CHAPTER VIII

Creating a new district

In Anakalang, there were mixed feelings about politics in 2000. Although 47 per cent of the voters in the sub-district Katikutana had voted in the 1999 general elections for Megawati's PDI-P, they had not foreseen that the parliament members would chose a *bupati* who may not be their preferred choice, and that the PDI-P candidate would be Thimotius Langgar, a man from Wewewa. Anakalang's own politicians were on the list for Golkar. Langgar was elected as *bupati* from 2000 until 2005. In 2000, there was a common complaint that 'Anakalang lost'. In particular Umbu Bintang had lost the *bupati* elections, but more generally, the influence of politicians from Anakalang had decreased considerably compared to the days when Umbu Djima was still *bupati* of West Sumba. What could they do about this? In 2001, a great opportunity emerged with the new phenomenon *pemekaran*: creating a new district. 'Central Sumba'¹ as an autonomous district could be a positive turn for frustrated political ambitions.

Decentralization and pemekaran

The Habibie government passed two new laws in 1999 that provided regional autonomy to the districts (*kabupaten*) starting in 1 January 2001. Laws 22 and 25 of 1999 provided the administrative and fiscal framework for a process that seemed to change the very foundation of the unitary nation-state. Law 22 devolved power from the centre to the districts in the policy areas of public works, education and culture, health care, agriculture, transport, industry, trade, investments, environmental issues, co-operations, labour and land (Ray and Goodpaster 2003). The central government would remain responsible for national defence and security, foreign policy, fiscal and monetary mat-

¹ This chapter is a modified version of a chapter I wrote for the edited volume *Renegotiating boundaries; Local politics in post-Suharto Indonesia* (Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken 2007; Vel 2007). I thank Gerry van Klinken for giving permission to reprint and for his elaborate comments.

ters, macro-economic planning, natural resources, justice and religion. Law 25 concerned the fiscal elaboration of decentralization and in particular the division of tax incomes between the centre and the regions where this income was generated. It also included the regulation that all districts would received funds according to a preset formula, called Dana Alokasi Umum, the General Allocation Fund. This fund would now be a main source of income for the autonomous district governments, who could spend the budget according to their own priorities.

One of the main reasons why the government wanted to accelerate this process was to accommodate the anti-Jakarta sentiments in many regions outside Java while the still-ruling Golkar party, which was on Java under political fire, tried to maintain its power bases in the outer islands by supporting regional autonomy. The sense of panic about their own future led policy makers to take drastic action (Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken 2007:10).

Bureaucrats and politicians all over Indonesia followed these developments anxiously, and thought about the opportunities these laws provided for their own regions and their own careers. West Sumbanese in Jakarta, in the provincial capital Kupang, in Waikabubak and in the villages and small towns could all imagine themselves in positions somewhere in this new, decentralized setting. One of the opportunities provided by Law 22 was *pemekaran*, the creation of new administrative units, such as, new provinces, districts or sub-districts. This led to a huge increase in the number of administrative districts, from 300 in 1999 to 440 in 2004, a feature that Henk Schulte Nordholt and Gerry van Klinken (2007:2) describe as 'administrative involution'.

Throughout Indonesia, three main reasons are always mentioned for creating a new district: it brings the government closer to the people, it will be beneficial to economic prosperity, and it is the wish of the people to have their own district. A new district will have its own bureaucracy with a budget to spend according its own priorities, which is one good reason for local politicians and aspiring civil servants to want to create their own district. Setting up a new district bureaucracy promises a large number of jobs for well-educated but presently underemployed locals.

Enthusiasm for Sumba Tengah

Thousands of people gathered on the plain of Laikaruda in the middle of Sumba on 31 January 2003 to celebrate the new district of Central Sumba. Trucks and small buses had gone early in the morning to the villages gathering passengers and spreading the word that a delegation from Jakarta was coming to inaugurate the new district. It would be a feast, with gong music and meals with meat. The honoured guests from Jakarta received traditional gifts, such as beautiful hand woven cloth. Traditional dance performances stressed the local population's commitment to the new district and the strong culture

and tradition of the area. Banners over the road proclaimed the creation of Central Sumba as an act of pure democracy – *Vox populi, vox Dei: suara rakyat adalah suara Tuhan* (The voice of the people is the voice of God) – and the slogan would locally be interpreted as a sign of (the Christian) God's blessing over the campaign. The crowd only learned afterwards that this was just one step in a very long process of creating a new district. They had been mobilized to assure the visiting delegation of the Central Parliament in Jakarta that Central Sumba above all rested on the genuine wishes of the people (*aspirasi masyarakat*).

In 2003, a number of people in Anakalang were wholly occupied with the idea of making their own *kabupaten*. A 'private' government budget for Anakalang would bring wealth to its elite and jobs for their well-educated children. Creating Central Sumba was proposed as part of the plan to divide West Sumba in three: Central Sumba and Southwest Sumba, and what remained of West Sumba, concentrated around the capital Waikabubak.² Creating a new district needs actors who engage in political struggle to reach this goal. These people are connected to each other through networks deploying shared histories and cultures. For the purpose of lobbying for their cause of creating Central Sumba, they created a shared political identity. Two important elements of this political identity are the boundaries that separate 'us' from 'them', and the stories about those boundaries (Tilly 2003:32).

When the opportunity appeared, the idea of *pemekaran* in West Sumba still had to be worked out in details. A new district needs a territory with boundaries, it needs explanation of those boundaries, it needs inhabitants who identify themselves in terms of a community linked to the territory, and it needs leaders who can convince all the stakeholders of the necessity of the new district. Map 8.1 shows the final proposal on the map of West Sumba. The old *kabupaten* is to be divided in three.

The original map onto which the new lines are drawn in map 8.1 is the map of election districts. It shows the sub-districts and also the number of parliament seats assigned from each area, which reflects the number of inhabitants. If we take the parliament seats as measurement criterion, and divide area 4 in three parts of two seats, the ratio of seats is 20 to 9 to 6 for Southwest Sumba, West Sumba, and Central Sumba, respectively. Central Sumba's bad legislative position under a one-man-one-vote regime in West Sumba is clear, because its population is only 17 per cent of total population. A new district consisting only of Central Sumba would neatly sidestep this statistic, and allow for a more targeted representation of its inhabitants.

² The names of the proposed districts are: Sumba Tengah, Sumba Barat and Sumba Barat Daya.

Map 8.1 The proposed map of West Sumba after *pemekaran* in three new districts

The arguments of Central Sumba's lobbying committee were phrased in terms of administrative history, linguistic divisions and in cultural and religious terms. The type of rhetoric and theatre in the campaign strengthened the arguments. Sumbanese holding good positions in the bureaucracy, army and business on Java and in Kupang involved themselves in the campaign and strengthened the lobby in terms of access to those who decide on matters of *pemekaran*. These factors will be elaborated below while narrating the campaign that started in 1999 in Kupang and Jakarta.

Economic stakes

Since Law 22 of 1999 on decentralisation was enacted, the government budget increased 300 percent or even more in the two districts on Sumba. Starting in 2001, the district government had the autonomy to spend that budget as it saw fit. Clearly district state offices became more attractive than ever, and local competition for these offices became more intense.

People in Anakalang envisaged that through creating their own *kabupaten* Sumba Tengah, they would receive their own revenues from the central gov-

Table 8.1 Government revenues in East and West Sumba in the period 2000-2005

In billions of Rupiah	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
West Sumba					
District Government Original					
Revenues (<i>pendapatan asli daerah</i>)	1.8	4.7	8,3	10.3	11.4
Revenues from Central government					
(<i>dana perimbangan</i>)	46.6	143.2	153.2	196.8	210
East Sumba					
District Government Original					
Revenues (<i>pendapatan asli daerah</i>)	1.4	3.8	7.7	10.5	10.6
Revenues from Central Government					
(<i>dana perimbangan</i>)	34.6	135.1	137.3	173	181.8

Source: East Sumba: *Laporan Keterangan pertanggungjawaban akhir masa jabatan bupati Sumba Timur, periode 2000-2005 (pada Sidang DPRD Sumba Timur)*, ir. Umbu Meheng Kunda, bupati Sumba Timur, 2005, p. 173

West Sumba: *Memori pelaksanaan tugas bupati Sumba Barat tahun 2000-2005*, Sekretariat Daerah Kabupaten Sumba Barat, 2005, pp. 157-8.

ernment (*dana perimbangan*). Their assumption was that the district budget for Central Sumba would be more than what was spent on the area under the current system, including what was spent on the salaries of government officials working in or originating from this area. They also argued that when West Sumba would be divided in three districts, the sum of their three budgets would be more than the present West Sumba district budget. It would be a win-win situation for all, they claimed.

Historical arguments for pemekaran

In the debate for or against the new district, many historical arguments were also put forward. What would make Central Sumba a meaningful entity? A study of the history of administrative boundaries using state sources and writings of Christian missionaries does not reveal that what is now considered West Sumba would be a natural social or geographical entity. The administrative boundaries involved in the discussion about *pemekaran* were created in the past by state officials, and these boundaries shifted every once in a while. In Chapter III, the traditional domain was already described as the most constant type of cohesive area in Sumba. This has always been the area referred to when Sumbanese explain the identity of a fellow Sumbanese to a third party: 'orang Lawonda', 'orang Loli'.

From the earliest accounts, Sumba is described as an island with permanent internal warfare. The object of warfare was to capture food, horses and people. In the pre-colonial era land could have been a cause of internal disputes, but not the object of warfare between two domains. The sharp borders drawn on maps of traditional domains are imaginary. A domain is defined by its centre and not by its borders. Taro Goh (1991) registered 16 domains in West Sumba and another eight in East Sumba. Other sources mention more: Meijering et al. (1927:8) mention 29, whereas Oemboe Hina Kapita (1976b:51-3) offers a more detailed sub-division when he describes the history of administrative distinctions. While living in Lawonda I noticed that people who originate from the domain Umbu Ratu Nggai still make a distinction between at least four domains within that area, which supports the larger number mentioned by Oemboe Hina Kapita.

What is important within the context of finding stories to support the idea of creating a new district is that districts can be made up of several traditional domains. Stories about the connection between these domains serve as an argument for their presence within one administrative area. In the course of history many different larger administrative units were constructed on Sumba. Consequently, domains shifted from one unit to another.

Map 8.2 I: Sumba before 1915

Map 8.2 IV: Sumba 1930: mission's division

Under colonial rule, which started on Sumba in 1912, the whole island of Sumba was one *afdeeling* (similar to today's district) of the Residency of Timor within the Dutch Indies administration. The colonial administrators considered the many traditional domains on Sumba, and chose one among the aristocrats (*maramba*) of each area to be appointed as king (*raja*), and this person subsequently acted as an indirect ruler (*zelfbestuurder*) for the colonial government. Sumba was divided before 1915 into three sub-districts, named *onderafdeelingen* (see Map 8.2 I). These in turn contained smaller sub-units called, in colonial terms, kingdoms or territories (*kerajaan* or *landschappen*). If one *landschap* comprised more than one traditional domain, the colonial government would appoint a *raja* from one domain with *raja*-assistants from the other domains. Although traditional domains were autonomous, they were linked in various ways. Cooperation in warfare, or protection against slave raiders from outside, created bonds. Marriage alliance was the most important traditional method of creating ties between members of various domains. Oemboe Hina Kapita (1976b:33) describes how the *raja* of Lewa Kampera in the mid- nineteenth century was in control of the whole area of Central and East Sumba, because of marriage alliances with the aristocracy of all the domains in that area. The first administrative units in Sumba corresponded with the area of influence of the major *raja* at that time. In 1915, West Sumba was split in two after Assistant Resident A. Couvreur studied the social structure in Sumba and decided to create Northwest Sumba and Southwest Sumba (see Map 8.2

II). In 1922 the two parts of West Sumba were reunited, and what was called Central Sumba in those days merged into East Sumba (see Map 8.2 III).

The Dutch Protestant Christian missionaries also divided the island into several territories for their work. In 1930 they decided to subdivide West Sumba into West Sumba West and West Sumba East, following the linguistic boundary that divides the area where the East Sumbanese language Kambera is spoken by one side and the West Sumbanese languages by the other (see Map 8.2 IV) (Wielenga 1949:189). The area which the missionaries designated as West Sumba East corresponds most closely to what was intended to become the district of Central Sumba in 2002, except the sub-district Tana Righu is not included in the plans. Wielenga (1949:43) argued that the linguistic boundary separating West Sumba West from the rest of the island was also the boundary east of which 'the landscape is more mountainous, sparsely populated, where animal husbandry is the main economic activity and which is less accessible for bringing the Gospel'.

After the Second World War Sumba was one of the 16 member states of the federation of Eastern Indonesian States, created by the colonial government to counterbalance the nationalist movement in Indonesia. Sumba was at that time divided into 16 *kerajaan*. In 1950, the Federation of Eastern Indonesian States ceased to exist and became part of the Indonesian Republic. The former Federation was divided into several provinces. The province of which Sumba was part became Sunda Kecil, which was renamed Nusa Tenggara in 1954. The province consisted of Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Sumba, Flores and Timor. In 1958 Nusa Tenggara was again divided, this time into three: Bali, East Nusa Tenggara and West Nusa Tenggara. At the same time, Sumba was divided into two districts (*tingkat II*), East Sumba and West Sumba, just as it was before.

In 1962 the Indonesian government introduced a uniform administration in every part of the nation, finalized with Law 18/1965 on Local Administration. West Sumba was called Daswati II Sumba Barat and was subdivided into several sub-districts that replaced the former *kerajaan* or *landschappen* (also known as *swapraja*). At first, there were only four sub-districts, one of which, 'Mau', was exactly the region that is now proposed as the new district of Central Sumba. Kapita (1976b:74) writes that 'for some reason or the other this division was not making governance easier'. The sub-district's borders were shifted and two sub-districts added, so that Memboro afterwards belonged to another sub-districts.

In the New Order period the internal administrative boundaries in West Sumba did not change. In 1999, the six sub-districts of West Sumba were divided into smaller sub-districts, resulting in the present total of 15 sub-districts. The most recent administrative division of West Sumba was for the general elections. The General Election Committee constructed five electoral areas (*wilayah pemilu*), and for each included two to four sub-districts, from

which locally registered representatives would be chosen in West Sumba's parliament (see Map 8.1). The fourth election area contains sub-districts that belong to three proposed new districts: Laura and Wewewa Utara to Southwest Sumba, Tana Righu to West Sumba and Memboro to Central Sumba. It is safe to conclude from this overview of Sumbanese administrative history that boundaries of administrative territories were constantly changing throughout history. Therefore the idea of *pemekaran* as part of the decentralisation discourse is nothing new. It seems to be just a new name for a practice that has been common for nearly a century.

Cultural and religious arguments

Sumba Tengah's activists also used cultural and religious arguments for creating a new district. Elsewhere in Indonesia, local identity politics are often played out in terms of religion and ethnicity. In Central Sumba this is not easy to do, because the area is rather homogeneous. Instead, as we shall see, local leaders conjure up identities out of less tangible materials. To do that, they need to possess highly refined oratorical skills.

Religious affiliation and ethnicity can both provide strong labels for creating political identity. Studies on violence in Indonesia give many examples of how these labels were used in defining the parties in violent battles (Colombijn and Lindblad 2002; Van Klinken 2007). Labels can only be helpful as markers of political identity when they provide a name for the shared characteristic of a group in opposition to other, neighbouring groups are often involved in contentious politics.

Religious adherence as it is registered on the official identity card shows that more than eighty percent of the population of West Sumba adheres to one of the five religions officially recognized in Indonesia (see Table 2.2), with 52 per cent of the population Protestant Christian in 2002, 27 per cent Catholic, 3 per cent Muslim. Christianity is a uniting characteristic of modern, educated Sumbanese, who are well connected to the Indonesian state. Catholics are found mostly in the western part of the island. If West Sumba is to be divided into three new districts, Central Sumba will be relatively more Protestant Christian and Southwest Sumba more Catholic. This argument was not used openly in the campaigns, but it came up often in private conversation.

Ethnicity is a useful concept when Sumba is studied within the larger framework of the Indonesian nation-state. In a similar effort to deal with ethnicity in Sulawesi, Aragon (2000:52) speaks of 'the fluid and concentric layering of self-identities'. The further a people are from their homeland, the more their ethnic identity is formulated in outsider's terms. Yet, in Sumba it is hard to make external ethnic labels other than 'Sumbanese'. Exceptions to

that rule are Muslim immigrants from other islands, and people originating from other islands who are living permanently on Sumba. For example the Savunese have their own language and in some villages in East Sumba they have their own hamlets, but their ethnic background was in 2004 not (yet) converted into a political identity.

One external definition of ethnicity on Sumba is found in the ethno-linguistic literature. According to an international team of ethno-linguists at the Artha Wacana Christian University in Kupang, who published *A guide to the people and languages of Nusa Tenggara*, there are eight Sumbanese languages, which they associate with eight different ethnic groups (Grimes et al. 1997:67-75). Violence in West Sumba's capital Waikabubak in 1998 took place between *orang Wewewa* and *orang Loli*. However, according to the language guide, these two groups are both part of the Wewewa language area; Loli is mentioned as a dialect of Wewewa and its speakers consequently are not regarded as a different ethnic group. As argued in Chapter III, the only 'ethnic' distinction that appeals to the Sumbanese population is that based on traditional domain, connected to the main clans of that domain. When politicians constructed arguments to support the campaign for Central Sumba, they would include entire domains in the envisaged new district and explain the coherence and links between them.

Rhetoric and theatre

While the activists for new districts on Sumba did not have very sound arguments in favour of *pemekaran*, they relied heavily on performance to convince their audience and create constituency. Political rhetoric in local election campaigns on Sumba and in the lobby for creating new districts was made of a combination of Christian sanctimonious talk, New Order jargon, quasi-ritual speech, colloquial talk and fashionable television language. The 'People's congress for Sumba Jaya' on 29 April 2003 provides a beautiful example. the campaign for seats in congress was at its peak for the new district Sumba Barat Daya, which was still called Sumba Jaya at that time.

People from seven sub-districts gathered in Waitabula, West Sumba's second largest town after Waikabubak, and Sumba's Catholic centre. On this day representatives of all seven sub-districts delivered a declaration supporting and urging the foundation of their new district, Sumba Jaya. They offered the signed declaration to the members of the Jakarta Committee for Sumba Jaya with the request to take this 'will of the people' (*aspirasi masyarakat*) further upwards in the decision making process. At the event no representatives from the decision-making bodies, whether from Waikabubak, Kupang or Jakarta, were present, but the ceremony was carefully orchestrated with these people

in mind as the audience. The Sumba Jaya committee made a VCD recording of the event, serving as a modern and lasting proof of the strength of their 'social movement'. The VCD captured the political symbols and rhetoric that politicians on Sumba use in contemporary campaigns.

The documentary starts with the arrival on 25 April 2003 of the Jakarta delegation at the (only) airport of West Sumba, Tambolaka, which will be an important asset of the new district. The Jakarta Committee consisted of six members, four middle-aged men and two women, who were all born on Sumba, in the area that they hope will become Sumba Jaya. They pursued their education and careers on Java. The committee included an army officer who is a bodyguard of a recently retired general in Jakarta, a private businessman and two university lecturers. It has good strategic access to people in the Ministry of Domestic Affairs.³ Upon arrival they wore suit-jackets made of West Sumbanese hand-woven cloth that looked so similar that they appeared dressed in 'uniforms of the traditional representatives'. The group set out to Waitabula in a convoy of jeeps, preceded by a cavalcade of motorcycles, reminiscent of the traditional horse riders' welcoming escort but also resembling a modern motorcycle youth gang. The documentary shows that shortly after their arrival, the Jakarta Committee, together with the chairman of the local committee for the new district, set up a meeting with representatives from all areas in the new district to explain the strategies and agenda for the People's Congress. They reminded the audience that this was the fiftieth meeting in preparation of Sumba Jaya, a landmark, and an additional reason why the Jakarta Committee's presence was justified. When the Jakarta delegation entered the field for the event on 29 April, they wore traditional dress combined with modern shirts. Although in a way they were the hosts of the ceremony, they sat in front as the guests of honour.

The groups from each of the seven districts arrived in trucks and small buses. Apparently the villagers were asked to come in traditional dress, and each group was preceded by dancers, who danced and shouted like they were going off to war. The official ceremony started with the Indonesian National Anthem. Then a Protestant Christian reverend explained to the audience in the local language that success can only come with the blessing of the Lord; he said a prayer in Indonesian, in which he asked the Lord for support for the campaign for Sumba Jaya and his blessing on the People's Congress. Representatives of each of the seven sub-districts read their declaration in Indonesian, after which there were a few minutes of dancing and cheers, called *spontanitas*.

The shared summary declaration of pursuit of the new district of Sumba

³ The next section gives a short profile of the committee chairman, Markus Dairo Talu.

Jaya was the core of the event. *Pemekaran* is a goal that needs to be established within the framework of the State, and this calls for state-like procedures. A female member of the organizing committee read the declaration with the monotonous and theatrical voice of a well-trained Indonesian school teacher. After each part of a sentence she paused and all sub-district representatives and citizens present repeated the words, as if they were saying the Lord's Prayer (Paternoster) in Church.

Deklarasi Kongres Rakyat Sumba Jaya

Dengan ini,
seluruh masyarakat dari tujuh kecamatan :
Laura, Kodi, Kodi Bangedu, Wewewa
Barat, Wewewa Selatan, Wewewa Timur
dan Wewewa Utara menyatakan :

Satu :
Bertekad mekar kabupaten Sumba Barat,

dengan nama 'kabupaten Sumba Jaya',
dan ibu kota Tambolaka.

Dua :
Bertekad untuk membangun
dan mensejahterakan seluruh masyarakat
dengan menggunakan potensi yang kami
miliki

Tiga:
Bertekad menyiapkan sarana dan prasara-
na operasional bagi kabupaten Sumba
Jaya.

Empat:
Mendesak agar DPRD dan bupati Sumba
Barat
untuk segera mengeluarkan rekomendasi
bahkan kabupaten
.....Sumba Jaya!
Waitabula, 29 April 2003
atas nama masyarakat tujuh kecamatan

Laura, Kodi, Kodi Bangedu, Wewewa
Barat, Wewewa Selatan, Wewewa Timur
dan Wewewa Utara,
dengan tandatangan

*Declaration of the People's Congress for
Sumba Jaya*

Hereby
the whole people of seven sub-districts:
Laura, Kodi, Kodi Bangedu, Wewewa
Barat, Wewewa Selatan, Wewewa Timur
and Wewewa Utara
declare (their):

One:
strong wish to split from district Sumba
Barat,

under the name 'district Sumba Jaya'
with the capital: Tambolaka.

Two:
Strong wish to develop
and increase the welfare of the whole
population
using the potentials we have.

Three:
Strong will to take care of all general
and operational preparations for district
Sumba Jaya.

Four:
Urge the district parliament and the
district Head of West Sumba to imme-
diately issue their recommendation for
the district

.....Sumba Jaya!
Waitabula, 29 April 2003
on behalf of the people of seven sub-
districts:

Laura, Kodi, Kodi Bangedu, Wewewa
Barat, Wewewa Selatan, Wewewa Timur
dan Wewewa Utara.
signed

After reading the declaration the master of ceremonies called the audience to

cheer the traditional *yawwoungu* to show their approval.

As Joel Kuipers (1990:i) points out in the opening statement of his book *Power in performance*, which asserts that on the island of Sumba, a vibrant form of ritual speech is required in all ceremonial events, the organising committee of the People's Congress in Waitabula invited a specialist in ritual speech to give a performance after the reading of the declaration. The few Indonesian words incorporated into the couplet-style monologue indicated that the speaker had composed it especially for this occasion, to frame the message of the declaration in the vernacular Wewewa. On the one hand this was rather similar to the complete domestication of traditional culture which was a mark of the New Order, as it is described by Bowen (1986) with regard to the appropriation of the concept of traditional self help, *gotong royong*. On the other hand it was also a way to add a type of rhetoric to the ceremony that livens up the audience and increases their commitment. Generally, political leaders rarely win support by rhetorical tactics and strategies that employ reason and rationality. Reason is dull and rarely moves people to action. Instead, according to Bailey (1983), 'it is passion that sways people'.

Most of all, the People's Congress in Waitabula was an orchestrated display of the grass roots involvement that is formally the primary basis for *pemekaran*. Political leaders display 'grass roots involvement' by getting a large crowd to attend the event. Leaders everywhere in the world use large crowds as the visible sign of support, to strengthen their political power. Joel Kuipers (1998:74-5) calls this feature in the context of Sumbanese political culture 'the ideology of audience completeness'. Audience completeness confirms the authority of the leader. Conversely, a key image of a leader's social influence, prestige and status is the capacity to create a 'complete audience'. The completeness is demonstrated by the number of people who attend, in their evaluation of the way they are received at the event. It is most concretely measured in how many heads of livestock are slaughtered for the meals served to the audience and in the volume and number of the verbal responses they produce during the leader's oration.

Campaigning for a new district is partly just rhetoric and theatre, set up by the initiators of the campaign, who need to do this to be acknowledged as leaders. The spectators enjoy it because it provides entertainment, good meals and fun. A people's congress or any other large gathering on Sumba does not necessarily imply that all the people present know what the event is about, let alone that they come because they support the officially stated cause.

Social forces behind pemekaran

What kind of people are behind this movement for creating new districts in Sumba? Why are they so engaged in these campaigns? At first, when I heard about the campaign in 2003, and was dragged along in the enthusiasm of the chairman of the local committee, I thought it was a broad movement in Central Sumba. Yet, after closer analysis of local newspapers, many discussions and interviews, I concluded that in fact it is only a rather small group of people who are actively and continuously involved in the campaign and whose interests would be served directly with a new district. They make up three categories. First there are the Sumbanese who reside outside their home island, usually on Java or in Kupang. I call them 'overseas Sumbanese', a group originating from Sumba, who actively retain their culture, self-identify with Sumbanese culture or acknowledge Sumbanese origin, and are not indigenous to their current place of residence.⁴ Among them are a number of men who have both the desire to return to their home island in a glorious way and the urge to contribute to Sumba's economic development. The second category is composed of a few dozen local activists, sub-elite, who see this as opportunity to gain status, power or wealth. The third category consists of at most 100 well-educated but unemployed youth originating from Anakalang.⁵ The large majority of the population is rather indifferent. Outspoken opponents are a small number of highly educated senior persons from West Sumba, and Umbu Djima (see Chapter II) is amongst them. The well-established members of the political class, who already have good positions and could not gain much from this initiative, are silent.

Overseas Sumbanese

The Jakarta Lobbying Committee for the cause of Sumba, Barat Daya, was very important in the campaign for the western district. They organised, they initiated, they provided money, they provided campaigning materials, they lobbied the decision making institutions in Jakarta and they returned to Sumba every once in a while. Who are they and why were they interested in a new district on Sumba? Three examples present at least part of the answer. Manasse Malo⁶ lives in Jakarta, where he is professor of sociology at the University of Indonesia. He was member of the national parliament (DPR) until October 2004. He was born on West Sumba (Waijewa) in 1941 as

⁴ In analogy with the term 'overseas Chinese', see for example <http://www.huayinet.org>

⁵ My own estimation.

⁶ Manasse Malo passed away on 6 January 2007.

the son of the first Sumbanese reverend of the Protestant Christian Church. He was a bright student and received a church fellowship first to study at the Christian University in Salatiga, Central Java, and to study theology in Jakarta. He was then lucky enough to get the chance, through international church connections, to study in the United States, and finally he earned his PhD degree at the University of Wisconsin. His wife is not Sumbanese, but born in Manado.

Manasse Malo has written and spoken widely on decentralization policy in Indonesia (Malo 1996). In 1998, fired by Reformasi, Manasse Malo was one of the founders of the Partai Demokrasi Kasih Bangsa (the Love the Nation Democratic Party (PDKB), a mainly Christian Party with a constituency predominantly in Eastern Indonesia. He was elected its chairman. In the 1999 elections PDKB won three seats out of 35 in the district parliament in West Sumba, and five seats in the national parliament. In 1998, I heard about discussions among the Kupang members of the new party which indicated that they were then in favour of making Indonesia a federation again.⁷ Eastern Indonesia would be one of the member states, East Timor possibly another.

From 1999 until the recent 2004 election period Manasse Malo was deputy chairman of the national parliament's Sub-Commission on Domestic Affairs and Regional Autonomy, and a member of the parliamentary committee that deals with regional autonomy. Now he is retired. He is a strong supporter of turning Sumba into a province, and the law requires a province to have at least three districts. He is the main source of information on this topic and the gatekeeper to all useful contacts for Sumbanese in the bureaucracy in Jakarta. In an interview in December 2004, he told me that now that he was retired he would not mind returning to Sumba, and be head of one of the new districts, or perhaps even Governor of the Province of Sumba, 'if the people ask me to'.⁸

In 1999 Manasse Malo had a discussion with Umbu Dedu Ngara about their ideas on *pemekaran* in Sumba. The latter was staff member of the provincial Planning Board Bappeda NTT in Kupang, and also heading for retirement. He is known as a good bureaucrat, but he rarely visited Sumba over the past decades. His home village is Lawonda in Central Sumba. His family is not the raja's, but certainly noble. The family members of his and younger generations are well-educated, and most of them live on Java. Umbu Dedu Ngara studied in Salatiga and was a board member of the Indonesian Christian Student Movement (GMKI), just as Manasse Malo had been. Umbu Dedu

⁷ Personal communication with Dr Nico Woly, Kupang, December 1998.

⁸ Interview with Manasse Malo on 16-12-2004, Jakarta.

Ngara conveyed the idea to create a new district of Central Sumba to several other provincial officials who came from central Sumba, and they began together to lobby for it. They put the idea on the agenda at meetings of the Union of Sumbanese residing in Kupang (*Ikatan Keluarga Asal Sumba di Kupang* or IKAS).⁹ In the new decentralised structure, the district has budgetary autonomy, and more decision-making power over many issues has been transferred to the district level, leaving the province with a mostly coordinating and a less powerful and rewarding role. So the provincial elite had good reasons for moving one step downwards in the administrative hierarchy. Moreover many Sumbanese who have reached the autumn of their careers look forward to returning to Sumba, where they can be cared for by their relatives and appreciated because of their status and relative wealth, and where they can die in peace and be buried in accordance with the prescriptions of tradition.

Markus Dairo Talu is not retired yet, since he is just in his early forties.¹⁰ He is an army officer with the modest position of adjutant, but with the rewarding task of being a bodyguard for a major general, who was his commander for many years. Guarding his general, Markus served in the Presidential palace for some years. He is also a freelance security specialist, who has acted as bodyguard or 'debt collector' for businessmen on their request, and as doorman for a fancy discotheque in Jakarta. This part of his identity is not well known in Sumba. When Markus returned to Sumba from Jakarta in 2003 and 2004, he was the benefactor for the campaign for Southwest Sumba, and chairman of its Jakarta Lobby Committee. Sumbanese spectators saw his love for the homeland and observe the signs of his wealth as he distributes T-shirts, caps and money. His life history is an attractive success story for those who do not belong to the aristocracy. Having lost his father, he lived with his mother and siblings in poverty in Wewewa (Waimangura). He was able to attend the Catholic school, and received a scholarship to attend a mechanics course on Java. There he met an army officer who became his mentor and introduced him to the army. In Jakarta he owns four houses, and provides housing and work for around 50 boys from his home area in Sumba.

What these three main actors campaigning for the new districts have in common is that they were born on Sumba, received a good education and, with or without a church scholarship, pursued their education on Java. Consequently they had a successful career, after which they wanted to return to their home

⁹ Interview with Manasse Malo on 16-12-2004, Jakarta.

¹⁰ Interview with Markus Dairo Talu at his home, Jakarta, 18-12-2004.

Markus Dairo Tallo proudly showing his Sumbanese identity in his house close to Jakarta, December 2004

island, where they enjoy high prestige, status and social security provided by their relatives. They are connected through various modern networks: the political parties, student alumni organisations, the Christian Church or the unions of emigrant Sumbanese in cities outside Sumba. In terms of Bourdieu's forms of capital, they all have accumulated a considerable amount. Yet, what they lack is domestic social capital and traditional type of cultural capital. Their 'overseas' capital could be transformed into status and old age security in Sumba, and leading a successful campaign could be a way to accomplish that.

Local campaign leaders

In the area that is proposed as Central Sumba, the successive raja from Anakalang and Lawonda were the most famous local leaders. They serve as icons of the glorious past and their careers are proof of the superiority of the people of these domains. Some of their descendants are now active leaders in the campaign for Central Sumba, though many others are not, and some even oppose the idea of *pemekaran*. Those who are active for the new district in one way or another have something to gain, which means that in 2003 they may have not been satisfied with their social positions.

The 'mother' in the lobbying committee for Central Sumba is a daughter of Habil Hudang, who was raja of the area Umbu Ratu Nggai from 1949 until 1962. He reached this office after the most famous of the raja Lawonda and an icon of the people of Lawonda, Umbu Tipuk Marisi, delegated governance to him. Umbu Marisi studied at the Academy for Government Sciences in Jakarta. Upon his return to Sumba after the war, he became Sumba's highest government official, chairman of the council of raja, in 1949.

Habil Hudang held the position until the system of governance was changed in 1962 (Oemboe Hina Kapita 1976:51). The chairman of the committee for Central Sumba is linked to Habil Hudang's family through marriage alliance. The most senior member of Propelmas, and the leader of the NGO Wahana, grew up in his house. His great grandson is one of the youth leaders in Anakalang. Umbu Marisi moved to the provincial capital Kupang on nearby Timor island in 1958 to become deputy governor (*Pembantu Kepala Daerah Tingkat I untuk Sumba*). His children did not return to Sumba to be active in politics.

The raja Anakalang's rule was restricted to *swapraja* Anakalang, until 1962 when Umbu Remu Samapati was elected to be West Sumba's *bupati*. He delegated his task as raja to his brother in law Umbu Sulung Ibilona, who was Umbu Djima's father. Both Umbu Sulung and Umbu Remu sent their sons for education to Java.

Umbu Remu's son, Umbu Sappi Pateduk, also known as Umbu Bintang, came back to Sumba in 1990 from Java. He wanted to live in his home area, to be able to combine his government career with his tasks as leader of his clan. He became the head of district planning board (Bappeda) in West Sumba. After the 1999 elections, district heads were to be elected by the district parliament for the first time since 1958. He has not been successful in the last elections, because he was just one among several Golkar candidates from Anakalang, struggling for the support of the same constituency. Support was divided and in the end the PDI-P candidate from further West in Sumba, Thimotius Langgar, won the position.¹¹ Frustration that 'Anakalang has lost power' is therefore among the motives behind creating Central Sumba district. Umbu Bintang was appointed in 2000 as a member of the district head's staff (*asisten II*). He was mentioned as the top candidate for district head of Central Sumba, but he does not show any official and open commitment to the campaign.

Burhan Magenda (1989:60-1) argued in his study of local aristocracies in the Outer Islands of Indonesia that they survive all changes in national politics and remain in power locally. In the recent literature on decentralization in Indonesia, all cases of *pemekaran* which are discussed reveal the strong interests of local elites, who act as initiators of the secession process, head the lobbying committees, and if successful, occupy the offices of power in the new provinces or districts (Quinn 2003). Yet a more detailed analysis is necessary to reveal which members of the local elite are involved in campaigns for *pemekaran*, and which ones are not. The ones active in the campaign on Sumba were actually only a few. Closer analysis suggests that the older participants in the campaign were marginal or former members of political class who were losing their positions so that they would be just members of the political public. They had sufficient status in traditional terms to be accepted as leaders, but occupied positions in government or the private sector that did not satisfy them, or put them outside the decision-making circuit. Leaders of the Central Sumba movement included a nearly-retired village head, a reverend suspended from his church office because of a long history of larger and smaller conflicts, and several retired civil servants.

Well-educated but unemployed youths

The senior campaign leaders were supported by a large group of relatively well-educated, unemployed youths, who did not want to work in agriculture.

¹¹ Previously Th. Langgar was district secretary (Sekwilda) in the district of North Central Timor, had always been a Golkar member but switched in time to PDI-P.

They received their education in Kupang or on Java, and then returned to Sumba with bachelor degrees but no jobs. These youths see the new district as an opportunity to get the positions for which they hoped and studied. Their relatives have invested in their education for many years and they hope to see some return on their investment, which is hard to accomplish through working in agriculture. In the short term, the campaigning itself provided the youths with lots of excitement, which is otherwise hard to get in Sumba. They are very vocal and could become more powerful in their capacity to use violence and enforce social exclusion for political opponents. Older people in Anakalang complain that these youths cause a lot of problems because many have the habit of drinking alcohol, and when drunk they easily turn aggressive. Another complaint of the older generation is that groups of youth have also appropriated the cultural custom of death wake. Whenever a person in Anakalang dies, the custom is to guard the body through the night, beating the drum and holding wake. Now, youths use these occasions to gather and drink. Death wakes are local public events for which no invitation is necessary.

Women

There are not many women involved as activists for Central Sumba, at least not at the surface. Ibu John is an exception, who will be discussed below. The school teacher who read the declarations for Sumba Barat Daya was another performer on stage. Engaging actively in politics and being a public leader is on Sumba still regarded as men's terrain. However, behind the scenes, many women are active. Gathering people, telling others about events, preparing meals and organizing gatherings are important parts of campaigns. Many well-educated, unemployed female youths have studied theology, which means that they are educated to be local leaders. Yet, they are not prominent in the movement for Sumba Tengah.

Campaigning for Central Sumba

After Umbu Dedu Ngara and two fellow provincial officials paid a visit to Waibakul,¹² the capital of Katikutana sub-district (Anakalang), the members of the local elite set up an organisation to lobby for the new district, called Forum Komunikasi Pembangunan Desa (Consulting Committee on Village

¹² Umbu Dedu Ngara (Bappeda), Umbu Giku (Livestock Service, Dinas Peternakan), Agus Umbu Sorung (Bappeda) from Kupang. Interview with Gany Wulang, Waihibur, 4-2-2003.

Development), usually called simply 'the Forum'. Agustinus Umbu Sabarua, village head of Anajiaka (bordering the sub-district capital) became head of the forum. Its members consist of invited representatives of youth and women's organisations, village and church leaders, in short 'leaders of every segment of the population'. The Forum's task was to obtain (a) proof of the *aspirasi masyarakat* (popular wish), and recommendations from (b) the head of West Sumba, (c) the district parliament, (d) the provincial governor, and finally (e) from the national parliament in Jakarta.

The Forum started by inviting representatives of all kinds of civil society organizations and local leaders around Anakalang to a workshop. The Forum's chairman said that the purpose of the workshop was to 'socialise regional autonomy', and explained the arguments for creating a new district. The main argument was that a new and smaller district would bring government services closer to the people, implicitly suggesting that those new services would correspond better to the population's needs and would be delivered faster and more efficiently. In this first workshop the participants discussed which other sub-districts could be invited to join in the new district of Central Sumba, since regulations at that time required a minimum of three sub-districts per district. The Forum's chairman phrased the main prerequisites for inclusion as: a shared culture, which he specified as linguistic unity, and marriage alliances.

To the west the linguistic border is a real barrier dividing the people that speak Kambara from the people who speak the different west Sumbanese languages. But language less strikingly demarcates the eastern border of Central Sumba, since eastwards everyone also speaks (a type of) Kambara. All the Sumbanese actors involved in the lobby for Central Sumba were connected by kinship and marriage alliances, including the campaign's most important man in Jakarta, Manasse Malo, whose sister lives in the same village as the chairman of Central Sumba's Forum.

The second step in the process of the 'socialisation of regional autonomy' was a workshop to inform and consult the leaders of all four sub-districts, or in the words of the Forum's chairman: 'to see whether they accept the conclusions that we already drew in the first workshop'.¹³ The workshops were held in cooperation with NGOs working on democratization in 2001 and 2002.¹⁴ The social work of these development organisations focuses on teaching local government officials and village communities about procedures and rights that the decentralisation law has given them. The NGO staff is well aware of the difference between their civil education and the 'political games' of those who

¹³ Interview with Agustinus Umbu Sabarua and Gany Wulang, Waihibur, 4-2-2003.

¹⁴ In the area around Anakalang workshops were organized by Yayasan Wahana Komunikasi Wanita (Waihibur/Waikabubak, Sumba) and Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (Maumere, Flores).

primarily seek personal benefit by creating new districts. Yet, local NGO staff is part of local society, and subject to pressure from the local elite. The Forum's chairman considered the leaders of the NGO Wahana as relatives of lower rank to whom he could simply assign the task of promoting Central Sumba.

The third step was a seminar with provincial government officials to assess the feasibility of a new district. The decentralisation laws, especially Government Decree 129 of 2000, specify a set of measurable criteria to decide whether a new district can be created or not. Important criteria include the availability of both natural and human resources, the number of inhabitants, the surface area, the economic potential, the presence of civil society institutions and people's political participation, as well as the level of infrastructural development and social services.¹⁵ In November 2001, a Sumbanese lecturer at the Satya Wacana University in Salatiga, Umbu Tagela, wrote:

Law 22/1999 and the Government Decree 129/2000, which provide all the rules with regard to the number of inhabitants and the level of economic growth and the way this should be calculated mathematically, surely leave no option for splitting up Sumba into several new districts. Yet, if the number of inhabitants is decisive, the Sumbanese could easily fulfil the criteria by just putting off the present family planning policy. [But] would not that be an offence against national policy? And if low economic growth is the reason for not allowing a split-up, would that mean that in terms of politics Sumba is expected to be poor forever? The real reason [for granting permission to new districts] is whether the ones in power have the political will to support the development of Sumba.¹⁶

In July 2001 the local *Sabana* newspaper opened with headlines reviving the age-old rumour of gold resources in mount Tanadaru, in the interior of Sumba. The fact that this mountain is situated in Central Sumba made the news favourable to the prospect of the new district. Until this presumed gold reservoir is actually exploited, it will do nothing to alter the unfavourable conclusion as regards to feasibility of a new district, namely that there is no economic potential for Central Sumba.¹⁷ Only 3 per cent of the government's income in West Sumba is derived from local taxes; the rest originates from Jakarta. There is one phrase in Government Decree 129 of 2000 that can still be of support to the Central Sumba lobby. Chapter III, section three, which formulates the criteria for the formation of a new district, in the final sentence adds the possibility of 'other considerations that enable the execution of regional autonomy'.¹⁸

¹⁵ See Chapter III of Government Decree no. 129/2000.

¹⁶ *Sabana* 7(10-25 November 2001):5.

¹⁷ This was firmly stated in an interview with one of Waikabubak's leading Chinese businessmen.

¹⁸ 'Pertimbangan lain yang memungkinkan terselenggaranya Otonomi Daerah', pp. 129-200, Chapter III, section 3.

Because the generally bad score of feasibility, the Central Sumba case was thus not closed, one concludes that *pemekaran* must not be considered merely in terms of the administrative execution of a set of decentralisation laws, but rather as a political activity. In May 2001, the Forum wrote a petition and a proposal, added a large number of supporters' signatures, and sent it to the district government of West Sumba, the Province, and to the national Parliament (DPR-RI) in Jakarta. Manasse Malo received the petition and stimulated the campaigners to continue their struggle, adding his advice on how to make the campaign more effective. He seemed dedicated to realising *pemekaran* on his home island. Indeed, rumour was that he hoped to become the governor of Sumba, which would need the creation of another district first and afterwards a separate province. He suggested that in the early stage of lobbying the Forum should pay a visit to Jakarta to convince the commission's members personally of Central Sumba's viability. A group of 25 men and three women of the Forum therefore set off to Jakarta. At home the number of cynics was growing, but the delegation itself was wildly enthusiastic.

Mother of the lobbying mission

Ibu John was one of the three women in the party heading for Jakarta.¹⁹ At 66 years of age she was the mother-figure of the group. She is a daughter of the last raja Umbu Ratu Nggai, Habil Hudang. As a girl she was selected to be educated in the mission's school in Payeti, which was the best education available at the time and a guarantee for membership of the Sumbanese elite. Some of Protestant Christian youngsters went for further studies to Salatiga. Ibu John and her husband both studied to be teachers, and after their return they set up the Christian Senior High School (SMA) in Waikabubak. Many of the current politicians, government officials and members of Central Sumba's Forum are her former pupils, including the present district head. Ibu John has known Manasse Malo since they were young, he is her 'little brother' in the Sumbanese, educated Protestant Christian elite. More recently, Ibu John and Manasse Malo had been in touch because they were both involved in Malo's political party PDKB. In December 2002 Ibu John attended the congress of this party in Jakarta and spoke about Central Sumba with Manasse Malo. He urged her to join the lobbying party to Jakarta.

They set off to Denpasar in Bali by ferry on 11 January 2003. There they went to Rocky Umbu Pekudjawang, a successful tourism businessman born in Anakalang,²⁰ to ask him for transport money to Jakarta. Ibu John related that upon seeing the tourist coach full of uncles, cousins and aunts, he decided to sponsor more than half of the costs of the trip. The party rested in Semarang, Central Java, where they were received by close relatives living there. They got a meal and food to go and an additional contribution of two million Rupiah.

¹⁹ This section is based on my interview with Ibu John (Rambu Moha) in Waikabubak, 20-2-2004.

²⁰ Rocky Umbu Pekudjawang is also number one on the Golkar list for the national parliament in NTT in the April 2004 elections.

In Jakarta Ibu John was invited to give a speech to the members of the sub-commission on *pemekaran*. She told them, dressed in traditional Sumbanese style, about the hardship of the people living in this remote area to be named Central Sumba, and how far they were from essential government services, about their genuine wish to develop themselves, of the great potential of the land, and that the will of God was behind them. Touched by this emotional speech, and assured that their tickets would be paid, the commission members promised that their inspection team would pay a visit to Sumba within a short time.

The parliamentary inspection team from Jakarta visited Sumba on 31 January and 1 February 2003. When they landed in the capital of East Sumba, they were very politely received by the district head of East Sumba. He had already made it clear from the start that Central Sumba could never include part of the present East Sumba district, with the formal argument that *pemekaran* means dividing one administrative unit into two, not recombining bits of two districts. It was in his interest to make sure that no part of his territory would be claimed by the new district. Subsequently the team was welcomed by thousands of people in Laikaruda, for the event with which this chapter started. The Forum had 'motivated' the crowd to come and offer the best of traditional presents. The crowd's presence reassured the Jakarta team of the local people's wish for autonomy, and in traditional terms it stressed the Forum members' leadership and legitimacy to represent the population.

By lobbying directly to Jakarta, Central Sumba's Forum by-passed and therefore offended the district parliament. Thus one obstacle remained, for the final application procedure a recommendation from all levels was required. Whereas the national parliament's team was ready to give its approval and the governor and parliament at provincial level were ready to issue the recommendation, the district parliament and the head of West Sumba were not. In Waikabubak, on 1 February 2004, the offended parliament of West Sumba treated the team impolitely, without a proper reception, and the district head remained absent, claiming that he had been summoned by the governor in Kupang.

In the meantime the West Sumba district government had also received a proposal for *pemekaran* by another part of the district. Sumba Jaya would unite seven sub-districts in the western part of West Sumba.²¹ This part of West Sumba is relatively more developed. The capital of Sumba Jaya would be Tambolaka, now known as the location of West Sumba's airport. Sumba Jaya would also include West Sumba's major harbour at Waikelo. The creation

²¹ The seven sub-districts are: Kodi, Kodi Bangedo, Wewewa Barat, Wewewa Timur, Wewewa Selatan, Palla (Wewewa Utara) and Laura.

of Sumba Jaya would split the ever-feuding domains of Loli and Wewewa, and would imply that very little would be left for the remaining part of the original West Sumba. In February 2003, Central Sumba's Forum was confident that Sumba Jaya's chances were poor, 'since 15 October 2002 was the deadline for submitting proposals and they were too late'.²² But Sumba Jaya's lobby appeared to be very strong, and if the criteria for *pemekaran* from the Government Decree were to be used to assess feasibility, this proposal would stand a much better chance. The proposal for Sumba Jaya, whose name was changed to Southwest Sumba in late 2003, increased the feeling of competition in West Sumba, and behind the stage, the hopes of success in Central Sumba began to decline.

A second complicating factor was protest from Wanukaka, where a movement sprang up which refused participation in the proposed district of Central Sumba. The official argument was that there is no history of Wanukaka being part of the same administrative unit as Anakalang, Umbu Ratu Nggai and Memboro. Trade relationships with the town of Waikabubak are strong. Waibakul as capital instead of Waikabubak would make the distance to government services for the population of Wanukaka even greater. This new development created tensions between Wanukaka and Central Sumba's proponents. A new distinction emerged to explain initial support for Central Sumba by some people from Wanukaka: Wanukaka *atas* (upper) versus Wanukaka *bawah* (lower), where Wanukaka *atas* refers to the 10 per cent of the population residing in the mountainous area adjacent to Anakalang, where marriage alliances are many.²³

West Sumba's district head Thimotius Langgar decided to create a committee to guide the *pemekaran* process for the proposed new districts. He appointed his deputy district head Yulianus Pote Leba as chairman, and Umbu Djima as vice chairman.²⁴ Both had been lecturers at the Nusa Cendana University in Kupang, and thus it was a logical approach for them to invite a team from that university ('team Undana') to make a feasibility study on the potential for West Sumba to be split into more than one district, using the criteria from Government Decree 129-2000 to measure the score of potential new districts. Undana's Team recommended three options for West Sumba. The first option was to split West Sumba into West and Central Sumba, the second to split into West Sumba and Southwest Sumba, and the third was to create all three new districts. Apparently, to remain united in one district was not an option. The team formulated positive conclusions, supporting the lobby for creating new districts. Two economists in Waingapu, Siliwoloe Djoeroemana who was born

²² Interview with Agustinus Umbu Sabaruwa, chairman of the Forum, 5-2-2003.

²³ Interview with Muana Nanga, director of STIE in Waingapu, 18-2-2004.

²⁴ Decree of the district head of West Sumba no. 379/2002, 31-12-2002.

in Anakalang, and Muana Nanga who was born in Wanukaka, wrote a very critical review of the feasibility study.

The team did not assess whether West Sumba fulfils the criteria for *pemekaran*, but instead focused on the new districts, parts of the present district. Government Decree 129–2000 states that already existing data should be used that are compiled by authorized institutions. Instead, the team gathered many new data, or used data from the sub-districts offices. The data themselves show a remarkable bias, positive towards a sufficient score for ability for splitting up the district. Compared to the official statistics published in *Sumba Barat dalam angka 2001* for example the total length of roads has doubled. Moreover, they seem to suggest that there are 15,000 post offices just in Waikabubak, which gives the impression the team counted the letters and not the post offices.²⁵

However, the audience for this criticism was lacking. After a number of demonstrations and a road block, organised by youth involved in the campaign and supported by some Forum members in Central Sumba on 22 May 2003, the West Sumba government finally agreed to give its recommendations, opting for three new districts, in what they called a ‘win-win solution’. The district parliament added two restrictions before the recommendations would finally be issued. Southwest Sumba had to reconsider its boundaries with West Sumba in order to make the division of resources, inhabitants and infrastructure more equal. Central Sumba had to reconcile with Wanukaka, to decide which of the latter sub-districts would be part of the new and the old district.

By February 2004 it appeared to be very hard to publicly criticise or even question the idea of Central Sumba in Anakalang. Those who did, like the critics of the Undana report, were accused of being disloyal to their place of birth, and in fact were threatened with social expulsion. In Sumba there were not yet, as elsewhere in Indonesia, any private militias who are sent to make people change their opinions. Less severe, but just as effective, are exclusion from mutual help services and bad rumours. Being elite on Sumba makes one by definition dependent on the services of many kinsmen and fellow villagers. Those elite members who live in the capital or even outside Sumba still count on their relatives to provide them with space and material for ceremonies like weddings, and eventually to provide them with a proper grave. Rumours that spread bad stories about alleged illness, accusations of being too old to think positively or being too estranged from Sumba to appreciate *aspirasi masyarakat* are effective in reducing authority. Youth play an important role in spreading these rumours. At the seminar on *pemekaran*

²⁵ My summary of Siliwoloe Djoeroemana and Muana Nanga, ‘Catatan kritis atas draft laporan hasil penelitian Tim Undana tentang pemekaran kabupaten Sumba Barat’, *Suara Sumba* 3-6(6-21 June 2003):6-7.

in Waikabubak, youth delegations openly contested the authority of highly educated speakers who were cynical about Central Sumba. The youth groups in Anakalang are strong because of their growing number. The most active members had bachelor degrees from Java or Kupang and did not want to work in agriculture, and therefore cannot find suitable employment. They are hopeful of new districts and good jobs.

In February 2004 it appeared as though the lobby for Central Sumba had become increasingly Christian. The lobbying group that set out to Jakarta comprised one Protestant Christian reverend who said prayers preceding every next step in the process leading to the final positive decision regarding Central Sumba. Calling the creation of the new district the wish of God (*kehendak Tuhan*)²⁶ made the critics of the *pemekaran* opponents of the Lord. This is another type of threat and a means of social exclusion in a community where being regarded as a good Christian is connected to respect and authority. More ritual and Christian rhetoric also increased the theatrical value of the campaign, which could have been a deliberate strategy to compensate for the absence of sound practical arguments.

On 26 February 2004 Manasse Malo received a delegation of the West Sumba district parliament, the Forum for Central Sumba, and one for Southwest Sumba, as well as several Sumbanese from Jakarta who brought the last requirements for the proposal to create new districts in West Sumba.²⁷ Officially these requirements included a number of documents with the recommendations of all the offices involved as well as a description of the process of *pemekaran* written by the district parliament. In practice the requirements included bribes at all levels. For Central Sumba this was a serious problem. The secretary of the Youth Organisation for Central Sumba estimated that up to 23 February 2004 the campaign for Sumba Tengah had between 800 and 900 million rupiah on air tickets, food and bribes.²⁸ For Sumba, this was an incredibly huge amount of money, whereas by Jakarta standards it was 'just cigarette money'.

The result of the meeting in Jakarta was that the proposal to split West Sumba into three, namely Sumba Barat Daya, Sumba Barat and Sumba Tengah (Southwest Sumba, Central Sumba and West Sumba), was officially put on the agenda for the plenary session of the national parliament to decide. Unfortunately for the activists from Sumba, the campaigning period

²⁶ Interview with Ibu John (Rambu Moha) in Waikabubak, 21-2-2004.

²⁷ *Sabana* 52:1 (*Sabana Tabloid Berita Mingguan* (weekly newspaper) Waikabubak. Vol. 1 (2002) till 3, total 56 issues).

²⁸ Interview with Adri Saba Ora, secretary of Forum Komunikasi Pemuda Peduli Sumba Tengah, 23-2-2004. For comparison: Cohen reports that the campaign to create the district Tojo Una-Una in Central Sulawesi required 1,5 billion Rupiah (Cohen 2003).

for the national elections started early that March. The Minister of Internal Affairs dismissed all decisions on matters of regional autonomy until after the new parliament was installed, which would probably be October 2004. On Sumba, as everywhere else in Indonesia, political campaigns from March 2004 onwards concerned the elections. So Central Sumba's activists shifted their attention from *pemekaran* and concentrated on the elections for the district Parliament in April, some of them being assembly candidates themselves.

A second discouraging matter was the revision of Law 22/1999. The minimal number of sub-districts in a new district was now raised to seven districts, which had to have existed for at least five years. For some time there was hope on Sumba that the decision for *pemekaran* in West Sumba would be taken before the changes in Law 22 took effect. However, the law was changed on 10 May by presidential decree. In spite of that, Manasse Malo was still optimistic in December 2004.²⁹ Other optimists agreed with him that with the current position in the process, the proposal for two new districts would not be affected by the change in the law, and a positive outcome would only be a matter of time.

The campaign for Central Sumba shows that to create a new district involves a long process, and success is not guaranteed. In the same period, since 2000, many other districts were created, which raises the question of why did it took so long for Sumba. That so many people and institutions have to provide their recommendation or decision, and the fact that they have to be 'motivated' to do so, is one explanation for the tardiness. Once the law on a new district is passed, the legislative bodies (and persons) have done their task and lose this opportunity for extra income. It would be interesting to see figures that show the amount of expenditure involved in 'the cost of the campaign'. For example, 1.5 billion rupiah was spent for the campaign of Tojo Una-Una (Cohen 2003:50) as compared to the lesser 900 million of Central Sumba. It would also be interesting to see how the expenditure effected the speed with which the *pemekaran* process took place. The fact that Central Sumba had not yet succeeded in becoming a district by itself (in mid-2006) does not contradict the opinion that all government decisions in Indonesia are for sale, but it could be interpreted as a sign that a district has a minimum price, which is too high for poor and small areas like Central Sumba to pay.

²⁹ Interview with Manasse Malo, 16-12-2004, Jakarta.

Conclusions

Until June 2006, the dream of Central Sumba had not come true. 'Not yet' said the most fervent proponents. Their arguments in support of the proposal are weak, especially since there are so little resources on Sumba. Yet, the campaign makes a good case of post-1998 local politics in the context of the new opportunities provided by democratization as legal process. The case involves assessment of the legacy of traditional leadership and the problematic role of religion and ethnicity on Sumba as ingredients for creating political identity, and as labels to distinguish 'us' from 'them'.

Creating a new district also reveals the links between national, provincial and district level politics that concern the district. It involves actors, institutions and decisions from the grass root up to Jakarta. The practices on Sumba in the campaign for a new district show the importance of networks as vehicles in political campaigns. Religious networks, alumni networks, kinship and marriage alliance networks create, much like political parties, connections between people who can provide reciprocal services. Part of this chapter contains a description of three successful Sumbanese men who reside in Jakarta or the provincial capital Kupang and who play a very important role in the attempt to create a new district on their home island. Their position and characteristics reveal a general pattern of connections with the centre.