head. When the proposals of the fifteen subdistrict PKPI boards were sent to the provincial and central board of the party, the Board of National Leaders of the PKPI decided to reject the candidates proposed by "the grassroots" and choose another pair, Drs. Langu Pindingara and Drs. Refafi Gah. Party members on East Sumba were furious and destroyed the party's office in Waingapu. This had no effect on the candidacy, however, and subsequently several subdistrict party board members openly declared their support for Lukas Kaborang and Emanual Babu Eha in the coming elections.

The national party board's choice of Pindingara and Refafi Gah is hard to understand in any way except as a matter involving "money politics." Rumor in Waingapu had it that East Sumba's PKPI Chairman had received a fifty million rupiah bribe to accept and support Pindingara's candidacy.

Drs. Langu Pindingara was born on Sumba in 1958 in desa Prai Karang, and his roots extend back to the region of Tabundung. He does not belong to the nobility. Compensating for his lower social status, he testified proudly in a newspaper interview of being the owner of a race horse, which is a potent symbol of Sumbanese masculine power.[45] His current position is Head Regional Treasurer in Gresik on East Java. He had a fine bureaucratic career, specializing in finance, and previous experience as head of the section that granted licenses and monitored building activities for public works in Gresik will have given him ample experience in dealing

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45 *Tambur* 8, December 2-15, 2004, p. 9.

with (the benefits of) corruption. The local newspapers in East Sumba were skeptical about him. He is neither familiar with nor known on Sumba, and his supporting team (*tim sukses*) is reportedly based in Surabaya, a situation that has exacerbated local concern about the team's motives. *Tambur* reported in November 2004 that Pindingara was not yet certain which party he would use as a vehicle to help him secure East Sumba's top position. The *Tambur* article describes how Pindingara first tried the PPDK, but its chairman, Lukas Kaborang, refused to support him; after that, he considered PDI-P or PKPI.

His candidate for deputy, Refafi Gah, had been member of the provincial assembly in Kupang for the last five years for PPD (Partai Persatuan Daerah, The Regional United Party), but was not re-elected in 2004. He is a university teacher in Kupang. In terms of winning a constituency, Refafi Gah is an asset because of his ethnicity. He is Savunese, a member of the second largest ethnic group living on Sumba after the Sumbanese; the Savunese constitute about 12 percent of the voting population.[46] Pindingara was the first candidate in this election who openly used the issue of ethnicity to win votes. He also tried to present himself as the candidate who would bring economic prosperity to the region, and tried to appeal to Muslim voters.

Rhetoric and "The Angry Man"

When Lukas Kaborang addressed the audience in his June 2005 campaign speeches, he displayed himself in his capacity as an "angry man." His speech was— like all effective ritual speech on Sumba—loud, a pulsating flow of words. It contained many threats: towards those who accused him of communist sympathies, towards the General Election Committee, and towards his rivals. "The angry man" style also appeared in the protests Lukas Kaborang voiced against other members of the assembly, against the current district head, against the election committee, and against anyone else who had acted in a way he disapproved of. He presented himself as the nemesis of the incumbent district head, Umbu Mehang.

Many voters in East Sumba appreciated this style, saying Lukas is "strict and angry for our own good." Yet during the official election campaign period in June 2005, his fierceness came close to aggression, and his masculine anger provoked violence among young adherents. His angry style turned against him in this period, when more and more people commented that because he was, first and foremost, frustrated by the loss of his position to Umbu Mehang in the 1999 elections, he was now campaigning in negative terms, whereas the other candidates were stressing positive opportunities.

Alphonsius Anapaku used a completely different rhetorical style: he is a master of Indonesian karaoke. A good election campaign on Sumba should include singing performances, and the best campaigners are those who can sing a song themselves. This feature has been popular in the Philippines for a long time and was introduced in Indonesia during the presidential elections in 2004, where presidential candidates Wiranto and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono turned out to be accomplished singers. On Sumba, Christian pop songs provide the best frameworks for campaign songs.

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[46] According to statistics of the Central Statistics Office (BPS) in 2000.

Other Supportive Networks and Sources of Legitimacy

All candidates tried to find organized support in the months previous to the elections. Organized support is arranged through institutions that have their own types of social organization and hierarchies, and their own norms and rules of conduct. In elections, political parties are self-evidently such institutions. In Sumba, the private business sector, the church, the state bureaucracy, and traditional kinship and customary law structures can also be used to acquire support.

All pairs of candidates in the district head elections were surrounded by a *tim sukses*, the promotion team, which consisted of advisors, investors, well-known supporters, and party officials. Golkar organized a promotion team in every election area, and its members held meetings with local leaders to inform them about the advantages of choosing their candidate.[47] The other political parties did not have such a well-organized and widespread network. The identities of the investors involved in the promotion teams were not always clear. Some local businessmen—nearly all ethnic Chinese—openly declared their support for one of the candidates, while others diluted their risk by contributing to the campaigns of several candidates. In East Sumba, the district head is very influential in all business contracts and contracting projects. *Tambur* newspaper reported that the promotion team of the PinRef candidate pair was based in Surabaya, suggesting that it consisted of investors only.[48] Local businessmen are extremely important in an election campaign: they control the whole transport sector in Sumba, and the candidates need their trucks and busses to transport their supporters. Their support is also vital when it comes time to handle the logistics involved in campaign feasting, especially for those candidates who could not muster sufficient support and contributions from the local population to help supply all the ingredients necessary to create a commensal feast.

Apart from relying on their promotion teams, including Chinese businessmen, all pairs of candidates used every other social network they could think of for raising support.[49] On March 18, 2005, well before the official campaign period opened, the Association of West Sumbanese (who reside in East Sumba) held an open-air meeting in Waingapu, where two thousand people attended and Umbu Mehang was invited to speak.[50] The coordinator of this meeting, Umbu Kaludang, recalled that 23,000 West Sumbanese live and work in Waingapu and its environs, and all of these are eligible to vote in Waingapu. Although Umbu Kaludang is head of the Agricultural Service in East Sumba, and therefore should not have openly mixed in politics, according to election laws, as coordinator of this West Sumbanese gathering he openly declared that he and his association supported Umbu Mehang and Gidion Mbilijora. A significant aspect of this declaration was that the politician invoked the concept of a "West Sumbanese" political identity in the context of East Sumbanese elections, and that "West Sumbanese" was regarded as a unifying label in East Sumba only.

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[47] Interview with Paulus Saga Anakaka, Golkar Promotion Team member, in Anakalang, June 20, 2005. Paulus S. Anakaka graduated in Malang, was chairman of the Christian Students' Organization in Malang (GMKI), is an active member of Golkar in West Sumba, and is currently unemployed (i.e. he has no position the bureaucracy), yet working in agriculture and as chairman of a farmers' group.
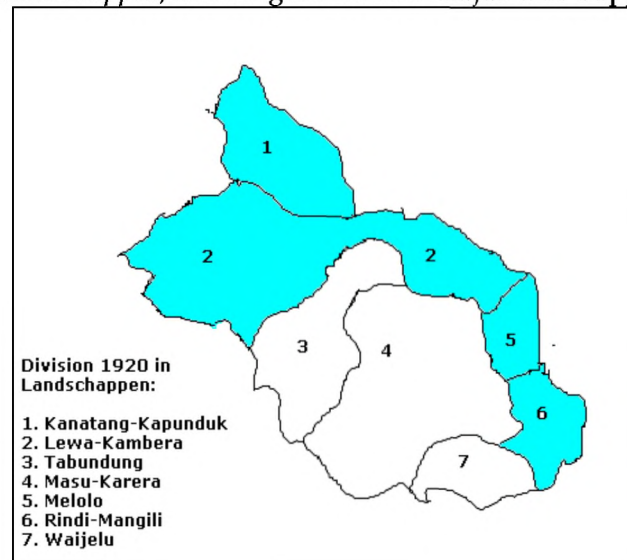
[48] *Tambur* 7, November 16-31, 2004, p. 10.

[49] "Paguyuban warga Sumbar dukung Mehang-Gigion," *Pos Kupang*, March 20, 2005. See http://www.indomedia.com/poskup/2005/03/21/edisi21/2103hum2.htm, accessed on May 25, 2005.

[50] Ibid.

The Christian church is an important institution on Sumba with a large constituency, and therefore another potentially interesting network for creating political identity and support. The official policies of both the Protestant Christian Church of Sumba and the Catholic Church require their representatives to refrain from any involvement in politics. Some individual reverends openly support candidates, however. All candidates in the East Sumba district head elections tried to present themselves as active members of a church, for example by starting every meeting, gathering, or feast with a Christian prayer. The father of Refafi Gah of the team PinRef had been one of the most important reverends of the early Protestant church, and this fact was cited to bolster his reputation. Small-scale "money politics" involving the church do come into play; candidates who wish to be positively associated with a church will make contributions. So, for example, a candidate in West Sumba financed the purchase of all the chairs in the new church in his home area, while Umbu Mehang regularly gave subsidies to the Protestant Christian Church to help finance their central meetings. Lukas Kaborang stressed his connection to the church in the campaigns leading up to the parliamentary elections in 2004 by announcing publicly that the acronym for his party, PDK, stood for *Partai Dengan Kristus*, the Party with Christ. In general, people on Sumba prefer a leader to be of their own religion, but this is just one of the criteria, and not a very distinguishing one, since all candidates in East Sumba are Protestant Christians, except Ignasius Kalukur Lidjang, who is a Catholic.

A candidate's alliances with the traditional Sumbanese nobility may be just as significant as his association with a Christian church. A headline in *Pos Kupang*'s December 20, 2004 issue declared "Four *Rajas* in East Sumba Support Mehang." The domains of kings involved covered the areas of Lewa Kambera, Kanatang-Kapunduk, Rindi and Melolo-Mangili, the areas darkened on the map below.[51]

Map 2
East Sumba *Landschappen*, Showing Domains of *Rajas* who Supported Mehang

Division 1920 in
Landschappen:

1. Kanatang-Kapunduk
2. Lewa-Kambera
3. Tabundung
4. Masu-Karera
5. Melolo
6. Rindi-Mangili
7. Waijelu

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[51] *"Empat Raja di Sumtim dukung Mehang,"* *Pos Kupang*, December 20, 2004. See http://www.indomedia.com/poskup/2004/12/21/edisi21/2112hum1.htm

In January, *Pos Kupang* reported that the PinRef candidates received support from the descendants of royal families in Lewa, Kanganggar (Karera), and Tabundung, which means at least one area overlapped one already claimed by the supporters of Umbu Mehang. This suggests that for the "traditional kings," it pays to present oneself as a royal descendant, and that for the candidates, securing public support from a king might be a way to buy a traditional constituency's votes. In this case, a report in the regional newspaper was also directed at a broader Sumbanese audience and could have served to prove Pindingara's connections with Sumbanese culture and traditions, connections that had often been disputed, because Pindingara had lived on Java for most of his life.

The general pattern of gaining support through various existing networks was that a candidate sought out meetings that would or could have been held for another reason and sought to appropriate part of each meeting in order to discuss his political agenda. The trade-off at such an occasion is that the candidate should provide the meeting with money, food, and livestock (to be slaughtered for the meal). Buying votes directly, or buying sympathy, distributing "gifts," creating reciprocal obligations, or promising rewards in the future all belong to the spectrum that measures and defines "money politics." Whether these are illegal activities is a question with no unambiguous answer.

Grassroots Involvement

Lukas Kaborang's campaign was focused on organizing displays of grassroots involvement and approval. The media associated Lukas Kaborang with the term *arus bawah*, literally meaning "undercurrent," but more accurately translated in this context as "aspirations from below." According to one scholar, "although the term *arus bawah* first appeared in connection to Megawati's rise to the PDI chair, it quickly came to be used in relation to a range of other issues in which public opinion was seen to have influenced government politics or voiced protests of different kinds."[52] Lukas Kaborang has become a symbol for opposition against the vested interests of the Golkar elite—in spite of the fact that only six years before the 2005 elections, he was Golkar's district head himself. At every occasion, he criticized his competitor, the incumbent district head, of being exclusively interested in urban development, especially building projects, and forgetting the interests of the majority of East Sumba's population, who rely on agriculture for their livelihood. Since Lukas Kaborang is a retired civil servant, with no power over the bureaucracy, nor does he have the wealth to buy votes, his strategy had to be to win the "grassroots votes."

Competitive Feasting

Since official campaigning was restricted to a short period before the elections, candidates had to think of another type of event that could be used to win popular support, one to which the Election Committee could not object. Leaders everywhere in

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[52] Stefan Eklöf, *Power and Political Culture in Suharto's Indonesia: The Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and Decline of the New Order (1986-1998)* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2004), p. 226.

the world try to muster large crowds as a visible sign of support to reinforce their political power. In the context of Sumbanese political culture, Joel Kuipers calls this feature "the ideology of audience completeness."[53] The higher the degree of audience completeness, the higher the authority of the leader. A key aspect of a leader's social influence, prestige, and status is the capacity to create a "complete audience." Audience completeness increases with the number of people who attend, with their degree of satisfaction with the service provided at the event—ideally, in Sumba, guests are addressed politely and served a hearty meal with meat—and in the volume and number of verbal responses they produce during the leader's oration.

Feasting is commonly put to use in Sumba to express, create, and consolidate social relations. It is also a means to increase prestige and status. In economies where labor is the main resource, leaders compete for control over social resources, rather than material ones. Leaders are powerful because they can enforce their authority over others. Feasting, defined by Michael Dietler[54] as a form of public ritual activity centered around the communal consumption of food and drink, provides an opportunity for a Sumbanese "big man" to create legitimacy as a leader.

> Feasting can ... create cooperative alliances between social groups, ... attract desirable allies by advertising the success of the group, create political power through the creation of a network of reciprocal debts, ... and extract surplus produce from the general populace for elite use.[55]

On April 29, 2005, Lukas Kaborang and his election partner Emanuel Babu Eha, organized a large feast in East Sumba's capital, Waingapu. They distributed sixteen thousand printed invitations,[56] through which they announced the following events:

1) a Christian ceremony to give thanks for the successful conclusion of five years' of service as Deputy District Head for Emanual Babu Eha;

2) the house-warming party in Emanuel Babu Eha's new private home;

3) the launching feast of Lukas Kaborang and Emanuel Eha's candidacy for the coming district head elections under the abbreviated name "Lukman."

Six hundred people were put to work to organize this party. At lunch time, they served a meal for which eighteen cows, ten large pigs, a buffalo, and several goats were slaughtered, and which required four tons of rice, three hundred kilograms of sugar, and a large bag of areca nuts, and these exact amounts were carefully reported to the media and even reached the national newspaper, *Kompas*.[57]

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[53] Kuipers, *Language, Identity, and Marginality in Indonesia*, pp. 74-75.

[54] Michael Dietler, "Rituals of Consumption, Commensal Politics and Power in an African Context," in *Feasts: Archeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics and Power*, ed. Michael Dietler and Brian Haydan (Washington, DC, and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), p. 67.

[55] Brian Hayden, "Fabulous Feasts: A Prolegomenon to the Importance of Feasting," in *Feasts: Archeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics and Power*, ed. Michael Dietler and Brian Haydan (Washington, DC, and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), p. 30.

[56] Waingapu has about 47,000 inhabitants, a quarter of the total population of East Sumba. See http://www.sumbatimur.go.id/mod/kecamatan/doc/doc6_37kota_kependudukan.htm, accessed on June 6, 2005.

[57] *Kompas*, April 30, 2005, http://www.kompas.com/kompas%2Dcetak/0504/30/pilkada/1721810.htm, accessed on June 2, 2005, and e-mail communication with Respati Dhani in Waingapu.

The feast was a big success, and all seventeen thousand seats were occupied. The two first aspects or parts of this celebration resulted in a combination of a Christian ceremony, a display in New Order jargon of both hosts' fine records as bureaucrats, and a ritual that resembled the traditional house-cooling ceremony. The large crowd present and the excellent quality of the meals underlined the legitimacy of "Lukman" as leaders. The third part of the celebration, the official launching party of the "Lukman" candidacy, was then only the most logical end to the sequence, as it acted as a vehicle for the thousands of participants to issue a grassroots call for the successful pair to be their leaders in the future. The other candidates had already organized quite a few large gatherings where they always served a meal, but Lukas Kaborang's enormous feast had launched a competition in staging great feasts.

During the official election campaign, the General Election Committee set up a schedule to indicate where the four pairs of candidates could hold their election meetings, trying to avoid clashes between supporters. Popular assessment of the success of these meetings was first of all influenced by the number of people present. The size of the audience was measured by the number of plastic seats available and occupied, and the number of trucks and busses used to transport spectators to the site of the campaign event. In the reports I heard, no one spoke about which people were present; they just tallied up the size of the audience. In June, the campaign audience was referred to with the term "*romantis*," an abbreviation for *rombongan makan gratis*—a group that attends to get a free meal. Those referred to as *romantis* remained anonymous, were presumed to be weakly committed to the candidates whose events they enjoyed, and could easily attend another candidate's campaign meeting the next day in order to get another meal.

The quality of the meal was the second measure of success. At a premier Sumbanese feast, the host should slaughter buffaloes, pigs, and cattle, and make sure that there is plenty of rice and meat for everyone. At traditional feasts, areca and betel nuts, *sirih pinang*, should be served to welcome guests, and everyone present receives coffee. Election feasts, on the other hand, focused only on the meal, which can be interpreted as a sign that the feasts were only meant to be a display of the number of supporters, and not intended to create a relationship with those attending. When Pindingara and Refafi Gah held a campaign in Waingapu, however, the result was negative: a large number of seats were piled up, unoccupied, and the pair of candidates served *nasi bungkus*, pre-portioned and wrapped meals, which are a sign that the host can afford to buy food, but cannot mobilize enough labor to cook the food at public occasions. Moreover, the gathering was surrounded by young motorcyclists, who are commonly characterized as "gangsters from West Sumba," hired by the candidates to support the campaign and exert supportive violence if necessary.
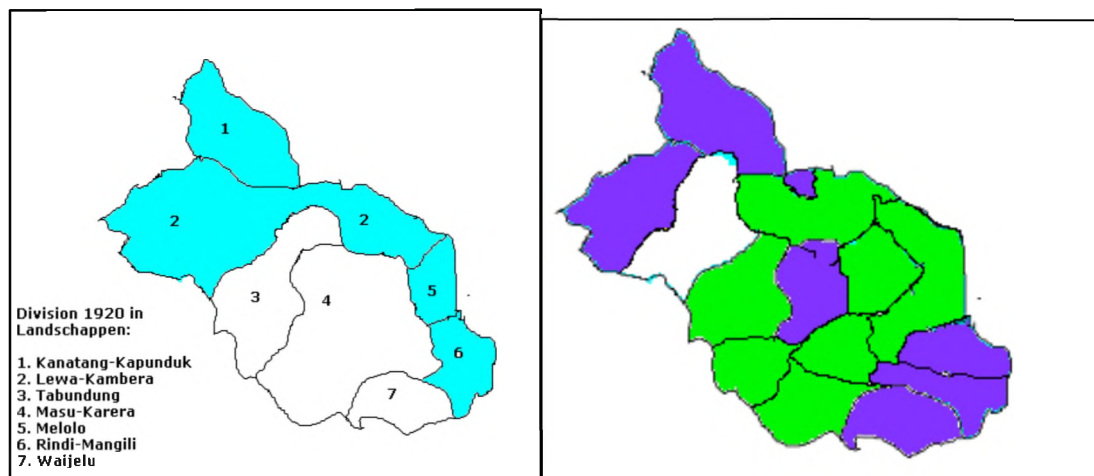
Compared to his election campaign meetings, Lukas Kaborang's feast had a much more positive effect on his candidacy: the invitations he sent were crucial in his bid to create supportive relationships. On the down side, the fact that his campaign meetings were open to everyone did not appeal to Sumbanese of higher social status, who will only attend such events if they have been privately invited.

The Result

The election took place on June 30, 2005. In the end, it turned out to be a very close race between the two big men, a race which Umbu Mehang won. Umbu Mehang won the elections with nearly 40 percent of the votes over about 34 percent for Lukas Kaborang. The total results appear in the table below. All the pairs of candidates received a majority of votes in their respective areas of origin. The two main rivals each won in seven of the fifteen subdistricts, but the districts where Lukas Kaborang was favored were less populous. The right map below shows the area where Lukas Kaborang won in gray, whereas the black areas show Umbu Mehang's victories. Compared to the map at the left showing those areas where descendants of former kings could be expected to wield influence and had promised their support to Umbu Mehang, the only kingdom that did not keep its promise was the Umalulu area around Melolo (area 5 in the left map). That was the area where Alphonsius Anapaku grew up and received many votes; in the end, Lukas Kaborang received more votes there than Umbu Mehang.

Nearly sixteen thousand voters either did not cast a vote, were not able to vote, or had their vote declared invalid. Since the difference between Lukas Kaborang and Umbu Mehang was only about six thousand votes, the exact explanation for the absence, for whatever reason, of these sixteen thousand votes was extremely relevant. Lukas Kaborang immediately protested, claiming that the larger part of the sixteen thousand invalid and uncast votes had in fact been cast by his supporters, but fraudulently discarded, which would mean that he in fact won with 50 percent of the votes. Hundreds of people demonstrated before the General Election Committee on the July 4, 2005, accusing the committee of using unfair procedures that favored Umbu Mehang.

Map 2 (at left, for comparison)
Map 3 (at right) Shows Subdistricts Voting for
Lukas Kaborang (gray) and Umbu Mehang (black)

Division 1920 in Landschappen:

1. Kanatang-Kapunduk
2. Lewa-Kambera
3. Tabundung
4. Masu-Karera
5. Melolo
6. Rindi-Mangili
7. Waijelu

Table 1. Results of the District Head Elections in East Sumba, June 30, 2005[58]

no.	Candidate for District Head	Political Party	Number of Votes	Percentage of Total Number Valid Votes
1 Lukman	Drs. Lukas Mbadi Kaborang Ir. Emanuel Babu Eha	PPDK	36,452	33.66
2 PinRef	Drs. Langu Pindingara Drs. Refafi Gah	PKPI	18,189	16.80
3 MeGi	Ir. Umbu Mehang Kunda Drs. Gidion Mbilijora	Golkar	42,991	39.70
4 Sius	Dr. Alphonsius Anapaku Ir. Ignasius Kalukur Lidjang	PDI-P	10,665	9.85
	valid votes		108,297	100.00
	total number of voters		124,173	

Conclusions

Pos Kupang's headline describing the election results in East Sumba ran: "In the End Golkar Wins on Sumba" (*Akhirnya Golkar menang di Sumba*).[59] Although the campaign messages and voters' assessments were supposed to be focused on the personal characteristics and leadership potential of the respective candidates, it could be true that Golkar won the elections simply because it represented a powerful network of vested interests. In fact, since 1998, when the democratic reforms in Indonesia were initiated, voters' support for Golkar in elections concerning the district of East Sumba has been fairly constant, as shown in table 2, below.

Table 2. Voters' Support in East Sumba in the 1999 and 2004 District Assembly Elections and 2005 District Head Elections, Showing Percentage of Total[60]

Political Party	District Assembly Elections 1999	District Assembly Elections 2004	District Head Elections 2005
Golkar	43	44	40
PDI-P	35	16	17
IPKI	8		
PDI	4		
PPDK		24	33
PKPI		16	10
others	10		

[58] "Akhirnya Golkar menang di Sumba," *Pos Kupang*, July 2, 2005. See http://www.indomedia.com/poskup/2005/07/02/edisi02/0207uta1.htm
[59] Ibid.
[60] Source: BPS East Sumba, 2003, p. 45. *Sabana* 56, May 2004.

Support for the other parties was not constant at all. One can generally conclude that the Golkar candidate can count on 40 percent of the votes, while the opposition candidates will have to divide up the rest. Because opposition is divided among so many parties, the Golkar candidate wins.

Nearly all the Sumbanese elite were members of Golkar until 1998. Those who shifted to other political parties since then had private reasons for doing so. Changing to another party mostly involved a decision to leave Golkar, indicating that the potential candidate hoped a new party would be more beneficial to his career. People who already held powerful strategic positions had no reason to leave Golkar. Again, Golkar was and is essentially a network of the vested interests. The other parties are vehicles for the opposition, consisting of those who are either frustrated by the current power holders, or those who cannot fulfill their ambitions through a regular bureaucratic career and Golkar.

Golkar candidate Umbu Mehang relied on strong supportive networks as his strategy to win the elections. Golkar itself functions as a well organized and elaborate network of people in leading positions who can exert power over their own subordinates. In West Sumba, the Golkar candidate also won. This candidate, Pote Leba, who was the incumbent deputy district head, received 32 percent of the votes. This result in the adjacent district supports the thesis that Golkar wins the elections thanks to its network of vested interests; it does not support the thesis that the incumbent *bupati* wins because of his position.

In East Sumba's *pilkada* of 2005, the opposition relied on various strategies to convince the audience of the candidate's legitimacy as a leader. Lukas Kaborang excelled in rhetoric, theatre, and the staging of feasts, and he could highlight the excellent reputation he had earned as district head in the previous period, 1995-1999. Although he did not win, many people—34 percent—voted for him; this can be interpreted as a vote for their own direct interests as farmers and small businesspeople who have limited access to the state bureaucracy.

Whether "money politics" played a role in the district head elections in East Sumba is hard to determine. All candidates depended on the assistance of businessmen, some of whom were openly supporting one candidate, whereas the majority were active behind the scenes and sometimes contributed to various candidates. Umbu Mehang gained a reputation for strategically supporting social events, such as funerals and also church meetings, by providing money or livestock. Lukas Kaborang used his large feast to create reciprocal obligations, but the feasts during the official campaign period were too anonymous to create social relations. These feasts were intended to enhance the candidate's fame based on the size of the audience and to buy the votes of poorer people by providing a free meal.

In an election system where only political parties can propose candidates, and where only a limited number of viable potential candidates happen to be available, a market develops in which "money politics" become important. Candidates in the 2005 *pilkada* on East Sumba required funds, and so they were all involved in "money politics" to some degree. The position of district head has become a very attractive and powerful bureaucratic post since the election reforms, so that candidates for the post can attract investors who hope to profit from their loyalty in the future. The

commenter in *Pos Kupang* who reported that it has become common for candidates to describe the bribes they pay to a political party as "political costs," a euphemism suggesting that these are standard political transactions, illustrates the blurred line between legal and illegal activities.[61]

The strong position of political parties in the initial phase of the election process and the involvement of local investors in the business of district politics are new elements of Indonesian democracy. How these investors will be rewarded after the elections is a subject for more research during the coming years.

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[61] Max Regus, "Pilkada, kapitalisasi politik dan banditisasi kekuasaan" (Regional head elections and the capitalization and criminalization of power), *Pos Kupang*, April 15, 2005. See
http://www.indomedia.com/poskup/2005/04/15/edisi15/1504pin1.htm, accessed on May 25, 2005.