CHAPTER EIGHT

TORAJAN LIVELIHOOD STYLES

Through tracing the socio-political, cultural and economic structures and layers of daily life in Tana Toraja in the previous chapters, I have shown the great variety of options open for making a living. The changing political and economic landscape (from colonialism to commercialization and migration) has opened up more possibilities in the past century. In the room or space that Torajans have to make a living, they strive for both material goals, such as securing land, money and heirlooms, and immaterial ones, such as prestige, status, siri' and power. The way people are oriented toward these different goals and the range of actions they undertake to achieve them is to a great extent shaped by the structures and context in which they are embedded. From the comparison between Palipu' and Kondo', it appears that structure and context are important boundary markers for people's actions. People in Palipu' are less oriented toward the organization of large ceremonies than those in Kondo' because of their different historical and social structural setting. Social mobility in Palipu' seems to be far more difficult than in Kondo', and spending vast amounts of money on ceremonies helps little in climbing the social ladder in Palipu'. Moreover, a long history of education and Christianization, especially Pentecostalism, have provided people in Palipu' with alternative possibilities and life orientations. In Kondo', where the building of an educational system was boycotted from the beginning of its introduction, and Christianity has far less penetrated into society, ceremonies continue to dominate all aspects of life. Consequently, people in Kondo' migrate to different destinations and for other purposes than people in Palipu'; namely to make as much money as quickly as possible rather than pursuing higher education to build a basis for a more sustainable or stable living. Finally, we saw a difference in orientation with regard to agricultural activities that is essentially due to both the economic structure and environmental conditions but possibly also to social and cultural regulations. People in Palipu' are much more oriented toward cash crop cultivation than are villagers in Kondo', who are almost solely involved in rice growing. In short, there are a variety of structural and contextual explanations as to why people behave and think differently in the two villages.
However, as we also saw in the previous chapters, within these structural and contextual boundaries, people still have some room for manoeuvre. Within villages but also, for example, in the same wealth class, people act very differently and have different goals in life. Both in Palipu' and Kondo' we have seen people that spend much more on ceremonies than others, people with and without translocal livelihood activities, people involved in the cultivation of cash crops or rice or both, and so on. Thus, even though we know in which context and under what conditions people are more likely to spend a lot of money on ceremonies, we do not know exactly who these people are and what they have in common, both in practice and in orientation. Therefore, alongside the framework of status systems, cultural ideals and geographical space and place, and the changes that take place within them, we have to look at the patterns of practices that households employ in making a living. Or, in other words, to take a closer look at the livelihood styles that have emerged in both villages as outcomes of the whole gamut of practices that reflect the impressive heterogeneity of daily lives. Only then will we be able to explain which people are spending a lot of money on ceremonies in times of economic crisis and political turmoil, and why.

In this chapter, I take a closer look at the livelihood styles of Torajan households in the two villages. First, I will identify the most typical livelihood styles that can be found in each village and their distribution among the populations. Second, I present a number of cases from both villages that illustrate these styles within the complexities of everyday life. Third, I reflect upon these livelihood styles by referring to the theoretical notions on the idea of style as outlined in Chapter 2.

Identifying Livelihood Styles in Palipu’ and Kondo’

To uncover particular patterns of coherence between various livelihood practices within the framework of status systems (‘social class’), cultural ideals (‘expenditures on funeral ceremonies’ and ‘religion’), geographical space (‘migration’, ‘destination of migrants’ and ‘remittances’) and place (Palipu’ compared with Kondo’), I have used a cluster analysis (See Appendix 1–4). This procedure resulted in four dominant patterns or styles for each village. When placing these styles in a table (see Table 8.1), three opposing poles of orientation are distinguishable that are important factors in differentiating the styles from each other: local versus translocal or even transnational; conservative versus dynamic or enterprising; and
Table 8.1. Livelihood styles in Palipu’ and Kondo’.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXTS/PLACE</th>
<th>Livelihood styles in Palipu’</th>
<th>Livelihood styles in Kondo’</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORIENTATION</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Enterprise</td>
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<td>Small spenders</td>
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<tr>
<td>STYLES</td>
<td>Style 1 Outcasts</td>
<td>Style 2 Established locals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of households (percentage)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Column in Appendix</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income activities</td>
<td>Cash crops: -</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Side activities</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Framework of status systems</td>
<td>Social class: 3–4</td>
<td>1–2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possess rice fields/land</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural ideals</td>
<td>Expenses on ceremonies: -</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Pentec</td>
<td>Prot/Cat</td>
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1 The term ‘conservative’ here refers to households that undertake few income producing activities, whether or not they are able or willing to. From this point of view, it is the opposite of enterprising people and does not imply traditional or inward-looking (though this might sometimes be the case).
minor against major contributors to ceremonies. From an analytical point of view, these three opposing poles of orientation appear to be the central axes of potential differences on which the various livelihood styles in the villages can be placed. What makes these styles distinct from each other is not only their differing positions on at least one of these axes, but more importantly their different positional combinations on all three axes. In Palipu’ for example, we can distinguish two livelihood styles that are both based on translocal practices and considered to be enterprising in their outlook. However, while both styles are similar with regard to these two opposite poles of orientation, they differ completely in their orientation toward expenditure at ceremonies and consist of people that stem from different social classes and religious backgrounds. It is exactly because of this that we cannot simply take wealth, social class, locality or any other

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<td><strong>ORIENTATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservative¹</td>
<td>Enterprising</td>
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<th>STYLES</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Translocals</td>
<td>Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>Locals</td>
<td>Siri' protectors</td>
<td>Gengsi seekers</td>
<td>Transnationals</td>
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<th>Geographical space</th>
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<tr>
<td>Migration</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Indon/Tator</th>
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<th>Abroad</th>
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| Remittances | + | + | n/a | + | + |

Note abbreviations:
religions: Pentec = Pentecostal; Prot = Protestant; Cat = Catholic
destination of migration: Sulsel = South Sulawesi; Indon = other places in Indonesia; Tator = Tana Toraja
+ = yes; - = no
variable as the single explanation of people’s behaviour but must look at the patterning of practices, or better, livelihood style, instead.

When we take a closer look at the various styles detected through the cluster analysis, we see that the largest group of households in Palipu’ (41 per cent) have a translocal style. That is, all these households have migrant members living elsewhere in South Sulawesi or beyond (57 per cent), in the cities of Java, the mining and logging centres of Irian Jaya, or industrial or forestry areas of Kalimantan. About 60 per cent of these households receive income from remittances from their migrant members, and probably even more derive financial assistance if we were to take into account the ad hoc financial contributions for unexpected events, such as sickness or death of family members in the village. They are also relatively enterprising in a sense that they have spread their agricultural risks by growing several cash crops (diversification). They come from all but the lowest social class, but the majority of these households (68.3 per cent) are in the third class. They are Protestant or Catholic and spend a considerable amount of money on ceremonies—more than half of them over Rp 500,000 per year.

The ones closest to the translocals are the ‘entrepreneurs’ in the sense that they generally also extend their activities beyond the village borders and have a broad spectrum of economic activities in which they are involved. However, in contrast translocals their expenditure on ceremonies is rather low. Quite a number of households identified with this style are Pentecostals. The cluster of people that were identified with a style which I labelled ‘established locals’ is of similar size (21 per cent) to the entrepreneurs but, in contrast, is locally oriented and includes some large contributors to ceremonial activities. I named this style ‘established locals’ because most of the households within this cluster are fairly secure in their relatively high social position.

Probably most different to the established locals are the households in style 1, which I named the ‘outcasts’, referring to people who have almost no chance for undertaking remunerative labour, or to climb the social ladder. For them, income from remittances is negligible, as is any other side activity. The majority of the outcasts in Palipu’ come from the lowest social class and own few or no rice fields or farmland on which to cultivate subsistence or cash crops. Since they have few income opportunities, and hardly any chance of social mobility, their financial contributions to ceremonial activities are rather low. Most such households have turned to the various Pentecostal churches in Palipu’ to escape from poverty, slavery, or
the obligations inherent to the gift-giving system that prevails in Tana Toraja.

The picture in Kondo’ is somewhat different in the sense that there is not really a dominant livelihood style, and all four clusters of households appear to be more or less of equal size. Almost all households are involved in livestock and poultry raising, making this, as in Palipu’, a non-discriminatory variable. In contrast to Palipu’, however, the variable of religion is not significant in Kondo’ because all but five households are Protestant. Although the analysis generated four new and distinct livelihood styles, the ‘locals’ in Kondo’ are not dissimilar to the outcasts in Palipu’. They have few migrant family members, and the ones who have left Kondo’ live in neighbouring villages or in the nearby town of Rantepao. Consequently, remittances are not a source of income for the bulk of the households in this cluster. They are involved in only a few income activities, and this cluster contains most of the households that spend relatively little on ceremonies. Nevertheless, such expenditures still far exceed the investment in ceremonies by most households in Palipu’.

All the other three styles in Kondo’ include households that can be considered to be ‘big spenders’ at ceremonies. The most extreme ones are the

![Image of a Toraja woman](III. 8.1. Toraja woman (photo by Wim Jakobs).)
‘gengsi seekers’. The households which are identified with this style have spread their activities across national borders (in other words are transnational). All the households have one or more migrants abroad (generally in Malaysia), or at least outside Sulawesi Island (7 per cent) and 98 per cent of these households receive remittances from their migrant members. In striving for a higher status, members of these households leave (voluntarily or under pressure) the Torajan highlands to find the cash needed for the organization of large ceremonies. No fewer than 62 per cent of these households had spent more than Rp five million on ceremonies and another 28 per cent somewhere between Rp one and Rp five million. Not surprisingly, most of these households are from the second and third classes and have some room to manoeuvre in climbing the social ladder. The majority are involved in a kaleidoscope of activities, and their involvement in cash crop cultivation is disproportionally high compared to the households within the other styles.

The people in the third livelihood style are protecting their position, or siri’, by making considerable contributions to ceremonies. This style includes the highest number of households from the first social class, and 60 per cent invest more than Rp 1 million per year in ceremonies and almost one-third more than Rp 5 million. All the households contain migrants working in other places in Indonesia, beyond the island of Sulawesi. Given their large investments in ceremonies to guard their honour or siri’, I labelled this cluster of households the ‘siri’ protectors’.

The ‘transnationals’ fill a somewhat odd position; they have no real basis for protecting a high siri or for seeking gengsi, because almost all of them are from the lowest social class. However, a remarkably high number of households spend between Rp one and Rp five million annually on funeral ceremonies. While these households have a transnational outlook, in the sense that they have spread their activities beyond the borders of Indonesia (as the gengsi’ seekers), their involvement in local income generating activities is rather restricted.

The cluster analyses of households in both Kondo’ and Palipu’ reveal some more or less neatly defined patterns of coherence between various aspects of livelihood which provide insights into characteristics of the households that are most willing to spend money on ceremonies. In Palipu’, households that are identifiable as established locals show similarities with translocals who invest considerable sums of money in ceremonies. Both lifestyles are made up of enterprising higher class people. In Kondo’, most households spend huge sums on ceremonies, but for diverse reasons: some are protecting their siri’, while others are trying to...
increase it. These people are not necessarily the wealthiest ones, but they are the ones who have extended their income-generating activities beyond local and national borders.

Although it reveals interesting insights, cluster analysis yields a rather static picture of livelihood styles and provides only a glimpse of what these styles actually look like. It fails to illuminate many features that typically go along with these styles. The ways in which the households of the various styles interact with other households, for example, remain unclear.

More importantly, it does not show the extent to which these styles are affected by changes in conditions triggered by the Indonesian economic crisis. In the following sections, I provide a more detailed and dynamic picture of the various livelihood styles by presenting four cases of households for each village.

Livelihood Styles in Palipu’

Translocals: The Household of Rannu and Lucia Lomo’

Rannu and his wife Lucia Lomo’ are already in their mid-fifties and have seven children, only three of whom still live at home. Home is a modern single-storey wooden house that stands on squared poles and is roofed with corrugated zinc. Opposite the house stands a nicely carved and colourfully painted rice barn, which has recently been built according to traditional principles mixed with some modern elements. The rice barn represents the high status of the family. As both Rannu and his wife originate from the old tongkonan Biang, their status is just below that of the second class or puang family. They are both farmers and raise some livestock. Around the house they have about a quarter of a hectare of dry land on which they grow coffee, cacao and some vegetables. The coffee trees do not provide enough beans for household consumption all year round, and the cacao fruits have been rotten for some years. Their vanilla trees died last year after yielding harvests for three years in a row. The household grows rice on the fields of Rannu’s mother, who lives next door with his sister, and the harvest has to be shared with these relatives. After distribution, about 200 kilograms of rice remains for household consumption, and this is not enough for the whole year. To eat rice all year around, Lucia Lomo needs to buy rice at the market over several months. When they are on a tight budget, Lucia mixes the rice with home-grown cassava. Both Rannu and Lucia also work on the rice fields of other villagers to earn some additional rice. Lucia takes care of their ten chickens and two pigs. Interestingly, one of the pigs was bought at an auction held at the Catholic church in Palipu’ where they are members. The chickens and pigs serve as a form of saving that they can immediately exchange for cash if something unexpected happens. They can also serve as gifts for house-building or funeral ceremonies.
The household spends, on average, around Rp three million yearly on ceremonial activities, but sometimes these figures are far exceeded. Because of the high cost of one year’s ceremonies, Rannu borrowed Rp eight million from a local Torajan bank, Ballo’ Toraya. Part of this loan was also intended to cover the school fees of their daughter who is studying nursing at a school in Makale and of two other children who attend a secondary school in a neighbouring village. Because the income from agriculture is low and insecure, Rannu regularly receives money from his brother and sister who live in Makassar. Rannu and Lucia’s daughters Kristina and Marlina also contribute substantially to the household budget (see the case of Kristina in Chapter 3). Kristina regularly sends money, goods and sweets to her parents in the village, which is transported by friends or relatives returning to the village or collected by Rannu, who sometimes travels to Makassar to visit his daughters and siblings for several days. Further, the migrant family members regularly return to Palipu’ to give a hand in the harvest season or to attend specific funeral ceremonies. However, although this extra labour is welcomed by Rannu, it is especially because of the migrant remittances that this household does not have huge problems in making a living or reacting to unexpected adversities or crises. As Rannu said, ‘The money from my family in Makassar is a continuous source of income, whether it is a crisis or not’.

The household of Rannu is a typical example of the translocal livelihood style. Important activities by family members at two locations, in Palipu’ and Makassar, are usually undertaken in consultation with each other, while there is an exchange of goods, people and information in both directions. Rannu’s family in Palipu’ takes care of Kristina’s child and sometimes sends rice or goods to their family in Makassar. Kristina and Marlina, on the other hand, provide labour, money and goods to the household in Palipu’ when needed. They are united in keeping the household running. Without the migrant family, Rannu would never have received a loan from the bank and could not fulfil his daily needs or meet his cultural obligations. Kristina in Makassar, on the other hand, could not work and earn an income if she had to take care of her baby. Typically, both the migrant members and Rannu and his wife are embedded in wider networks that provide them with the assistance needed in times of contingencies, or in case of upcoming ceremonies. Their daughters, and Rannu’s siblings, are able to make use of their kin, colleagues, church members and participants in kerukunan Kandora (migrant association) in Makassar, while Rannu and his wife are part of an important and extensive family that owns a considerable amount of land and family wealth (mana’), and includes some fairly wealthy members who are always ready to give a

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2 See Chapter 3 for a more elaborate explanation of this bank.
hand, whether as an act of kindness or to protect the siri’ of the family. In general, these households are not poor, but they are not rich either, and they have an average standard of living according to Torajan criteria.

Entrepreneurs: The Household of Ne’Angke’

Ne’Angke’ lives with his wife, two children and a grandchild in a long wooden house that is built on poles. The house stands on the outskirts of the village, at the bottom of the hill on which the tongkonan of the deceased puang looks out over Palipu’s largest rice fields, or uma’. Ne’Angke’ and his wife are both from the lowest social class in Palipu’, and most of their relatives live in the neighbouring area of Rarukang, which used to be a part of Palipu’. The family of Ne’Angke’ has a relatively high and stable income through diversification of income activities, both within and beyond the borders of Palipu’. Household members are growing rice on two pieces of land owned by the puang in return for a share of the harvest. They also cultivate coffee, cocoa and vanilla, and they have about 20 pigs and one buffalo, which is raised by the son of a neighbour. Andarias, a son of Ne’Angke’, sometimes earns some additional income through working as a bricklayer in and around the village. Because income from these activities is still unstable (depending upon rainfall and the regional economic situation) and employment is difficult to find, the other three children of Ne’Angke’ have migrated to Kendari (in southeast Sulawesi) or Makassar. A son in Kendari teaches at a primary school and regularly sends money and goods home. Two daughters, Delfi and Nona, work in a local bar and shoe store in Makassar (for the story of Delfi see Chapter 3) and also contribute to the income of the household. The remittances are mainly used for daily necessities in the household and to pay for the studies of Ritta, the Delfi’s daughter who lives in Makassar. If the household desperately needs money, they sell one of their pigs. If the situation is more dire, they will either call upon Ne’Angke’s brother who lives in Rantepao and works for the Protestant Torajan church, or the brothers and sisters of Ne’Angke’s wife who have a small shop in Kendari. In general, the household gets by through its considerable array of potential income sources. When the cost of living increased in Tana Toraja, following the economic crisis, they put more effort into growing cash crops such as vanilla and cocoa. When both the rice and the cash crop harvests were disappointing because of the drought, they asked for more money and goods from their migrant relatives and sold some pigs, and Andarias sought more construction work.

This household is a typical example of what can be categorized as an entrepreneurial livelihood style. This style is generally adopted by households from the lowest class who own few rice fields. In contrast to the ‘outcasts’, these households are very enterprising and are always searching for additional income possibilities. They have a diverse assortment of income activities shared among the various household members and locations that offer resistance to the threats in their vulnerable surroundings.
Because of their low social position, their networks are relatively small and do not reach people in the higher levels of society, except for a few patrons such as the *puangs*. However, even though their networks are small, social relations remain crucial for undertaking various activities, and the social relationships within their small network are relatively close and intense.

Households with an entrepreneurial livelihood style are not strongly oriented toward *gengsi* and generally use remittances for everyday expenses (such as food, housing, healthcare and education) and investing in agricultural activities rather than for lavish ceremonies. Although the majority of such households are Protestant, quite a number are Pentecostals. Pentecostalism further stimulates such entrepreneurial spirit as it accepts individual profit making. Moreover, it provides its adherents with the opportunity to establish new networks and free themselves from the chains of upperclass patrons who expect their free or low-paid labour for working their fields or at funeral ceremonies. Although most Pentecostals do still participate in the ceremonies of others, they do not organize large ceremonies themselves or take large gifts to ceremonies. Probably because the Pentecostals do largely exclude themselves from the existing socio-cultural system, through refraining from gift-giving, the church network is quite important in their lives. These networks are generally small, consisting of only a dozen households, but they are tight and helpful in cushioning many material and emotional needs in times of contingencies. Much of the money that went to ceremonies in the past now goes instead to the Pentecostal church for building and maintenance.

*Established Locals: The Household of Ne’Kedeng*

Next to the primary school, a two-storey wooden house looks over the valley of Palipu’. The house is surrounded by a green and colourful garden separated from the road by a hedge. On the ground floor is a little shop where sweets and cakes are sold to the schoolchildren, cigarettes to the men, and rice, salt, sugar and other daily needs to the women. On the floor above the shop lives Ne’Kedeng, who has a seat on the traditional village council, and his family. Ne’Kedeng who, according to local customs, is named after his first grandchild Kedeng comes from an important *tongkonan* in the village. His wife, Naomi, originates from an even more important *tongkonan* in Palipu’, and her uncle is the ritual leader of Palipu’. Both Ne’Kedeng and his wife are considered by other villagers to be upperclass citizens and fairly rich. Like most upperclass villagers in Palipu’, they are adherents of the Protestant Torajan church. Although the family has five children, none of them has left the highlands. Three children are still in school, and two
daughters are helping Naomi in and around the house and in the shop. One of the daughters is married to another villager who commutes to Makale each day to work as a mechanic in a garage.

Although the house is not particularly large, it fulfils a central role in the social life of several villagers. Almost every night, people gather in the backyard to have a chat and drink some palm wine until late into the night. These late-night gatherings, sometimes lasting until two or three in the morning, are obviously detrimental to Naomi’s health, because she always wakes up at five to feed their livestock and prepare breakfast. Naomi is raising 3 pigs, 2 goats and 15 chickens for future contingencies and upcoming ceremonies. Ne’Kedeng is raising a cock for gambling purposes. In the late afternoon, some men in Palipu’ usually come together to pool Rp 50,000–100,000 on a battle between two cocks who have sharp razor blades tied to their feet. Generally, this bloody spectacle ends when one of the cocks gives up. Ne’Kedeng is not particularly lucky and often loses money through gambling. However, as he put it, ‘Gambling is not about the money but concerns a social element’. Besides these afternoon and late night gatherings in and around the house, the area underneath the first floor is a popular spot for villagers to socialize informally.

The household possesses a quarter of a hectare of rice fields and another plot for cash crop cultivation, including vanilla, cocoa and coffee robusta. On another plot, they grow some cassava and coffee for subsistence use. The house is encircled with fruit trees and coconut palms. Most of the food consumed by the household comes from their own gardens. Although the quantity of their land has declined a little in recent years because of redivisions among the tongkonan members during funeral ceremonies, the household has not faced any notable change in their income. Interestingly, Naomi remarked that ‘the situation in our family has not changed in the past five years (1998 to January 2003) because we have nothing to do with the government’.

The household spends a substantial amount of money on luxury goods and possesses all the items you can find in the village: a radio, a CD player, a DVD player, a television and satellite dish, a sewing machine and a motorcycle. Although the cash crops in good years yield considerable profits, most of the money comes from the wealthier family members in Palipu’, or from their son-in-law who works in Makale. The same is true when it comes to ceremonies. Even though funeral ceremonies in Palipu’ are relatively small, and only three or four buffalo and several pigs are slaughtered (with the exception of the puang family who slaughter tens or even hundreds of animals), they still spend millions of rupiah each year on ceremonies, mostly also borrowed from, or given by, their richer siblings.

The case of Ne’Kedeng is a good example of a household with an established local livelihood style. Both Ne’Kedeng and Naomi are of a high social class through their kinship ties and well-established in this social position. They cannot rise to a higher position, and therefore it is pointless...
to push for upward social mobility. Conversely, their social embeddedness in society prevents them from descending the social ladder. They are highly respected and adored by a large group of people (neighbours, friends and kin alike) in Palipu’, and can always count on assistance in the organization of and participation in ceremonies. This does not mean, however, that they can refrain from gift-giving at ceremonies. Because they are from the higher social classes, just below the puang, they have to uphold this status by spending a considerable amount of money on ceremonies. This means that they need people who are able to lend or give them money. Since they are very locally oriented, and lack any direct relations with migrants, they have to maintain some relationships with translocal households and, through them, their migrant members and their money. As households with both translocal and established local livelihood styles are often members of the same tongkonan and thus share the same siri’, migrant money often trickles down in the form of money or cattle loans (not always expected to be repaid in this life). Further, in the event of future necessities, they always have some land they could use for collateral. Often such families are also involved in a variety of activities, such as rice cultivation, cash crop cultivation and other ancillary activities. The high number of households (83.3 per cent) involved in the cultivation of the fairly new cash crop, vanilla, is striking. As among the translocals, there are hardly any Pentecostals in this cluster.

Outcasts: The Case of Sande’s Household

Sande’ is a landless person who lives in a small house on the edge of the village, close to Ne’Mone. The house stands on a hillock that is officially owned by the village headman. Because it is not very fertile, it has already been lent for several years to Sande’s parents, who live further up the hill. Sande’ shares the house with his wife Elisabeth and their seven children. Elisabeth is Sande’s third cousin, and they both come from an area of Palipu’ that is known as ‘the home of slaves’. Because they do not own land, Sande’s family works on other people’s rice fields in return for a share of the harvested rice. Sande’ and his son plough, and his wife and daughter are involved in planting and harvesting. Usually these activities each take 3 to 5 days per season and yield about five litres of rice per labourer per day. In addition, Sande’ grows some coffee on his parents’ land (provided by the village headman) for both consumption in the household and for sale. On average, they harvest 4 to 5 kilograms of coffee during the harvest months which yields Rp 5,000 per litre. The children planted some vanilla plants that were given by a neighbour for free. They used some long grass as fertilizer because they lacked the money to buy synthetic fertilizer.
Besides farming, Sande’s son Julian takes care of Ne’Angke’s buffalo, which was bought at the market for Rp 6.7 million. Julian, who is 12 years old, dropped out of school and goes daily to the fields with the buffalo to graze. In about another year, the buffalo will be sold and the profit will be shared between the owner and Sande’. In addition to the buffalo, the household is raising two adult pigs and seven piglets at the same time of the study. The household received the mature pigs from the PKK (women’s group) in the borongna of Babana through a form of rotation system. When the pigs give birth, Sande’s wife has to give three piglets to another household. Elisabeth feeds the pigs sweet potato leaves which are grown around the house and rice bran which she purchases at the market. The money for purchasing the rice bran comes from the sale of one of their ten chickens.

To feed the household members, they need about one litre of rice per day. However, because they are often short of rice, they mix it with cassava, which is also grown on their parents’ land. They usually do not buy any food. The only expenses they have is for the education of their children, soap and clothing. Because of their lack of money, only two out of their seven children attend school, each costing Rp 5,000 per month. They buy clothes only once a year. Sometimes they receive some garments from migrant family members (cousins) returning for a ceremony. However, in return Elisabeth has to prepare food and wash the dishes at these ceremonies.

The household does not spend any money on ceremonies because they are Pentecostals. They seldom go to funeral ceremonies and, if they do go, they do not take any gifts, because this is strictly forbidden by their religion. In fact, all but two of Sande’s brothers and sisters became Pentacostals when they were young. The other two have remained members of the Protestant Torajan church and work for the puang family. For years, his sister Lomo has been working as a servant for the puang in Palipu’. After the puang died, Lomo stayed in his house to take care of the body until the actual funeral a year later. Another sister of Sande’ joined a puang member in Makassar, where she works as a servant in the house in exchange for payment of her expenses. It seems that the only way to escape commitments toward the puang family is to change religion and become Pentecostals, as Sande’ has done.

Sande’s household clearly shows a livelihood style in which the objectives are not so much to fulfil the cultural expectations of society, in the sense of gift-giving at ceremonies, but rather to make ends meet. Or, in other words, to find enough food and money to survive. Because he converted to Pentecostalism, Sande’ broke the link with the puang family; in so doing, he excluded himself and his household from any help from that quarter. The small group of people belonging to his parish of the Pentecostal church have not completely taken over this role, but they do provide labour in case of need. The household is able to borrow small amounts of money (up to say Rp 30,000) from neighbours and family members, but in
general these people are in the same situation. Escaping this situation is not easy because the household lacks relatives that would 'bridge' them to a wealthier (higher class) group of people, and they do not have the money to provide further education for their children, nor land or investments to grow profitable cash crops or rice on a large scale. For them, the economic crisis did not make much difference, because they were already trapped in a marginal subsistence situation.

*Livelihood Styles in Kondo’*

**Locals: Pong Fitri's Household**

At the far eastern end of the village of Kondo’ stands a small wooden house on a mountainous plateau. The house is occupied by Pong Fitri, his wife and four children. The couple earn an income through planting some rice on other's people's fields in another village, about three kilometres to the south. Pong Fitri makes additional money by cutting mortars out of stone. Recently, the couple planted some coffee and cocoa trees near their house. However, because this piece of land is on the top of a rocky plateau, it is difficult to retain rainwater in the soil, and the trees grow only slowly. Pong Fitri
and his wife are doing their utmost to make ends meet. The rice they obtain from the fields they work on is not sufficient to provide them with food all year around, and they grow some cassava to mix with the rice or to replace it during shortages. They also grow some sweet potatoes to feed their pig which they keep for future necessities—perhaps as a gift at a ceremony. They raise two chickens and two dogs that are also predestined for consumption at ceremonies. Around the house they grow some banana trees and chillies.

The appearance of this small house on a dry plot of land on the outskirts of the village suggests a pitiful life. Their low status and very limited sources of income do not help make life any easier. However, on closer observation, the household appears to be firmly embedded in village society and to receive much assistance from relatives, neighbours and other villagers. Often Pong Fitri’s wife praised society in Kondo’ for being helpful during hard times. As she put it, ‘We feel secure living here, because the people in Kondo’ are very close to each other. They are helpful and show their kindness when it is needed most’. At the time of my interview, the household owed Rp 1.5 million to a rich villager who had lent them the money so that they could participate in a large funeral ceremony during the previous year. Although they pay interest of five per cent each month (Rp 75,000), the sense that there are always people in the village willing to lend them large sums of money gave the household a sense of security. They often borrow rice from some of the large landowners in the village, again at an interest of five per cent. Next to these helpful financial contributions, they also receive significant day-to-day assistance from their close relatives, neighbours and members of the same saroan. These people frequently exchange small amounts of money and food when it is needed. Further, they often give each other a hand in cultivating the rice fields and cash crops, or in renovating or building a new house, as occurred with Pong Fitri the previous year. Interestingly, even though Pong Fitri is from the lowest social class, he feels very attached to his tongkonan, to which he annually gives about Rp 100,000 in paniuran (ritual debt).

The case of Pong Fitri is typical of a household with a local livelihood style. It is of the lowest social class, financially poor, has relatively few income possibilities and lacks any migrant members and remittances. However, I would not term them impoverished or outcasts, like some people in Palipu’. The people in this category are still firmly embedded in local society. In this way they manage to acquire the most important basic needs such as food, housing and healthcare, and, probably more importantly, to fulfil their cultural duties at ceremonial events.

Gengsi Seekers: Pong Pading’s Household

Pong Pading is married to a daughter of Ne’Sukku (see the account of a funeral in Chapter 6), and as they were still living in the village he took care
of most of the organizational work for the funeral ceremony. In everyday life, Pong Pading cultivates rice, cocoa, vegetables and some passion fruit, but the organization of the funeral ceremony demanded all of his time for a whole month. He even had to postpone ploughing the rice fields until the ceremonial activities were finished. Pong Pading’s household also cultivates the rice fields of his brothers- and sisters-in-law who are living in Luwu and in Malaysia. In exchange, they are allowed to keep two-thirds of the rice harvest in good seasons and all of it in slack times. However, the plots are small and provide barely enough rice for the household’s consumption. For the third season in a row, disease has struck his cocoa trees.

Notwithstanding these disappointing agricultural results, Pong Pading’s household has no difficulties in maintaining a reasonable standard of living. They raise ten pigs and some chickens which can be sold during difficult times but, more importantly, they have two children working in Malaysia, plus one in Kalimantan and another in Luwu who support the household financially on a regular basis. At the funeral of Pong Pading’s mother-in-law, Ne Sukku’, all ten pigs were eaten by the 150 villagers who assisted with the preparations for the ceremony and by the hundreds of guests at the actual rituals. Pong Pading’s children contributed the remainder of his entire share (Rp 150 million) to pay for 15 buffalo and other necessities. Unlike his wife, who is without question from the highest social class, one of Pong Pading’s parents is from the second class, making his status somewhat questionable. Because of this, he is always focussed on increasing his prestige through slaughtering lots of expensive buffalo at funeral ceremonies or taking large fat pigs to house inauguration ceremonies. Further, by filling a central role in his wife’s family, possible because almost all of her family live outside Tana Toraja and so are not always in a position to attend funeral ceremonies, he is continuously seeking ways to increase his prestige or gengsi. His opportunities to achieve this goal have increased in the last four years because, during this period, almost all of his children have migrated and are now able to contribute to the family’s striving for honour.

The case of Pong Pading illustrates a typical household that has ordered most of its practices in such a way that they lead to an increase in gengsi. When entering Pong Pading’s house, there is no obvious sign of wealth, but everyone in Kondo’ considers him to be a wealthy man because he offers so many buffalo and pigs at funeral ceremonies. It seems that the pursuit of gengsi in Kondo’ is still accelerating, demanding ever greater contributions of pigs and buffalo. Many people from the higher social classes are involved, and the competition for prestige seems to be unaffected by the recent economic crisis. This is to an extent because much of the necessary money comes from outside Indonesia (mainly Malaysia) where markets were less affected by the Southeast Asian economic crisis. More importantly, the competition continues because contributing money to ceremonies and thus upholding or increasing the family’s
prestige is the number one priority for most villagers, even if this must be accomplished at the expense of their own living conditions and comfort.

This style involves mainly people from the second and third social classes, who still have some room for upward mobility. Although most of the money of the _gengsi_ seekers comes from outside Tana Toraja, most of them also engage in a range of agricultural activities in Tana Toraja, such as cash crop and rice cultivation. To fulfil their major objective in life, quite a number of households also raise buffalo. In addition to conspicuous gift giving at ceremonies, status and prestige also depend on one's social contribution to village society. For this reason, most of these households are quite active in various social, cultural or economic events. They fulfil duties in a church, on the village council, in public projects, and so on.

_Siri’ Protectors: The Household of Ne’Rombe_

Ne’Rombe and his wife live together with their 22-year-old daughter in a large _tongkonan_. In front of the _tongkonan_ are four beautifully carved and decorated rice barns (_lumbung_) that symbolize the wealth of the family. Since the mid-1970s, Ne’Rombe has held the position of _pa’buntuan sugi’_ which means ‘rich man’. Given his wealth, this title has certainly been given with good reason. He owns a second house in Burika’ and owns about 10 hectares of rainfed, but also irrigated, rice fields. Notwithstanding, a more important criterion is his impressive record of contributions of slaughtered animals at funerals and the large number of animals he takes to other people’s ceremonies. Ne’Rombe is quite a figure in Kondo’. He is the leader of two _tongkonan_, the headman (_Ambe’_) of _saroan_ Bottona in the southern part of the village, and is known as ‘the king of slaves’. Although it is never expressed openly, most people living in the area of _saroan_ Bottona are considered to be former slaves or people from the lowest class. One consequence is that Ne’Rombe has no difficulty mobilizing people to help him at funeral ceremonies, or to work on one of his twelve plots of rice. However, unlike in the past, today he has to provide food, cigarettes and palm wine, or give his labourers a share of the harvest in exchange for their services.

To protect his status and power over the people in Bottona, he has to display his wealth at all important ceremonies and slaughter animals in vast numbers at all of them. Fortunately, he has six children who are now living in Jakarta, Irian Jaya, Kalimantan and Malaysia and who take care of most of the expenses. Working as a businessman, a civil officer, at a bank, and as a general labourer, they manage to save tens of millions of _rupiah_ each year to send to their home family in Kondo’. Another son, living in Rantepao, takes care of this great amount of money that regularly flows into the local bank. Because this son has a telephone in his house, he is able to facilitate contact between the migrants and his parents in Kondo’. All the migrants return home at least once a year to attend one of the ceremonies, keeping ties within the family close.
In line with his extravagant expenditure at ceremonies, Ne’Rombe spends far more on daily life than the average villager in Kondo’. Typically, his household needs about Rp 700,000 each month for food, clothes, toiletries, animal feed, healthcare, church donations, electricity, land tax and transportation to the market and to ceremonies. In addition, it costs them about Rp 1 million annually to farm their rice fields (mostly for renting a hand tractor for ploughing). It is also these rice fields that deliver most of their locally earned income. The fields are cultivated by other people on a sharecropping basis, and they typically yield over 500 litres of rice (worth Rp 10 million at the time of this research), after deducting the share for the workers. However, the rice is never sold on the market but is utilized in the household for everyday meals and for ceremonial activities.

Although the case of Ne’Rombe might seem a little extreme, it presents clearly all the aspects that make up the livelihood style of the siri’ protectors in Kondo’. Ne’Rombe (and his other household members) is well-respected by his tongkonan and saroan members, and also in the Protestant Torajan church where he holds a seat on the elders council. In order to maintain this respect of Kondo’ society, or in other words to consolidate his position, he has to display his wealth at ceremonies. To obtain the necessary wealth, the household has spread their economic activities over multiple locations and various disciplines. Although Ne’Rombe functions as the representative of the household, all its members have a part to play in the maintenance of its wealth and power. In addition to money, it has never been a problem for Ne’Rombe to find labour for the organization of extraordinarily large ceremonies because he has so many followers. As one Torajan told me, ‘It is only possible to organize large ceremonies if you are from the highest class. For ceremonies of size you need to mobilize a lot of people, and this is only possible when you are very rich or when you are from the highest class and have a lot of people below you who feel obliged to help’. In conclusion, it is fair to say that this livelihood style is thus suited to people from the highest social echelons who have migrant money and followers. As with the status seekers, their concern in life is not so much about having enough food on the table or being healthy, but rather to be able to slaughter livestock at all times and at all ceremonies. Over 60 per cent of such households invest more than Rp 1 million per year in ceremonies, and almost one-third of the households spend over Rp 5 million for such purposes.

Transnationals: The Household of Marthen Bai

Marthen lives with his wife and a school-age child in a newly-built wooden house in the southern part of the village, known as the ‘slave area’. The house,
which cost Rp 8 million to build was completed just before I arrived for a first interview. The house was paid for by his other three children, who are all working in a supermarket in the city of Sandakan, in the eastern part of Malaysia. The small cottage they used to live in before they moved into the new house now serves as the kitchen. Marthen is cultivating some rice fields that are far from the village and owned by a distant relative. The yield is not enough for the household’s own needs, and each year the household needs to buy rice over several months. He also has some fruit and coffee trees in front of his house for subsistent use and, whenever possible, he makes some money from carpentry. His wife is raising a pig and some chickens and earns some additional rice by working in other people’s rice fields during the harvest season.

Because the income generated by Marthen and his wife is insufficient to buy food and other daily necessities, let alone luxury consumer goods, they depend on the regular remittances sent by their children. As Marthen phrases it, ‘money is the key to everything’ (uang adalah kunci segala segalanya). To prevent myself from feeling ashamed toward other relatives if there is a funeral ceremony and I cannot join, I hope that my children will never refrain from sending money. I need to offer pigs and sometimes even buffalo at ceremonies whether I want to or not’. Last year, Marthen’s household spent about Rp 8.5 million on gifts for ceremonies. He explains that the reasons for sending money home are ranked as follows: for funerals and other ceremonies; for house building; and then for expenses in daily life. For Marthen’s household, life has become much easier recently because their minimal income has been supplemented by the remittances of their children who have been migrating over the past decade. The migrant family members regularly return home to attend ceremonies or to spend their holidays, and Marthen and his wife have already been twice to Malaysia to visit their children and grandchildren.

Marthen’s situation is a good example of a household that has become completely dependent upon remittances. Compared to the other livelihood styles, the translocal contains more households that lack any land rights and that are less involved in the cultivation of coffee, cocoa or vanilla. Consequently, remittances play a significant role in the income portfolio of these households, especially when we consider their relatively large expenditures on ceremonies. Typically, they have established a solid network around them, one which usually includes relatives, neighbours and saroan members. However, they do not fulfil any very public or notable role in society, as do the gengsi seekers and siri’ protectors, and they do not rely on their networks when it comes to money. The transnationals have to fulfil certain duties to retain their honour and to prevent themselves from being shamed, but this is far easier (and cheaper) than fulfilling the duties of the siri’ protectors, who have to uphold their high status.
In this sense, the orientation of the people with this style is more of a balance between fulfilling duties at ceremonies and obtaining a basic standard of living in terms of food, healthcare, housing, religious devotion, etc.

Some Concluding Remarks on Livelihood Styles in Tana Toraja

The typical cases above demonstrate that people within similar contexts opt for different approaches and practices in earning a living. A closer look shows that neither structure nor agency is the sole determinant of these choices and actions. Households within the same social class might behave differently, and households with similar characteristics do not automatically act in the same way. People’s actions are, rather, the result of both structural aspects, such as social class and income possibilities, and the capabilities they have to undertake particular practices. Although there is a wide range of possible practices from which people can choose (consciously or unconsciously), both the cluster analysis and the observations during the field research highlighted certain dominant patterns of practices in Tana Toraja, which are well reflected in the livelihood styles described above. As styles are not neatly bounded or static, an investigation into livelihood styles in other villages, or a follow-up study, would probably lead to slightly different results. However, apart from styles that reflect deviant behaviour (such as those involving illegal practices), the styles in Palipu’ and Kondo’ are fairly typical of contemporary southern and northern villages in Tana Toraja. In this respect, they are helpful in answering the questions that stand at the heart of this study: which households in Tana Toraja are spending a lot of money on ceremonies, and why, and how are these households able to find the necessary money and resources while Indonesia is struggling with an economic crisis.

The livelihood styles in Palipu’, tend to contradict somewhat the view that funeral ceremonies in Tana Toraja are becoming larger and more extravagant spectacles. Apart from the puang families, the majority of the households are not oriented toward the organization of ceremonies of great size and cost. Social mobility is difficult in this region, and people are more oriented toward the education of their children and the making of a sustainable living. Participation in ceremonial activities remains important for most households in order to maintain their status or to fulfil their ritual obligations toward their ancestors or relatives, but most of these ritual activities remain modest and involve the slaughtering of only
a few buffalo and pigs. The largest cluster of households in the village, the translocals, spend money on ceremonies, most of which is derived from migrant members who are living in South Sulawesi (mostly in Makassar) or elsewhere in Indonesia. The style cluster called ‘established locals’ contains about half the number of households in the translocal cluster. These households are all of a relatively high status and spend larger sums of money on ceremonies, mostly generated through local activities. Both these two clusters of households are dominated by Protestants or Catholics and are relatively wealthy compared to the other villagers.

In contrast to households with these livelihood styles, the outcasts and the entrepreneurs spend little or no money on ceremonies. Instead they focus on obtaining enough money for food, healthcare, education and other daily necessities. All households in these two style clusters come from the lower social echelons of society. The outcasts have difficulty making ends meet, and most of them have turned to Pentecostalism to free themselves from pressing ritual obligations. They make up quite an isolated group in society and struggle much of the time to satisfy their basic needs. Through employing a wide variety of income activities and spreading beyond local borders, the entrepreneurs have succeeded in making a much more sustainable living. During the economic crisis, they profited from the increasing prices for cash crops, and their migrant family members helped to cushion the impact of disappointing agricultural harvests. Some members of this cluster have also turned to Pentecostalism to either escape ritual obligations or to free themselves from the suffocating grasp of the puangs.

Unlike the livelihood styles in the south of Tana Toraja, the livelihood styles in the northern exemplary village of Kondo’ seem to better the paradox that I put forward in the introduction to this chapter and also to this book. The style analysis makes it clear that it is particularly households from the upper two social classes that spend enormous amounts of money on ceremonies, albeit for different reasons. The expenditure on ceremonies by households from the highest class are needed to uphold their high status and siri’. These siri’ protectors generally generate money from rice cultivation and, more importantly, through migrant members with relatively well-paid jobs throughout Indonesia. Because protecting the family’s siri’ is seen as so important for these households, the money flow from migrants has not been affected by the economic crisis. The gengsi seekers, who are generally from the second and third classes, are driving up the size and cost of funeral ceremonies. With the help of ‘new’ money from migrant household members in Malaysia, which was not hit as hard by the
Southeast Asian economic crisis as Indonesia, they are now in a position to organize exorbitant ceremonies themselves or to buy the most beautiful and expensive buffalo for the ceremonies of other siri’ protectors, taking on new debts that have to be paid back, preferably through an even larger gift at a future ceremony.

The growth in ceremonies is fuelled by the contributions of lower social class households who are trying to fulfil their perceived duties in both financial and physical (contributing labour) senses, to guard their own, and their tongkonan’s, honour. Although they do not organize large ceremonies themselves, these transnational households are significant contributors of migrant money to the ceremonial activities of others. Households identified as having the style of ‘locals’ are the only ones not really spending much on ceremonies. They do not receive remittances and have very limited income generating options. They are not oriented toward prestige but just do what is expected of them, investing a modest amount of money in gifts for ceremonies but, more importantly, providing labour to help make the organization of the enormous ceremonies of siri’ protectors and gengsi seekers possible.

In conclusion, the livelihood styles concept has helped me to examine the households and add to the picture that I had of Tana Toraja at the start of my research. My research shows that it is primarily the gengsi seekers and the siri’ protectors in the northern area of Tana Toraja that are involved in a continuous battle over power and prestige. In the south, it is primarily the puang who organize extravagant ceremonial activities, while the majority of the villagers refrain from holding large slaughtering events. In this southern region, there is even a growing number of people who escape the gift-giving system by turning to Pentecostalism. Further, the styles concept helped in reaching an understanding of these households that went beyond income activities. It provided ideas about households’ structural constraints, their value orientations and their social networks and relations that can be called upon in times of crisis or contingencies.

Livelihood styles are not static, and they vary from the standard patterns in the sense that change is inherent in a style. Along with internal changes, these styles are the way they are because of changes in the context in which they are embedded. As we saw in both villages, the introduction of education, Christianity, a cash market and migration have all created new opportunities and value orientations. However, these changes, triggered by outsiders, did not occur evenly or at the same time in all parts of Tana Toraja. Moreover, the way people reacted to these changes differed and depended on various other factors such as structural constraints,
existing value orientations, and the local and/or translocal social networks in which they took place.

People could potentially switch to other practices or even adopt other styles, but in general this appeared to be complicated by structural constraints. As we saw in the two village studies, people feel more or less obliged to participate in ceremonies, to protect their own and their family’s siri’ and to show their respect to their ancestors. Refraining from these socio-cultural duties would mean a break with their family, their tongkonan and even society. Although there are some so-called free-riders (generally in the towns of Rantepao and Makale) and people who sever most or all of their social relations by leaving the village and severing contact, the majority fulfil their duties. In Palipu’, the ‘outcasts’ turned to Pentecostalism to escape their socio-cultural obligations, something which was not possible several decades ago. This provided a way out of the gift-giving system without becoming totally excluded from existing social relationships. The orientation of people with the other styles is still based on participation in ceremonial activities, not only to pay their respect to ancestors, or to protect the honour of the family, but to obtain, power, prestige and wealth as well. In that sense, participation in ceremonies, and the high expenditure that comes with it, are as rational as seeking food, shelter and a healthy life. And the way to match the ever-increasing sizes and costs of the ceremonies of the siri’ protectors, and so obtain more power, prestige and wealth within the highlands, is through migration to places beyond Tana Toraja.