Ngadha Webs of Interdependence: A Community Economy in Flores, Indonesia

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This work is my own original research except where otherwise cited in the text.

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Abstract

This ethnography provides an analysis of the community economy of the Ngadha people in Bajawa, a small mountain town on the island of Flores, Indonesia. Practices of everyday and ritual economic interdependence in Bajawa are grounded in agricultural subsistence, a religion of Ancestor worship, and more recently Catholicism. This study details the diversity of local economic practices and analyses the Ngadha community economy through the ethical coordinates of necessity, surplus, consumption, and commons. The logic of the community economy is then contrasted with the logic of economic development projects. Despite the complexity and abundance of local economic activities, discourses of economic under-development and deficiencies in local human resources are accepted as truth by many government bureaucrats, religious leaders, NGO workers, and even by Ngadha themselves. The State in particular identifies the Ngadha people as poor and in need of development however there are few community generated actions or strategies to pursue transformations into more ‘successful’ economic subjects. Gambling, although illegal, offers one example of how large amounts of cash are redistributed through an everyday practice and popular past time. In drawing on such examples I argue that economic development initiatives based on capitalist logic that promote individual surplus accumulation, clash with Ngadha strategies of economic interdependence that are based on group surplus distribution.
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In the research and production of this thesis I have received the support of so many people it is difficult not to know where to start, but where to stop.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>ABCD</td>
<td>Assets Based Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>adat</em></td>
<td>Customary manners and practices which extends to the legal, moral, and ethical aspects of life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ancestors</td>
<td>Noun form of these deities</td>
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<tr>
<td>ancestors</td>
<td>Adjective form of these deities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Australian Government Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhaga</td>
<td>Sacred offering house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>KUD</em></td>
<td><em>Koperasi Unit Desa</em> Village Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>Diverse Economy Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>gotong royong</em></td>
<td>Mutual cooperation (Javanese)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kampung</em></td>
<td>Village, suburb, or city block area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mataraga</em></td>
<td>Sacred altar rack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngadhu</td>
<td>Sacred sacrificial post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neku</td>
<td>Celebration of named Ancestors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reba</td>
<td>New Year celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Saka pu’u</em></td>
<td>Intra-clan group, trunk rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Saka lobo</em></td>
<td>Intra-clan group, tip rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVD</td>
<td>Society of the Divine Word, Catholic Church</td>
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Throughout the thesis I have used a rounded exchange rate current in 2004-2005 when I undertook the bulk of my research: $Aus1 = Rp 6,000.

In order to differentiate between two foreign languages used throughout the thesis I have italicised Indonesian, and italicised and underlined Ngadha language.

Ancestor as a noun is typed with a capital A following the convention of capitalising deities such as God and Buddha.

Organisations are not capitalised, for example state and church, but proper names of organisations are capitalised, hence Indonesian State and Catholic Church.
'Faced with the unsatisfactory and indeed politically motivated paradigms of explanation that have been insinuated into the mental fibre of modern capitalist society - its mechanical materialism as well as its alienated forms in religion and nostalgia - what counter strategy is available for the illumination of reality that does not in some subtle way replicate its ruling ideas, its dominant passions, and its enchantment of itself?'

Michael Taussig *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism* (1980: 7)
Chapter 1: Introduction

This is an ethnographic study of socio-economic interdependence among the Ngadha people who live on the outskirts of the town of Bajawa in Ngada district on the island of Flores in Eastern Indonesia. The strong bonds that tie Ngadha\textsuperscript{1} people to each other and to place are intimately linked to a community economy that strives to provide a culturally defined level of subsistence that caters to the physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing of all. This community economy reflects Ngadha practices of interdependence that privilege ancestor worship, community, and group distribution of resources above the needs and desires of the individual.

Ngadha people's way of life began changing at an unprecedented pace just over one hundred years ago in 1907 with the invasion of Dutch colonial forces. This rapacious change continues with the ongoing introduction of globalising technologies such as satellite television and other media, and new economic options under the auspices of two dominant institutions: the Indonesian government and the Catholic Church. Both of these institutions along with development focussed institutions construct Ngadha as poor, a people deficient in skills and resources.

In an effort to improve the lives of Ngadha people these institutions implement development programs in the hope of raising standards of living. Following trends in wealthier nations towards economic rationalism based on market driven economics, many local development initiatives promote small business and enterprise to create monetary wealth. This thesis will argue that this style of development, designed to generate individual surplus accumulation, fosters tension for Ngadha people whose customs and practices are geared towards group distribution.

This study details local cosmology as it pertains to practices of economic interdependence, then contrasts this with the rationale of government, non-

\textsuperscript{1} Ngadha – with an ‘h’ refers to an ethno-linguistic group of people, Ngada - without an ‘h’ refers to the district, a political-geographic area of land.
government, and foreign funded economic development projects. I undertake an analysis of practices in place using both anthropological approaches and the diverse economy theory of Gibson-Graham (2006a) to gain a deeper understanding of local economic logic. This research draws attention to the Ngadha community economy which is grounded in interdependence and practices of group surplus distribution. This finding is significant as it reveals how this local logic clashes with the logic of development initiatives based on capitalist economic principles predicated on an assumption of individual surplus accumulation.

At the heart of this thesis are Ngadha people, who I first met in 2003, lived with in 2004-2005, and visited for a short time again in 2006. I begin by introducing a Ngadha couple, Dhone and Nali, and a snap-shot of their household economy in order to illustrate the variety of economic strategies they employ. Spanning a variety of activities Dhone and Nali’s household strategies form a microcosm that reflects many aspects of the Ngadha diverse economy taken up in this thesis: self-provisioning, family-kin-clan based sharing of labour and resources, casual wage labour, gambling, co-operatives, and small enterprise. This seemingly disparate group of economic strategies are brought together in this thesis and analysed using the diverse economy framework.

Following an introduction to the lives of Ngadha people, I move on to a description of the geography, socio-economic environment, politics and history of this location. I then establish the broader context of my doctoral research as part of an academic team implementing an industry-funded action research project. Terminology is discussed, in particular the key terms ‘economy’ and ‘development’ before elucidating the theory and methods that inform my approach. I conclude this chapter by giving a brief overview of the subsequent chapters of this thesis.
Introducing Dhone and Nali, Willi and Maria

Dhone is a Ngadha woman who now lives on her family’s land at Kisawae, a five minute motorbike ride from Dhone’s kampung and clan land. In late 2003 her family cut down coffee trees to make space for a basic house with bamboo walls and a dirt floor. Since then Dhone, her husband Nali and their two year old daughter have resided here, visiting a neighbour’s home to bathe. Dhone also carries buckets of water from a neighbour’s home for cooking and cleaning. By April 2004 Dhone and Nali had saved enough money for a concrete floor. Male relatives and friends of Nali poured the floor by hand over a number of days. While the floor was being laid, Dhone was on hand to cook and serve food and drinks while caring for their daughter. Currently Dhone and Nali are saving cash to purchase materials for the next phase of construction; a concrete drop toilet in a separate bamboo structure at the back of the house.

Since moving to their new home, Dhone has become an active member of an arisan (savings) group comprised of female residents in the immediate vicinity. She has also joined the Catholic pastoral and prayer group which meets once a week for prayers and discussion. Each week they meet in a member’s home on a rotational basis with the host providing coffee and cakes. These memberships mark Dhone’s status as a married woman, and involve her in a network of neighbourhood activities and relationships. Dhone sees herself first and foremost as a housewife. At age twenty eight, her main goal is to be a good wife and mother. She cooks, cleans, and is the primary carer of her daughter. Gathering feed for their chickens and pig is an important daily chore for Dhone. The chickens are a source of eggs and meat, while the pig is an essential animal for funeral exchanges and a source of prestige and wealth. In an area cleared around the house, she has also planted chilli bushes to use in cooking and to sell at the market. Dhone also engages in a range of other cash based economic activities.

We first met on a street corner opposite the market in the centre of Bajawa town where she was selling grilled corn in mid 2003. In the months following her family’s maize harvest, Dhone sets up a small coal-fired barbecue late in the

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2 Throughout this thesis I will use the term kampung as there is no equivalent word in English. Kampung can refer to an area the size of a city block in an urban setting, a rural village or, more relevant here, a discreet physical, social, residential space in an identifiably defined area.
afternoon, selling this popular snack to shoppers during the afternoon rush hour (Plate 1).

In November 2004, Dhone was able to access a loan from the local government to start a small business. Nali constructed a rudimentary bamboo stand at the side of their home and Dhone opened a small kiosk. Each day she would lay out items for sale such as sweets, sugar, tea, cigarettes, salt, and oil. It soon became clear that this arrangement was not ideal. With the exception of an old lady who cared for her grand-daughter, the immediate neighbours were often out during the day and Dhone found herself isolated, selling little. They decided to move the kiosk to Nali’s family home in the centre of town. A much sturdier bamboo structure was

Plate 1: Self employed small business - selling grilled corn

...
built in front of the house with a space at the back for a mattress where Dhone and her daughter can nap, play, and listen to the radio. At this location there are many passers-bys and Nali’s family and neighbours are often home during the day to provide company and to help care for her daughter and attend the kiosk. Although Nali’s family did not pay bride wealth, Dhone has entered his family’s household economy based on a combination of inter-personal compatibility and market logics rather than prescribed norms of kin association.

While Dhone is at her in-laws on a daily basis she still frequents her family home in Bomolo kampung. As the oldest daughter, she stands to inherit the family home, land and adat³ objects⁴. Although her young family no longer resides in Bomolo, she is still an integral part of the household economy. Maria, Dhone’s mother, will care for her grand daughter if Dhone has casual work or is busy with other responsibilities. Dhone and her daughter often stay in the kampung for days at a time if there is an important celebration or ritual. These occasions always necessitates her assistance with food and labour. She injects significant contributions to the household on these occasions, particularly items that need to be purchased with cash such as sugar, salt, and extra vegetables from the market. Her labour is in constant demand during these periods both at the house hosting the celebration or ritual and at her family home where animals to be sacrificed need to be tended and food prepared for any guests.

As far as the government administration is concerned Dhone is still a resident of Bomolo kampung. This is where she is enrolled to vote and she was a member of the committee organising the ballot for the presidential election in 2004. She has also kept her registration at the puskemas (health post) closest to the kampung and visits or stays over if she or her daughter is ill. Even if Dhone did notify the government of her change of residence, she and her children are inextricably linked to Bomolo kampung as members of clan Paru. They are therefore tied to this place through descent, matrilineal inheritance, and the physical symbols of

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³ Adat an Indonesian term for customary manners and practices which extend to the legal, moral, and ethical aspects of life with established practices and patterns of behaviours which are open to contestation and interpretation, and hence not pre-determined.
⁴ Adat objects are an important part of lineage inheritance and can include gold jewellery, cloth, swords, spirit ladder, and the mataraga altar rack, see Chapter 3.
the clan in the *kampung* courtyard, the Ngadhu (sacred post) and Bhaga (sacred miniature house) discussed in Chapter 3.

As is common practice, Nali resided in the *kampung* of his wife following their marriage. However Nali rarely visits Bomolo since they moved to Kisawae. When he did live in the *kampung* he suffered greatly at the hands of Dhone’s father Willi, a tall imposing man knowledgeable in matters of *adat* and a harsh, outspoken critic. While Willi inspires fear in the residents of Bomolo, he is also trusted and admired for his physical and spiritual prowess. Willi is locked in a constant battle with the other active senior man in the *kampung*, Yusef, a retired public servant. The ongoing disagreements between Willi and Yusef proved instructional throughout my fieldwork as each man drew on his knowledge anchored in the power of *adat* (Willi) or the state and church (Yusef) to advance his point of view. Willi opposed Dhone’s marriage to Nali for a number of reasons: Dhone became pregnant forcing the marriage without Willi’s approval; he complained Nali never worked hard enough either around the house or in the fields; they are third cousins and so according to Willi too closely related; but most importantly because Nali is *gae kisah*, (middle rank) where as Dhone and her family are *gae meze*, (high rank).

Like many young men in Bajawa, Nali has had a series of unskilled jobs for short periods, or sometimes months. For a time Nali delivered the daily paper ‘Flores Post’ by motorbike. He also picks up occasional day labour work with a construction company. In early 2005 his most regular source of cash income was from acting as a runner for the organisers of the white coupon lottery. Four times a week Nali spent the afternoon and evening collecting and distributing money for this illegal gambling operation. For both Dhone and Nali cash income is generated by working flexible hours backed up by others who can step in, as is the case with the kiosk and newspaper deliveries. These flexible work arrangements enable them to be active participants in economic spheres beyond those of wage labour and the market place.

Like all Ngadha people, Dhone and Nali contribute labour and goods when kin and clan are holding ceremonies of life-cycle rituals. Events take a minimum of
three days and up to two weeks of intense preparation, followed by mourning or celebration. Not to participate in such ceremonies has the potential to invite critical gossip and ostracism from the community. It places a social distance between the offending party and their kin and clan, diminishing the support they and their family would receive during future ceremonies, and erode their identity as Ngadha people.

This thesis draws on the everyday life experiences of people like Dhone and Nali, and Dhone’s parents Maria and Willi, as a window into the logic that informs local economic practices. By examining these practices in terms of necessity, surplus, consumption, and commons, I show how local economic logic is premised on notions of interdependence and group surplus distribution. This economic logic often clashes with the capitalist economic logic that underpins the logic of development projects. Such projects imposed in Ngada by the state, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), and other institutions, would benefit from an approach more closely integrated with place-specific economic logic.

Fieldwork Area
The town of Bajawa where Dhone and Nali live is located in the western-central highlands of Ngada district on Flores Island. Flores, originally called Nusa Nipa (Snake Island), is a long, thin island stretching along an east-west axis that lies parallel to the equator (see Map 1). Geologically it is part of the volcanic Banda Arc group of the Lesser Sunda Islands of the Indonesian archipelago, and is particularly unstable with fourteen active volcanoes (Monk et al 1997: 38).

Approaching Flores by ship, landfall appears suddenly as the mountainous terrain rises sharply out of the tropical azure sea. However it is by air that you get a true sense of the topography of the place the Portuguese called ‘Cabo de Flores’ the ‘Cape of Flowers’. Volcanic activity, two of which are still active in the district, has produced a landscape that appears to have been concertinaed, squeezed together to form a stunning landscape of peaks and valleys.

The district (kabupaten) of Ngada extends from the north to the south coast, with rugged mountain terrain in the south and interior, giving way to hills and flat
plains in the north (Molnar 1994: 2). Kabupaten Ngada borders kabupaten Manggarai to the west, and kabupaten Ende to the east (Map 2). Administratively Ngada is divided into 11 sub-districts, 143 villages and 30 suburbs within an area of 3,037 square kilometers boasting a population of 227, 899\(^5\) people (Badan-Pusat-Statistik 2002, 2004). The capital Bajawa is situated in an ancient caldera at 1,150m and has a population of approximately 15,000 (Plate 2).

As a regional centre Bajawa is an important meeting place where goods are traded and information is exchanged. Indonesian is the language of commerce, education, and government, and is spoken by all but the oldest people. Bajawa is also the name of the local language, a sub-dialect of Ngada language, an Austronesian language categorised by linguists as a dying language (Baird 2005: pers comm). Bajawa is a sub-dialect and sub-culture of a more generalised Ngadha language and culture. Bajawa and other Ngadha sub-groups are fiercely proud of their separate identities. Ngadha language is considered part of the Central Flores linkage of languages and dialect (Fox 1998). An important clarification here is that Ngadha (with an ‘h’) refers to the ethnic group which along with Nage-Keo and Riung peoples make up the three major ethnic groups in the district of Ngada. Linguistic studies provide a more detailed analysis distinguishing between Nage, Keo, Riung, Rembong, Soa, Ngada and Eastern Ngada languages (Grimes et al 1997).

Though no ethnographic research has been published on the people of the town of Bajawa, a number of anthropologists have worked in Ngada and bordering districts. These studies highlight a mutual intelligibility of cultural norms which are yet sufficiently different that only in specific instances can parallels with the Ngadha people of Bajawa be inferred. This is the case with marriage practices which Smedal describes in his research on the house, land and kinship amongst

\(^5\) This statistic should be seen as a rough guide at best. The same figure appears in both the 2002 statistical guide to the province and the 2004 guide to the district. Figures are apt to be inaccurate or inflated in order to increase government funding to areas.
Plate 2: Bajawa Town
Ngadha people in the south of the district. He indicates that his work bears little relationship to other research on kinship in eastern Indonesia as core concepts such as asymmetrical alliance and cousin marriage are not applicable, and ‘...sociologically, what most unequivocally distinguishes Ngadha people from all their neighbours is the fact that Ngadha lack the concepts conventionally glossed as wife-giver and wife-taker. Also...no type of cousin is linguistically or conceptually distinguished from any other’ (Smedal 1994: 20, 32).

During a pre-fieldwork trip in 2004 I met three Swiss anthropologists, Sue Thueler, Susanne Loosli, and Romana Buechel finishing up fifteen months of fieldwork in Bejo village about four kilometres from Bajawa. Molnar and Tule, both anthropology PhD graduates of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS) at the Australian National University carried out their fieldwork in Ngada district. Molnar (1994, 1998) examines the Ngadha system of organising principles and symbolism of Hoga Sara society as expressed in social organisation and cosmology. Tule (1998, 2001) explores the relatively recent inculturation of Catholicism and Islam in relation to Keo people’s identity and village life in the south-east of the district.

Other ethnographers that have worked in Ngada include the German missionary Paul Arndt (1933, 1960, 1963) who conducted some of the earliest fieldwork in Ngada. Cole is currently writing her PhD thesis in the United Kingdom and has published work on how tourism has transformed and strengthened ancestor worship in a village about seventeen kilometres from Bajawa, at the base of Mount Inerie (Cole 1998). Gregory Forth (1994, 1998a, 1998b) has conducted fieldwork predominately with the Nage people, a closely related ethno-linguistic group to the east in the district of Ngada. In examining religious cosmology and spirit classification amongst the Nage of Bo’a Wae he found that the influence of Catholicism had significantly contributed to a decline in ritual activity but not diminished or replaced the importance of spirits in Nage social order (Forth 1998b: 19).

Another RSPAS graduate Lewis whose study was conducted to the east of Ngada in Sikka, has published work based on his PhD thesis. His structural account
examines social organisation amongst the *Ata Tana 'Ai* (People of the Forest), a geographically marginal ethno-linguistic group residing inland on heavily forested valleys and slopes in Sikka (Lewis 1988). Graham (1991), who also wrote her PhD at RSPAS examined social structure amongst Lamahalot speakers on the far eastern tip of Flores. Erb (1987, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2005) has worked on the border region to the west of Ngada in Manggarai with three different ethnic groups; Rembong, Rajong, and people from southern Biting. Erb documents and compares these groups in terms of ritual, mythology, and social organisation.

Howell's (1989) research is of interest as she has written about exchange and valuables amongst the Lio people who live in the district of Ende, adjacent to the eastern border of Ngada. Lio society is patrilineal but is similar to Ngadha society in that they also have three distinct ranks; nobles, the general populace and slaves. Drawing on Sahlins and problematising Mauss’ notion of the embodiment of the gift, Howell raises a number of issues about Lio exchange which are salient to this thesis including: time; nature of exchange partners; nature of things exchanged; the relationship between alienable and inalienable wealth; relations between exchangers and exchange across generations; and the need to expand the temporal dimension of exchange. References are made to exchange at the house level, contributions for burial rituals and secondary burials which enhance status, and the role of the priest leader to call on the community to contribute labour to repair or construct houses. Of particular interest to this study is that Lio society includes living and dead members that '...takes the [exchange] process out of the realm of inter-personal or inter-group relationship to the socio-cosmological domain in which individuals are less important than the whole (Howell 1989: 422). This echoes the beliefs of the Ngadha people of Bajawa and is discussed further in Chapter 3.

As in other Austronesian societies, Ngadha house and clan relationships are of the utmost importance and are primary factors in defining individuals and how they inter-relate with others socially, politically, and economically. 'Clan membership is often defined in terms of rights and obligations: the right to inherit land and heirlooms correlates with [other] obligations…’ (Molnar 1994: 219). Among the closely related Nage people, Forth found the term for family or clan was used to
refer to ceremonial and sacrificial cooperatives as much as to genealogical entities (Forth 1998a: 7). Eastern Indonesia as a discreet field of study was first proposed by the Dutch anthropologist Josselin de Jong in 1935 and is more recently associated with the prolific work of Fox (1980a, 1980b, 1988, 1993a, 1995, 1996). However in common with Smedal (1994) I write with more emphasis on individual agency and hence in a different register to this body of research. Additionally, in contrast to these structural analyses of the house and kinship, this thesis examines these organising principals and relationships only insofar as they influence contemporary economic practice and sociality.

The cash market economy on Flores is dominated by small scale trading of agricultural produce. Cash crops and producing agricultural surplus was promoted during the era of President Suharto’s New Order Government when Flores farmers were encouraged or coerced into planting rice in place of the main crops of tubers (varieties of cassava and sweet potato) and maize. This push, corresponding to the advent of the Green Revolution⁶, created a host of land and water problems, and changed the dietary staple from maize/tubers to rice in some areas. At a Ford Foundation sponsored meeting of farmers from throughout Flores in 2004, these problems were a recurrent theme in relation to food security, along with access to markets.

In Ngada district people earn a living primarily through agricultural production including dry and, to a much lesser extent, wet rice cultivation, coffee, cashew nuts, vanilla, cloves, and numerous secondary food crops. Fishing is also an important economic activity in the district and fish are transported inland for sale and consumption on a daily basis. In Ngada there is no manufacturing base or means to process raw produce with the associated employment and value-added to the commodity. Traders are predominately Muslims with business connections on their islands of origin. The majority of the small Muslim population are Bugis from Sulawesi but there are also a few Minang settlers from West Sumatra, as well as Javanese internal migrants.

⁶ The Green Revolution refers to the introduction of high yield varieties of rice and chemical pesticides and fertiliser, see White (White 2000).
Viewed through a capitalist economic lens Ngada district is indeed a site of low economic growth, with low per capita income, small markets, and a heavy reliance on agricultural production. Unemployment is high and poor infrastructure coupled with steep, mountainous terrain is not likely to attract investors or industry in the near future. Market trading is dominated by ethnic Chinese who have financial capital and connections to off-island transport and trade. Despite a long history of habitation, ethnic Chinese are typecast on Flores as foreigners with business acumen linked to their culture and Confucianism.

More than ninety percent of the Bajawa population is Catholic but the day begins, as throughout most of Indonesia, with the strains of a Koranic singer calling the small number of Muslims to prayer before sunrise. Shortly after the church bells ring, piercing the haze that often shrouds the trees and peaks surrounding this mountain town. Livestock stir, cocks crow, men hawk and spit the phlegm caused by smoking strong kretex clove cigarettes. Women and children rise first to start fires, cloaked against the morning chill in thickly woven ikat cloth. Older women chew their first wads of betel nut then tobacco for the day. The family gathers, squatting around the fire to sip scalding hot coffee highly sweetened with processed sugar purchased from the ubiquitous kios (kiosk). Children reheat rice from the previous evening’s meal for their breakfast before donning the national colours to go to primary school - a white shirt, with a red skirt for girls, and red shorts for boys.

When neighbours drop by with announcements, invitations or gossip, custom dictates that they are offered coffee. Discussion will often turn to lottery numbers, dreams are analysed and coffee cups overturned with the remaining thick sludge examined for signs and symbols to be associated with different numbers. One by one individuals move away from the fire to go about their business. Those employed by the government will leave for the office in the neatly pressed beige or green polyester outfit of the pegawai (civil servant). Market sellers will begin to open their stalls for the day and women will shop early in order to prepare food for the day. Generators are started, beating out a dull roar to power machines milling coffee, rice, or corn.
For the vast majority their main daily activity is prescribed by the time of year and associated agricultural labour, or preparation and performance of life-cycle ceremonies for kin and clan. Whether working in the fields or the kampung, the midday meal is followed by a rest or some quiet time. It is considered rude to call on people during these hours of the early to mid-afternoon. In fact this is a dangerous time to be moving around as this is when *polo*, witches are active. If a pressing engagement requires you to leave the house or field, I was advised to turn my underpants inside out or break off some young leaves and put them in my pocket as a talisman against the molesting actions of witches.

By late afternoon school children and civil servants are back in the kampung and those working in the fields return, usually burdened down with produce or firewood. Five days of the week there will be a flurry of activity just before 5pm when betting closes for the white coupon lottery. Following intense discussion and deliberations, young children are sent to place bets, usually with some extra rupiah to buy sweets from a *kios* along the way. Boys will push carts of fish from kampung to kampung calling out to residents to buy their wares. Pigs become restless in their bamboo pens and squeal for food. As evening settles in, women reignite cooking fires and prepare the evening meal. Rice and a variety of green leaves is the staple and may be accompanied by seasonal vegetables, meat or fish. Women typically serve men their dinner first then return to the kitchen to eat their evening meal with the children. In the absence of life-cycle celebrations, which engage people on average once or twice a week, evening is a time for homework, television, praying, and attending prayer groups at nearby homes.

**Ngada History**

While missionaries and anthropologists have conducted ethnographic research on the island of Flores since colonial times, the colonial history of Ngada is relatively recent. Colonial powers had no early motivation to gain control of the land and the Ngada people were perceived as hostile and, incorrectly, as cannibals (Molnar 1994: 13). Two Dutch expeditions tried and failed in 1889 and 1890 to survey Ngada while looking for tin ore (Molnar 1994: 13). Catholicism arrived in 1912 with the Roman Catholic missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word. A
number of the early missionaries were German. Most notable among them was Paul Arndt who arrived in Ngada in 1924 and produced a large body of ethnographic work. His historical and ethnographic material in German and Dutch has been analysed by Erb (1987), Forth (1998a), Molnar (1994), and Tule (2001), and is accessible through these secondary English language sources.

Prior to the Dutch invasion of Bajawa in 1907 there was no inter-group government in Ngada. Clans and residential groups fought or collaborated in shifting alliances. What is now the district of Ngada lay outside the influence of the kingdom of Bima (Sumbawa) which was backed by the powerful Sultan of Goa from South Sulawesi. This empire exerted some authority over the land and people to the west of Ngada on the island of Flores up to and including what is now the district of Manggarai (Maku 1967: 136). In the order of South East Asian polities of the day, Manggarai was the periphery of the periphery far from the influence and control of the centre. There were peaceful relations between the people of the Bajawa region and Manggarai with Wae Mokil, Mborong, near Aimere in the south demarcated as the eastern extent of Manggarai influence. The Portuguese landed on Solor and Larantuka on the eastern tip of Flores in the 1500’s and sent missionaries proselyting across the island on horse back (Deidhae 2001: 44). Portuguese and later English traders operated along the south Ngada coast peddling gold and swords in exchange for animals, slaves, cloves, and pepper (Forth 2001: 18, Tule 1998: 72). Neither these traders nor missionaries gained a foothold in the uplands of Bajawa until the Dutch took control in 1907 (Tule 2001: 36).

Bajawa is now the administrative capital of the district, the seat of the local government (kabupaten), and centre for trade and commerce. Contemporary Bajawa society is predominately conservative, and change is accommodated cautiously with ancestor worship, adat and senior clan members guiding both individuals and the community. Life revolves around a vibrant complex of cultural institutions that connects and sustains individuals, families, and ancestors in place. The practices of ancestors are followed to ensure safety and prosperity, harking back to a time which reaches into the present through action and memory. To deviate from tradition is to court trouble, as ancestors control the forces of
nature and the fate of the living. In this context, communities and individuals do not necessarily privilege financial gain above all else. Economic rationality is not the organising principle in this location which is geographically remote from large markets and does not have large scale industry or a manufacturing base. As a primarily agricultural community, time is cyclical and punctuated by life cycle, *adat* and religious events.

In Bajawa I lived in the *kampung* of Bomolo. Bomolo is located on the outskirts of the town of Bajawa, within walking distance of the market in the centre of town. Bomolo is not the exact name of the location but follows local practice for naming sites; *Bo* meaning place, and *molo* meaning good, which here also takes the place of the name of the founding Ancestor. Bomolo Ancestors derive from two clans, Dala and Paru and all residents are members of one of these two clans. Arriving in Bomolo *kampung* the outstanding features are the Ngadhu post and *Bhaga* house that stand in the central courtyard (see Figure 1). A road runs directly through the middle of the *kampung* dissecting the central courtyard onto which all the houses face. The land rises sharply on one side where food crops are planted on the slopes and tended by the women and children.

In Bomolo a façade of financial equality is maintained with two or three generations of each family dwelling in a similar style of home on collectively owned clan land. Houses in Bomolo are constructed from cinder blocks and have corrugated iron roofs. With the exception of the poorest family, all houses have a front terrace and concrete floors, a front/guest sitting room screened from the adjoining living room by a curtain, and three or more bedrooms. The kitchen is always at the back of the house and built from bamboo with a fireplace for cooking. The toilet and bathroom is usually a separate structure at the back of the house and made of bamboo or concrete.

About half the houses are built to encompass a wooden *adat* house. *Adat* homes are a raised, single room constructed from wood with a plaited palm fibre roof. Cooking, eating, sleeping, socialising, and rituals all occur in this one room. A single sliding panel provides access and ventilation. There was no latrine and ablutions were performed ‘out the back’. The newer ‘healthy houses’ have a front
verandah and a number of rooms, typically a front room for receiving guests, a living room and two or more bedrooms. Walls and floors are concrete and every room has a wooden frame window with either glass slat panes or wooden shutters. Kitchens abut the main structure but are usually constructed from bamboo with a dirt floor. Drop toilets are housed in a small bamboo or concrete structure at the back of the house, sometimes with an adjacent bathing area.

Houses are arranged in a rectangular shape around the periphery of the *kampung* square; comings and goings are observable by all residents. Whenever leaving the *kampung* there is always someone watching who will call out and ask where you are going. In this respect I have found that the standard response is to answer ‘the market’ irrespective of your destination. This allows public accountability yet offers a modicum of privacy. Households often have alternative routes, through gardens or behind other houses, allowing residents to come and go without their movement being observed each and every time they go in or out. In the house where I lived there was no such exit so our movements were always public knowledge.

In Bomolo I lived in the house with three permanent residents, Maria (Mama), Willi (Papa) and their youngest son Markus. Maria was born in Bomolo and is clan Paru. Willi is clan Dala and moved approximately 200 meters from his family home to Bomolo when he married Maria. Maria and Willi are both in their late fifties, fit and active. Willi is the head of the household and controls its social and economic activities. Apart from farming, Willi is a blacksmith and makes knives and spear tips to order in a workshop behind the house. As a senior man in the community and acknowledged *adat* expert he is often called to attend meetings or to give advice.

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7 As mentioned previously, Dhone her husband Nali, and their daughter moved out of this house in 2005.
Figure 1: Outline of Bomolo kampung
When gathering data I was repeatedly referred back to Willi for ‘correct’ information. Maria does the majority of the physical labour, farming as well as drying and milling rice and coffee, collecting and preparing food for the pigs, collecting firewood, cooking and cleaning. Maria chews betel nut (sirih pinang) which has stained her lips and gums bright red. She also chews large wads of tobacco so is rarely without a wad of something in her mouth. It took a while to ‘tune in’ to the way she speaks with a mouth full of betel or tobacco. Markus was seventeen years old and in year 10 at school (SMA level 1). As the last and youngest child at home he does many of the same chores as Maria. He is frequently called to do a variety of tasks such as going to the kiosk for cigarettes or sugar, sweeping, feeding the pigs, and carrying heavy bags of rice or coffee.

In Bomolo, and throughout Bajawa, matrilineal inheritance of land and houses is the norm. Commonly young couples will co-habit once the woman is noticeably pregnant or they are married – which can mean living together after an adat marriage but before the ceremonies of a church wedding. A major factor affecting choices of marriage partner is rank. There are three ranks or castes in Bajawa society: the highest – ga’e meze, middle – ga’e kisah, and the lowest – ho’o, or slave rank. It is considered the height of rudeness to ask someone what rank they are and I was warned against raising the subject outside the family. A woman should marry a man from the same or higher rank. She can marry one rank below her but a fine must be paid to her family and the women than assumes the lower rank of her husband. A man is free to marry a woman of lower rank without sanction.

Once a woman’s family accepts the man into their home he becomes a part of the economic and social life of family while retaining rights and responsibilities in his home and clan of origin. Children’s identity and status follows the mother’s, as does clan identity through which a child is linked to the home and village of their mother. Children have no rights or responsibilities in the house and village of their father. Alternatively, a woman can move to the home of her partner but the man’s family must pay bridewealth (belis) to the woman’s family. The woman and their children then derive their clan identity and status from the house of the man. According to adat, once belis has been paid there are ways for a child or
youth to leave the family which has paid belis and has primary rights of association with them, and return to the family who received payment and has only secondary rights. This involves giving a negotiated number items including livestock, cloth, and rice. Through a ceremony and presentation of gifts, clan and residential status can change. Primarily this occurs when the number of residents in a home dwindles and there is no younger generation to fulfil daily duties, occupy the land, and carry on the lineage. If moving to the matrilineal clan and house, this is referred to wado sao ebu, and to the patrilineal clan and house, dheko leqa. As my Flores Father Willi pointed out ‘animals aren’t expensive, people are’.

**Alternative Economies Action Research Project**

This thesis was undertaken as part of my work with a team of academics exploring a new approach to local economic development through an action research project titled ‘Negotiating Alternative Economic Strategies for Regional Development in Indonesia and the Philippines’. This project was jointly funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC), the Australian National University (ANU) and our industry partner, the Australian Government Agency for International Development (AusAID). Much of AusAID’s funding is channelled bilaterally through recipient government agencies at a national level. This arrangement has had intermittent success, particularly since government functions were decentralised in many developing countries, resulting in patchy development. There is therefore much scope for new economic approaches that deal directly with local government units of which this project is one example. AusAID is particularly interested in the potential of the project methodology to enhance its effectiveness in the delivery of development assistance.

Concurrently, the two countries where we piloted the project, Indonesia and the Philippines, are undergoing a process of democratisation and decentralisation.

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8 I would like to acknowledge the stimulating input of the project research team: Katherine Gibson, Deirdre Mackay, Amanda Cahill, Ann Hill and Catarina Williams in the Department of Human Geography, and Kathryn Robinson and Andrew McWilliam in the Department of Anthropology at the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University.
with the responsibility for the provision of essential services devolving to local governments. While the Philippines began the process of decentralisation some ten years earlier than Indonesia, in both locations local government structures have been reorganised to accommodate their expanded role and increased service delivery responsibility. Agencies claim they have maintained or increased provision of services however in five locations internal reviews found an overlap due to lack of clarity at the departmental level (Colongan 2003: 4). At the district and sub-district level the government is striving to improve the lives of the population in Bajawa, and economic development is seen at the primary means to achieve this goal.

This ARC action research project explores two key issues in development: how to re-present locality to enable local people-centred development, and how to implement decentralised governance across the complex archipelagic nations of Indonesia and the Philippines. The basic philosophy of the project is to put into practice an alternative methodology for raising the standard of living in local communities based on existing social and economic strengths, and capacities. This approach makes a timely contribution to development thinking and practice. Critics have long pointed out that development is in danger of being little more than ‘...economic colonisation of the so-called informal sector...launching the last and definitive assault against organised resistance to development and the economy’ (Esteva 1995: 16). Academics and practitioners alike recognise the pitfalls of current development approaches and are striving to find new ways to increase the efficacy and sustainability of initiatives.

Overwhelmingly development casts beneficiaries of development programs as lacking, in need of outside assistance and direction. The project instead trialled an alternative view based on the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach adopted from Kretzman and McKnight (1993) to examine these communities differently. The ABCD method focuses on skills and assets already present in a community and works on the simple premise of seeing the proverbial glass as half full, rather than the negative view of the glass as half empty. One of the important aspects of the ABCD process is the exercise of encouraging people to realise and revalue the skills local people have, and the positive qualities of
traditional practices. In Indonesian State discourse, marginal communities are disparaged as lacking human resources (*SDM sumber daya manusia*) and in need of training and up skilling. Put front and centre of the Indonesian agenda by Suharto, village and rural people are commonly constructed as backward and an impediment to economic and national development.

The assets based approach employed by our research team works in sharp contrast to capitalocentric models in which local communities are defined by what they lack. We aimed to devise intervention strategies that can be devised through deep ethnographic understanding of local social, economic, and cultural practices. The challenge in my doctoral research was to bring understandings of these practices to the fore as assets present in Eastern Indonesia from which development alternatives could emerge.

One of the tools we employed to reach this deeper understanding was the diverse economy framework (DEF). This framework broadens my conceptualisation of the economy by facilitating the inclusion of the wide range of mutual cooperation and other-than-capitalist types of transactions and labour that dominates the Ngada economy. Described in Chapter 2, the diverse economy framework emerged through the work of Gibson and Graham’s post-Marxist Feminist critiques of political economy. It is designed to unhinge economic thinking from a narrow capitalist focus, to highlight the ‘hidden’ or under-valued resources of communities. The project team used the diverse economy framework as a heuristic device for mapping and re-presenting local transactions, activities, and enterprises as being highly variable yet also valuable.

The main aims of the project were to: strengthen partnerships between government, NGOs and other sections of the community; strengthen the capacity of local authorities to identify and mobilise local resources; generate new pathways for regional development by building on existing social capital in the

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*Capitalocentrism is a term coined by Gibson-Graham to challenge views that position the economy and other aspects of social life ‘...primarily with reference to capitalism: as being fundamentally the same as capitalism, or as being deficient or substandard imitations; as being opposite to capitalism; as being the compliment of capitalism; as existing in capitalism’s space or orbit’ (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 6).*
local area; emphasise people as the primary resource; and broaden the definition of the local economy. Three of the key research questions set out in the project proposal which relate directly to this thesis are:

- What are the assets, capacities and diverse economies that constitute the ‘hidden’ social resource base of communities?

- How might these assets, capacities and traditional economic networks be sustained and mobilised in different ways?

- How can recently empowered local government units take an active, innovative and ongoing role in building sustainable communities and stable futures?

Insights into these question emerged through research in Bomolo and through working with the project’s partner organisation, Sannusa throughout the district. Sannusa is a small non-government organisation focussed on local issues and operating a Grameen Bank inspired informal banking facility through which small groups save money and access loans. The staff are conversant in community, government, and development discourses and often act as knowledge brokers between these spheres. It was in consultation with this project partner that we piloted a new approach to economic development, paying particular attention to language and the loaded terminology of development. The challenge to find new language for development was paralleled by the challenge to marry the diverse economies approach to the language of anthropology.

The Language of Economy

It is not without irony that in reaching for a new perspective on the monolithic entity that is ‘the economy’, and in attempting to alter the taken-for-granted paradigms and its language, I find myself immersed in the paradigms and language of exactly that from which I strive to break free. Terminology was a great concern in the early research phase of this thesis. As I sought to read on reciprocal labour and surplus distribution, the anthropological literature frequently obfuscated rather than clarified my understanding. The language was unpacked, however, in an article by McCormack (1976) who deciphers the many ways the

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10 Sannusa is an acronym for *Yayasan Nurani Desa*—Pure Village Foundation
term ‘reciprocity’ is employed in the anthropological literature, and the work of Gregory who describes the theory of goods in anthropology as ‘...a complete terminological, conceptual and theoretical muddle where terms such as “gifts”, “commodities”, and “money” are used interchangeably’ (Gregory 1997: 75).

Further confounding this issue is the fact that while some of the plain language terms I use are easily intelligible, they are also loaded with meaning(s) and assumptions. Capitalism is a common term that requires deliberate and specific definition. As I seek to embed capitalist practices in a broader view of the economy I have opted to use Gibson-Graham’s definition that simply states that ‘...capitalism involves the production of commodities for a market by free wage labour...in which surplus labour is appropriated from the direct producers in value form by non-producers’ (2006a: 198 n.11). This definition deliberately does not cast capitalism as a system in order to denaturalise capitalist assumptions. In this thesis capitalism is linked and placed along side other-than-capitalist and non-capitalist practices.

Conversely in the discursive praxis of the development industry, words can become hollow to the point of being broadly interchangeable and meaningless (Goldsmith 1991). Community is one term liberally used in development circles and anthropology (see Walker 2001). It can refer to a geographical area, an administrative unit or a ‘target population’: farmers, the poor, or women. It is always abstract and ‘out there’, and understood as an unproblematic and positive term. While community can be all these things, the converse can also be true. Community is usually contested, is rarely egalitarian and may also be negative, constraining or oppressing for its members. The dimension of time is also an important consideration as community is often ephemeral, and comes together over one issue, only to dissolve over another. Community may also include absent members such as migrant workers, or temporary members such as development workers or anthropologists. This is an important point as development workers may not see themselves as implicated or responsible to community members but to their employer, typically an NGO and funding agencies. There can be advantages in this position such as not being bound by local patronage hierarchies. All of the above points contribute to my understanding of community as an
amorphous entity that may be real or imagined, but always specific to a time and place.

The term ‘economy’ is similarly contested and linked to concepts of the community. Gudeman offers a cross-cultural model of economy discussing economic processes as consisting of two realms, that of the community and the market (2001). While drawing on Gudeman’s model to (re)introduce other-than-capitalist aspects of the economy, I prefer to conceptualise the economy as an intertwined, integral part of human life where there is a '...close interrelationship of economics with other cultural factors, and shows that economics is not a realm unto itself' (Haviland 1989: 394). Gregory points to a tradition of denying the coexistence of gifts and commodities in anthropology, for example, in Appadurai’s description of the kula ring as non-westernised, non-monetised exchange in his introduction to the influential edited volume *The Social Life of Things* (Gregory 1997: 43). In this thesis I build on Gregory’s notion of the coevality of economies to include not only gifts, commodities, and goods but also a diverse range of transactions and enterprise forms. In this way the concept of the community economy informs this analysis, enabling me to tease out the many strands of the Ngadha economy. Community economy is a term adopted by Gibson-Graham to explore the dynamic social, cultural, spiritual, and political relationships and activities that along with economic relations (re)create economy. (Gibson-Graham 2006a). Coupled with an anthropological lens, this thesis examines economic motivations, repercussions, outcomes, and implications but makes no evaluation of whether actions or strategies are economic, non-economic or both. For the bulk of this thesis I rely on Gregory and Altman’s simple yet eloquent definition of the economy as ‘...the social relations people establish to control the production, consumption and circulation of food, clothing and shelter' (1989: 1). However further explication is necessary when addressing the complex interplay of macro-economics, development, and a political world order that results in attempts to assist and control the lives of cash poor people.

During the 1970’s a history of deliberations within the sub-discipline of economic anthropology crystallised into a dyadic, polarising argument that pitched those involved into one of two camps; substantivists and formalists (Gudeman 2001,
Robinson 2000). The debate has petered out now and most commentators summarise the dispute as being between the formalists, who argued that all economies operated on universalist principles based on western economic models, and the substantivists who saw the economy in cultural relativist terms. Wilk sets out a different approach to the formalist - substantivist debate (1996). Moving beyond these basic opposing positions, he indicates that there were also underlying differences. Substantivists examined institutions and observable behaviour through the lens of cultural relativism. Formalists were concerned with the logic of economic choices made by the individual. He finds that the two positions are not mutually exclusive; that they are actually exploring questions of rationality, truth, reason, and progress. He points out that they were '...taking classic philosophical positions about ontology organised around polarities like free will versus determinism, rationalism versus romanticism, and selfishness versus altruism...they are starting from sets of assumptions about human nature rather than testing those assumptions' (Wilk 1996: 75 author's emphasis).

While the formalist/substantivist debate dominated economic anthropology until the 1980's, the influence of these positions is still evident. Of direct relevance to development projects is the way '...formalists also contributed indirectly to the performative power of modern micro-economics by propagating the idea of a universal logic of rationality. They hypostasized market logics and found these logics in the markets they studied' (Callon & Caliskan 2005: 4). Thus the formalists were paving the way for a plethora of development projects based on one particular type of economic logic that was deemed to be cross-culturally applicable.

The origins of development as we know it is traced to the end of the Second World War, specifically to a speech by Truman, the incoming President of the USA, who declared that those in underdeveloped areas must benefit from the knowledge and progress of the USA (Esteva 1995: 6). This position led to a privileging of economic growth as a sign of progress and the carving out of a dominant position for economists in development discourse and planning. 'Central to the understanding of development is the understanding of economic growth...' (Akiyama & Larson 2004: 1). A disciplinary bias has therefore skewed
development as we know it to a fiscal approach that favours economic growth as the means to improve people's lives.

Anthropology's critical, academic engagement with development commenced at the Manchester school (UK) and has expanded rapidly (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 12-3). Development studies are now being taught in anthropology departments all over the globe and many anthropologists now work in the field as development practitioners. Given the breadth of this work an important distinction has been made between 'development anthropology' and the 'anthropology of development' (Grillo & Stirrat 1997: 2 ) attributing (Charsley 1982).

Development anthropology applies anthropological methods to the endeavour of development whereas the anthropology of development analyses the implementation and repercussions of development. This thesis is consciously located in both of these categories, examining development approaches whilst simultaneously engaged in a development action-research project.

Theory and Methods
In this thesis I set out to examine the day-to-day tensions between individual accumulation, one of the hallmarks of capitalism, and group distribution, commonly associated with kinship based economies. Analysing the economy of Bajawa, particularly institutions of interdependence, this thesis documents a rarely explored yet enduring practice in Indonesia. This thesis is placed within a genealogy of ethnographic research, forming a part of '...anthropology's great contribution to the history of value theory [which] has been to record, and to a certain extent celebrate, the existence of alternate value systems (Gregory 1997: 7). In a cross disciplinary vein, my work also adds to the growing body of literature on development alternatives and advances the theory and methods of the ABCD DEF approach emerging within human geography and anthropology. My aim in this study is to focus on the actions and strategies of individuals and groups in Ngada to illustrate locally constituted economic practices. This is a place-based study particularising and analysing the general by examining and interpreting ethnographic detail, what Geertz called thick description (1973).
In the first instance I focus on interdependence in Bajawa as a type of total prestation. I echo the approach of Mauss who defined total prestation in his seminal work on gift exchange, using it to explain how exchange involves all members of a group and everything they own which ‘...are at the same time economic, juridical, moral, aesthetic, religious and mythological...[and] their meaning can only be grasped if they are viewed as a complex concrete reality' (Mauss [1954] 1969). As Howell found amongst the Lio people who live further to the east on Flores, exchange was not just between people but also between the living and the dead (1989). People made offerings and sacrifices to the Ancestors who ensured the fertility of the land. She argues that '...exchange expresses the moral order of a society and should be seen as a life-giving process - not a reciprocal, time specific act in which two things are exchanged between two individuals' (1989: 434).

Conceptualising mutual cooperation and other economic activities, I use the diverse economy framework as a guide for the collection and documentation of information on community economy activities. The diverse economy framework sets out transactions, labour, and organisational forms into the realms of the formal, alternative, and non-capitalist/market economy and is explained in full in Chapter 2. It is a tool for mapping social and economic livelihood strategies which tend to remain ‘hidden’. As a theoretical approach the diverse economy is anti-essentialist in that ‘...relationships are contingently rather than deterministically configured; economic value is liberally distributed, not attached to certain activities, and denied to others; economic dynamics are proliferated, not restricted to a set number of governing laws and logics; and multiple temporalities and storylines are untethered from one linear narrative' (Gibson-Graham 2005: 13). This framework expands the notion of the economy and includes economic practices not necessarily recognised in capitalist economic paradigms such as worker-owned cooperatives, gifts, and barter. This tool is particularly useful in examining economic practices in Indonesia. In development paradigms local institutions of mutual cooperation are cast as the backbone of ‘Indonesian-ness’, but also considered rural and backward, as opposed to urban, progressive, and modern. Furthermore, at times the state considers mutual cooperation as not relevant or even as an impediment to development. The diverse economy
framework avoids placing such judgements on the value of economic practices, and foregrounds all practices as potential strengths to be built on in search of alternative development strategies.

In this thesis I draw on empirical observations and subjective accounts of abstract notions (such as adat and community) to accurately describe daily practices and institutions. My approach to anthropology has been influenced by Bourdieu’s theory of practice, in that I study agents (phenomenology) and patterns (structure) to articulate practices and cognitive processes that enable the structure (praxiology) (Garbett 2003). At the same time I have enjoyed the challenge of marrying the innovative theory of the diverse economy, emerging from human geography, with my anthropological insights. My presence during fieldwork and now via mobile phone implicates me in the fabric of the lives I write about. I have taken up the suggestion of Wolf to include my voice in my writing. As she points out, researchers are ensnared in hierarchical relations of politics, class, and gender yet are largely missing in texts (Wolf 1992: 266). For this reason I write in the first person and locate myself in the field when relevant throughout the thesis.

Ethnographic data in this thesis is primarily drawn directly from people residing in and around the town of Bajawa. My data on the history of the Ngadha people is supplemented by interviews with a Ngadha man, Petrus. His knowledge is based on personal experience, oral history, and his reading of the work of Paul Arndt, a German SVD (Society of the Divine Word) Catholic missionary. Petrus lives in the town of Bajawa but is the most senior man within the clan - kampung complex where I lived on the edge of town. He is an authority on adat and estimates that he is in his eighties. Acknowledging the work of Arndt, Petrus joked with me that Ngadha people knew their history through the writing of foreigners and that his grandchildren would learn their local history from my ethnography. Much of the accepted local history has indeed been influenced by the writings of Arndt. Also

\[11\] Maribeth Erb who has conducted fieldwork in the neighbouring district of Manggarai has experienced this. Her work is a source of information for tour guides and school teachers (Erb 2007 pers comms). Another anthropologist Sue Thueler, who at the time of writing was drafting her PhD thesis, also reports a similar stance among the people she lived with in Bejo, about four kilometres from Bajawa.
much knowledge is broad and generalised which may be a local feature or indicative of layers of knowledge to which I was granted only superficial access.

Occasionally I draw on material gathered in other locations within Ngada district to illustrate processes common throughout the district. This reflects my position as both a ‘classic’ ethnographer focussing on a distinct group, and my work as part of an action-research development project in different locales across the district. For a variety of reasons anthropologists often choose to use pseudonyms to conceal the identity of the people with whom they have lived and worked. This was not my intention at the outset. I know the people that are now my family and friends on Flores would like to see their names in a book. However as local practices and my research led me to examine gambling, an activity outlawed by the Indonesian State, it is pragmatic to mask their identity by using different names for most places and people. While I identify Ngada as the district, and Bajawa as the town where I lived, more specific locations and people’s names, with the exception of the cooperative KUD Loboleke, have been changed.

Participant observation and informal interviews have provided the majority of my primary data along with other techniques for gathering information such as extending conversations, video recording, taking photographs, reading local newspapers, and conducting surveys. Not surprisingly I have found that data collection on mutual cooperation coalesces around major ceremonies and life-cycle events. Here is where I have found participant observation particularly helpful. By actively engaging and participating in women’s work, or observing and asking questions about men’s work, I was able to gather detailed information about the activities at hand.

Current academic fashion refers to people met during field work as interlocutors or fictive kin. While every anthropologist enjoys unique interactions during research, given my experience in the field I find informants or interlocutors an impersonal term. Fictive also seems inappropriate as it implies a sense of being artificial, or as listed in the Oxford dictionary, not genuine. In this thesis I will refer to the family who took me into their home simply as my Flores family. I feel
a strong bond with my Flores family which includes their extended family, neighbours in the kampung, and members of both clans.

During an initial pre-fieldwork trip in 2003 I came to meet my Flores family after getting to know Dhone at her grilled corn stand near the market. After chatting at length on a number of occasions she introduced me to her family who subsequently invited me to live in their home when I returned the following year for fieldwork. When I moved into the family home after returning to Bomolo in 2004, I was instructed to call my friend’s parents ‘Mama’ and ‘Papa’. My friend Dhone, who I mentioned previously had moved out of the family home, became my sister. This configured relations to the satisfaction of the family, incorporating me into their world, under their auspices and control. A few months after I had moved into the family home, Maria confided in me that she had lost her first two babies. One child was born the year before me, the other a year after. A devoutly religious woman, Maria explained that God had sent me to replace the two children she had lost. Hence there was a special emotional bond between Maria and I, with its genesis in nothing I could have consciously done either personally or professionally as an anthropologist.

After living with my Flores family for a year we got to know the good and the bad in each other. This fundamental and defining relationship was not unproblematic. I know my presence in their home made them the target of talk and jealousy. They had to wear my social gaffs and mistakes. For my part, I had to adapt to living with a family for the first time in many years, and conform to patriarchal authority that made my inner feminist cringe. That said however, it was overwhelmingly a happy relationship which continues at a distance via mobile phone.

I lived with and have written mainly about Ngadha people although I will also introduce and discuss the other two indigenous ethnic groups in the district; Nage-Keo and Riung. My acquaintance with Nage-Keo and Riung people was through savings and loans groups across the district associated with our local NGO partner Sannusa as part of the ‘Negotiating Alternative Economies’ action research project. My residence in the peri-urban community of Bomolo provided the
principle focus for participant observation in a range of economic and social practices involved in everyday life. As Forth (1998a) found during fieldwork with the closely related Nage people, a casual and undirected approach is most suited to local ways of articulating and transmitting knowledge. I also collected more formal data through reviews of government documents, meeting with a range of government and community figures, and video taping activities at critical junctures during my research.

Many anthropologists take theoretical stances or hypotheses as a point of departure for their research. During my fieldwork I used a more agent centred approach and allowed the daily practices of kampung life to guide my research. What was compelling was the prevalence and importance of practices of mutual assistance. In response to prevalence of this phenomenon I began researching mutual cooperation and labour exchange upon my return to Australia after a pre-fieldwork visit in 2003. Back in the field in 2004-05 I was again challenged by local practice to incorporate a diverse array of anthropological material into a coherent ethnographic account. As I got to know the people of Bomolo, and they got to know me, it became evident that not only were many different types of mutual assistance practices widespread and frequent, but that there were also other informal practices shaping daily life, particularly prayer groups and gambling.

How was I to incorporate such diverse aspects of the economy into a coherent argument? In order to do this I had to ‘pan-out’ and adjust to a broader focus away from labour exchange to incorporate the many aspects of the informal economy which sustains people physically, socially, and spiritually. In order to achieve this aim I became interested in the multiple memberships and economic activities of individuals and households. During the initial six months of field work I collected data on groups and organisations involved in Bomolo style mutual cooperation. I also gathered data on the multiple roles of individual women in Bomolo and surveyed the senior woman in each household about their group membership and economic responsibilities.

Ceremonies were an important time for me to collect data and as a participant observer these were often marathon efforts lasting days and sometimes weeks. In
July 2004 I joined Bomolo residents preparing and performing the Neku ceremony (discussed in Chapter 4) attracting approximately one thousand guests. As we began to clean up after this huge event news emerged that our neighbour and relative next door had died. Without a moment to spare we launched into funeral preparations with our home as the main staging area. This was an exhausting but rewarding time as I oscillated between participating in work and ceremonies, and scribbling notes. As a foreigner I had great novelty value and friends and family called on me constantly to serve the guests in their home, prompting one visitor to ask her host ‘Why did she come all the way from Australia just to serve rice?’

In writing this thesis I was presented with the unique and challenging opportunity of working at three different intersections: one between the disciplines of anthropology and human geography, one between applied and theoretical academic work, and one between the anthropology of development and development anthropology. Firstly, writing in anthropology my research is theoretically informed by the work of feminist geographers Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham (Gibson-Graham 1996, 2005, 2006a). The cross-disciplinary nature of my work is most obvious in the use of these author’s diverse economy framework and theorising on community economies. Secondly, the academic production of this PhD thesis has been embedded in the applied work of implementing an action-research project in Australia, Indonesia, and the Philippines also drawing on the theoretical framework of Gibson-Graham. My analysis is weighted with my experience both as an agent implementing development and a researcher. Here I want to quote a recent treatise on anthropology and development which examines the tensions between research and action.

According to Bachelard's famous expression...scientific knowledge... is constructed through a continuous, unrelenting fight against error, by means of meticulous criticism, intellectual polemic, theoretical vigilance, and of constant examination of acquired knowledge. Action, on the other hand, comprises arbitration,
ambiguities, compromise, wagers, wills and emergencies. Knowledge doubt, while action needs to believe’

(Olivier de Sardan 2005).

This leads me to the third area my work straddles, that is the distinction made earlier between development anthropology and the anthropology of development (Grillo & Stirrat 1997: 2 attributing Charsley 1982). In implementing development through the ‘action’ component of our action-research project, we were involved in development anthropology, bringing our unique disciplinary approach to the practice of development. However the ‘research’ component of our work means that it falls within the boundary of an anthropological analysis of development practices.

Chapter Outlines
Chapter two begins with a consideration of the history and influence of the two dominant institutions in Bajawa, the Indonesian State and the Catholic Church as it pertains to the local economy. I then sketch some of the ethnographic detail of the Ngadha people of Bajawa in terms of the diverse economy framework which is used to map the local community economy.

Chapter three depicts how economic interdependence in Bajawa has its genesis in ancestor worship and has expanded to incorporate a more recent belief in Catholicism. These spiritual foundations, clan, rank, age and residential status also contribute to how individuals position themselves in regards to their rights, expectations and obligations. However interdependence is not seamless and the chapter concludes with an account of the breakdown of interdependence.

Chapter four describes -practices of everyday and ritual interdependence in Bomolo kampung. I detail normative institutions and trajectories of interdependence that reproduces the community economy. This exemplifies Ngadha material and abstract conceptualisation of interdependence, the crux of the Bomolo community economy. In particular weddings and funeral are occasions for coming together and (re)creation of community.
Chapter five extends the analysis beyond the ways that Ngadha people make a living, and recreate the commons, to an examination of surplus. Gambling is one strategy for individuals to socialise cash in the community sphere I explore how people manipulate and accommodate cash surplus in tandem with practices of interdependence which defray individual accumulation of surplus. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the coexistence and interdependence of economic forms in Bomolo.

Chapter six builds on the preceding empirical data to engage with the literature on strategies of interdependence, in particularly Koentjaraningrat’s work on Java. I then turn to examine Indonesian Government sponsored cooperatives. Worker-owned cooperatives, premised on the pan-Indonesian notion of mutual assistance or *gotong royong*, have had mixed fortunes since their introduction across the archipelago. More recently with the decentralisation of the state’s bureaucracy, the Ngada district government is again promoting worker-owned cooperatives with seed funding to small groups.

Chapter seven briefly examines international development to appreciate why initiatives based on capitalist economics are favoured by the local government. I discuss the work of Sannusa, a Bajawa non-government organisation which operates as a conduit between capitalist and alternative economic approaches to local development. Examples from some of the groups Sannusa works with serve to illustrate these points. The chapter closes with a discussion of the alternative economies project and how it differs from mainstream development with an approach that is process driven, locally specific, and adaptable.

Chapter eight reiterates the argument that in Bajawa capitalist economic development initiatives is secondary to the maintenance of the community commons that sustains people physically, emotionally and spiritually. I summarises my findings and pose questions which emerged as a result of this research.
Chapter 2: Historical Trajectories and the Diverse Economy

Ngada, indeed the whole island of Flores is a familial and cultural homeland, not a site in which most people can amass wealth or prosper. To make money from wage labouring people frequently travel to other islands or overseas to seek work. In Bomolo a witty neighbour told me the story of how a long time ago a huge gold producing tree fell over, the trunk landing on Flores, the top of the tree on Java. Since that time Flores has had an abundance of wood and Java an abundance of gold. The people of Flores have the resources to survive, while the Javanese have the means to prosper.

This chapter is an examination of the local economic landscape. I begin by detailing the arrival of the two most pervasive institutions in Bajawa - the Catholic Church, and the government in the guise of Dutch colonial forces initially, followed by the Japanese and ultimately the Indonesian State. I then introduce the Ngadha community as it relates to the diverse local economy. The analysis contextualises socio-economic interdependence amongst the Ngadha people of Bomolo kampung, as a precursor to the map of the diverse economy of the adjacent town of Bajawa. Through this mapping process current economic options and strategies emerge including practices such as gambling which is typically not acknowledged in analyses of the economy. The diverse economy framework graphically illustrates the many economic activities which fall outside the realm of formal market capitalism. This leads to a discussion of the multiple strategies that the people of Bomolo and Bajawa employ to make a living. I examine the articulation of the interdependent economy of Bomolo kampung with the hub of the market-based economy in Bajawa town. I conclude by introducing four ethical coordinates as a way to analyse the primary data presented in the diverse economy framework.

It is arguable as to which institution holds greater authority over daily life on Flores; the Catholic Church or the Indonesian State. Certainly the Catholic
Church has a longer history on the island. In 1550 Portuguese Dominicans arrived on Solor Island, close to the eastern tip of Flores, and quickly expanded their mission to Flores until superseded by the Dutch. From 1913 to 1920 the mission was gradually handed over to SVD (Society of the Divine Word) German missionaries who secured a contract with the Dutch colonial government to run all schools on Flores (Maku 1967). In 1920 SVD German missionaries selected Mataloko, about ten minutes by road from Bajawa, as their centre and erected a school with an electrical and carpentry workshop, and offered training in farming and other practical skills (Deidhae 2001).

The entrance of these foreign forces began a tectonic shift in people’s lives in the form of conversion to Catholicism, governance by external authorities, and different labour relations. The oldest living generation continues to focus on agriculture and labour for self-sufficiency. Cash first became a necessity for this generation to pay for children’s school fees and to purchase items from an array of newly available consumables such as soap and cooking oil. Their children, now adults, look increasingly to wage labour while periodically fulfilling their duty to labour in the fields and the home. This generation has already begun to have children of their own and now must find the money for schooling and the consumer goods that are part of their lives.

The church holds the greatest influence over the religious, moral, and ethical aspects of people’s everyday lives, while the state holds greater sway over legal and bureaucratic matters. Relatively, the church does hold some power in secular issues, while the state can influence the spiritual domain of the church. The church, for example, is a major landowner on Flores and runs schools, hospitals, health posts, a printing press, book stores, and hotels. Priests and nuns are often required to be entrepreneurial in their endeavours to build churches and provide practical assistance to their parishioners. They are also called on to mediate between quarrelling parties, advise on legal matters, and investigate crimes. For its part, the state dictates that all citizens must have a religion and intervenes in

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12 All Indonesians must subscribe to one of five State sanctioned religions: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism or Buddhism. Each person’s religious persuasion is documented on their...
religio\textendash; doctrine to achieve its secular goals. In line with the Suharto era family planning policy of ‘\textit{dua anak cukup}’ (‘two children are enough’) to stem population pressure, the Catholic Church was invited to support the use of contraception or leave the country. The church chose to stay and continues to support state guidelines in regards to birth control.

**Background and Influence of the Catholic Church**
The relatively recent history of Catholicism in Bajawa belies the importance of the church to the spirit and soul of individuals and as its role as one of two dominant institutions, the other being the Indonesian government. Conversions began in Bajawa in 1911 with the opening of the first school whose teachers were lay preachers (Deidhae 2001: 44). Catholic missionaries tapped into pre-existing Ngada cosmology ‘\textit{Dewa zeta, Nitu zale}’ (‘God above, Ancestors below’) to convert people. The church claims to have produced the first book, which was a translation of the Bible written entirely in Ngadha language in 1972 (Djawanai 1980: 7).

The influence of the church extends to service provision and the church-run health clinic in Bajawa is very popular as, I was told, people have greater faith in the efficacy of the treatments administered by the nuns at the government-run hospital. The Catholic Church also continues to be actively involved in education. Not only does it operate Catholic schools, but through its NGO Yasukda it also facilitates the construction and renovation of government-run schools, acting as an intermediary between school councils and government funding agencies. I also encountered priests acting in a para-legal capacity. In one case, in which an individual was murdered, priests assisted the investigation by gathering evidence when the community refused to cooperate with police officers who are from other islands. In all spheres of secular life, I was told that people trust and obey Catholic clergy – they are perceived to be honest, open, and compared to the government, unlikely to cheat people.

identity card. Failing to subscribe to one of these religions is to be branded a communist, a label to be greatly feared. For more on this see (Schwarz 2004: 20-2).
The church has a strong and clearly articulated hierarchy expressing structures of power and authority found in other institutions such as government and village savings and loans groups. Catholics in Bajawa belong to one of two parishes (Paroki) which are further divided into areas. At the area level pastoral care is shared by senior women and men who have authority in aspects of the lives of the faithful, from Catechist teaching and education to financial matters. These area representatives visit kombas groups to discuss issues and activities. Kombas (komunitas umat basis) are ‘Catholic prayer groups’ which generally meet once a week to sing and pray, although this escalates to every night during the festive months of May and October. During meetings kombas groups discuss and offer religious advice on a range of social issues such as marriage problems, teen pregnancy, household finances, education, and health. While providing pastoral care the area heads answer and report to the parish pastoral board (DPP- Dewan Pastoral Paroki). It is through the kombas groups and secular services delivery that the teachings of the church reach into the lives of Ngadha people. With such a pervasive presence in areas such as health and education the Catholic Church is a major economic force in the district and holds great sway in the lives of Ngadha people. Such influence is grounded in the long history of the Catholic Church on Flores.

Writing in the discipline of missiology, Maku (1967) has traced the spread of Catholicism across Flores to Portuguese Dominicans who arrived on nearby Solor islands in 1550 and quickly expanded their mission to eighteen stations in the region. After the 1859 pact of Lisbon the Dutch took over pastoral care of the then 9,000 Catholics on Flores, before handing over the Larantuka mission to the Jesuit order in 1863. The Jesuits then extended missionary activities on Flores to Maumere (1875), Sikka (1884), Lela (1893), Nita (1905), and Koting (1912). In 1913 missionary work on Flores was again passed on, this time to the German Catholic SVD (Society of the Divine Word). By this time, the presence and power of the church was well established and on Flores alone there were more than 30,000 Catholic converts, six stations, five mission schools (there was also six government schools), two technical training workshops for boys, two boarding houses to teach girls household skills, and training centre for catechists.
Under the 1913 Flores-Sumba contract with the Dutch colonial administration, the Catholic and Protestant Churches received funding to cover seventy-five percent of the cost of providing education across both islands (Webb 1990: 7). The colonial government thus endorsed the SVD to operate schools on Flores, expanding its role in civil society. In 1935, SVD built a hospital in Lela and in 1947 began training boys and girls to be nurses. In subsequent years, SVD opened farms and plantations across Flores in Hokeng, Nangahale and Todabelu, imported seeds and tools, and bred cattle (Maku 1967: 16). Missionaries also opened workshops and trained boys in shoemaking, dressmaking, blacksmithing, carpentry, electrical work, auto mechanic repairs, driving, and painting (Deidhae 2001: 42). The SVD also created transport, trade, and communication links. Church-owned ships plied inter-island routes with larger boats travelling to Surabaya and Jakarta on Java. The scope of the work of the Catholic Church was therefore unquestionably extensive, bringing some unintended consequences. Van Bekkum is quoted in Maku as saying that the Catholic Church '...with such an economy we form as it were a state within a state; and this has caused anger and jealousy of many "enlightened" native people...They feel themselves humiliated by the very fact that we achieve so much' (Maku 1967: 24).

After the Second Vatican Council was held in 1962, the church adopted a policy of openness and there was a marked shift in the way missionaries operated. Previously intolerant of other cultures, missionaries were encouraged to promote Catholicism with or through local cultural practices. Locally, people refer to the *inkulturasi* of the church, the enculturation of Catholic belief and culture. Interestingly, the Catholic Church has made a number of concessions to the state in order to maintain its presence within the country. Contrary to its teachings, the Catholic Church officially condones the use of contraception in Indonesia in line with government policy (Deidhae 2001: 90). Furthermore, the majority of clergy are now indigenous Indonesians after a ban on foreign Christian missionaries came into effect in the early 1970’s. At that time foreign clergy in the country were offered the choice to leave or become Indonesian citizens. Some opted for citizenship but only a small number are still alive today. Having converted the

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13 The suffix *-asi* is a commonly used to incorporate foreign words into the Indonesian language
majority of the population, the Catholic Church maintains its position as the foremost religious institution on Flores. The provision of goods and services continues and the SVD runs an important publishing house, bookstore, and education facilities on the island.

Creation of Bajawa town and the role of the State
Before focussing specifically on Bajawa it is worth noting briefly the arrival of other external forces and the colonisation of Flores. Prior to colonisation by the Dutch, the western part of the island of Flores was ostensibly claimed by the Kingdom of Bima (Sumbawa) backed by the powerful Sultan of Goa in South Sulawesi (Maku 1967: 136). At that time South East Asia, was divided into local polities and Manggarai, to the west of Ngada, was on the extreme margin of the periphery, far from the influence and control of the centre. Petrus, a senior clansman and lay scholar of Ngadha culture and history explained there were peaceful relations between the people of Bajawa and the Manggarai region with Wae Mokil, Mborong, near Aimere in the south demarcated as the extent of Manggarai lands.

Portuguese and later English traders operated along the south Ngada coast peddling gold and swords in exchange for animals, slaves, cloves, and pepper. Neither these traders nor the missionaries gained a foothold in the uplands of Bajawa. Colonial powers had no early motivation to gain control of the land and the Ngada people were perceived as hostile and cannibals, a myth commonly held at that time about people of the interior of Indonesian islands (Molnar 1994: 13). Prior to Dutch colonisation then, Ngada was a transitional geographic zone between Portuguese influence to the east and Bima to the west (Anon. n.d.). Ngada as a territory and Ngadha as an ethnic group are labels conferred by Dutch colonialists and then later by anthropologists as; ‘...emic group identities were constructed with reference to a local mountain, river, or other geographical feature’ (Schroeter 2005: 319).

There was no form of unified governance among the Ngadha prior to Dutch rule. Clans and residential groups fought or collaborated in shifting alliances. While
two Dutch expeditions tried and failed to survey Ngada while looking for tin ore in 1889 and 1890, (Molnar 1994:13), they did not gain a foothold in the interior of the district until they launched a military campaign in 1907. Once they gained control of the land that is now Bajawa, they created a petty monarchy from local leaders, as they had done in many other areas of Indonesia, in order to control the indigenous population (Daeng 1985: 293). Initially, the Dutch appointed a non-Ngadha king to ‘rule’ the area sparking a war between rivals and followers until Java Tai of Bajawa was appointed king in 1914 (Djawanai 1980: 380). Two successive kings, Pea Mole and Siwi Mole ruled prior to the creation of the Government of Indonesia which dismantled petty monarchies across the recently constituted nation (Anon. n.d.: 5).

With the arrival of the Dutch colonial forces in Bajawa came foreign traders who brought gunpowder, guns, and knives which they exchanged for Portuguese gold and slaves. On the north coast, traders from the Kingdoms of Goa (Makassar) and Bima exchanged goods with the coastal residents of Riung (northern Ngada). The Keo people in the south-east of Ngada district sporadically traded slaves, rice, and maize with maritime Bugis and Goanese merchants in exchange for metal currency, gold and gunpowder (Forth 2001: 18 referencing Arndt 1963).

The Dutch lost control of Flores to the Japanese during WWII. Japanese soldiers set up camps in Bajawa and Ngadha people were co-opted or forced to provide for all their needs. One of the oldest residents of Bomolo kampung described his experience as a labourer for the Japanese, marching to Mbay on the north coast to clear an airstrip. No exact dates from this period are available specifically for Bajawa but Holland surrendered Indonesia to the Japanese army from March 1942 until August 1945 (Schwarz 2004: 4-5). Following the end of the Japanese occupation the Dutch briefly regained control of the island. The Netherlands Indies Civil Administration and their appointed kings created a Flores Federation which was dissolved with the creation of Negara Indonesia Timor, the Indonesian forerunner to the current Indonesian province of Nusa Tenggara Timor (Daeng 1985: 291).
Since 1950 the Republic of Indonesia has governed the archipelago from the capital Jakarta on the island of Java. The influence of the national government reaches into the daily lives of people in Bajawa through elected officials and public servants who administer local government policies and programs through various departments in charge of the military, police, law, infrastructure, health, education, taxation, and subsidies. While many local politicians and civil servants (pegawai) are from the district they serve, they are often perceived as a separate self-serving class. A generalised perception of the state bureaucracy is that it operates in and of itself for the benefit of its officials and a face-less government located in Kupang (the provincial capital on Timor Island), or Jakarta. Most people have contacts within the government; indeed this is thought to be essential to achieve anything to do with bureaucracy and administration. Power within the government is personalised so it is with good reason that local people avoid ‘cold calling’ on a government department, and will try to seek out some form of private connection to a civil servant in that office.

From the point of view of the pegawai, they are operating in an over-staffed, poorly-funded environment. Within the bureaucracy the community is imagined as an under-developed entity that is lazy and uneducated. This view is borne out of a history of state discourse which ‘...equated the poverty and economic backwardness of newly independent postcolonial societies with “tradition” (Robinson 1986: 3). Both in interviews and during public talks I heard civil servants listing off what is lacking in the community and what is needed to develop it, despite the fact that many in ‘the community’ work for ‘the government’. Of course this stylised grouping of ‘the government’ or ‘the community’ is academically problematic but I report it here as this is a divide often cited in casual conversation including with bureaucrats. This is not a phenomenon confined to Bajawa, as Schwartz makes clear:

...there is not much of a sense of shared accomplishment. Many Indonesians see themselves simply as the objects of government policies, rather than partners in a national effort. Thus, while they are pleased with and proud of the nation’s economic progress, they are not especially confident about the future, an insecurity founded in the knowledge that they have little control over their own destiny.

(Schwarz 2004: 246)
The economic base of human life in Ngada is in many respects the antithesis of government led development and market economics with its tenets of growth and scarcity respectively. To Ngadha people, the economy is ultimately controlled by God and Ancestors, with human volition exercised through moral behaviour and correct ancestral worship. The difference between community and government understandings of the motors of the economy means that government often disparages the non-cash economy which is predominately beyond its reach. The economy of Ngadha people is relegated to historical time, backward and traditional, a hindrance to the progress of the modern Indonesian State. This devaluation of the local is often a necessary precursor to the development of a market based economy. As Esteva states 'establishing economic value requires the devaluing of all other forms of social existence...the whole construction of economics stands on the premise of scarcity, postulated as a universal condition of social life' (Esteva 1995: 18). State ideologies of development have entered into the local imagination, and the individualisation of the economy is illustrated by the comments of a civil servant:

People are capable. If their children want to go to school there is no money but if there’s a party, then there’s money. When I go out the back of people’s houses I see pigs and other livestock [in other words capital]. But they say “What’s the use of going to school, there’s already a President. If my children go to school what will we get?

At present the newly empowered district government has, in line with the approaches and thinking of mainstream development agencies, prioritised credit provision to individuals or small groups to start small-scale enterprise, or for inputs to increase agricultural production. The latest program, Gerbang Emas (Golden Gateway [to prosperity]) is being rolled out across the district and is discussed in Chapter 5 along with other credit programs offered by the central government since the 1970s. Furthermore, BAPPEDA (Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah) the government agency for regional development and planning, has two programs that are now also supplying funding for community development. The first of these, credit tahan pangan (food security), assists farmers to increase agricultural production. Farmers can borrow up to ten million rupiah from a total fund of two hundred million rupiah (that is help for a
minimum of twenty farmers) at an interest rate of six to twelve percent per year. The second program credit *pedagang kecil* (small traders or co-ops), lends individuals or groups up to ten million rupiah from a total fund of five hundred million rupiah at an interest of six to twelve percent per year.

**Church and State: Collaboration**

To this point I have been describing how state and church now exert substantial influence over Ngadha people’s daily lives including the economy. Having said this, it must be noted that the values and authority of these institutions are also open to contestation and resistance. For example, the majority Ngadha are law abiding, God fearing people but they engage in gambling which is strictly prohibited by both church and state, which proselytise about the evils of gambling and threaten sanction including fines, jail terms, and the wrath of God.

These two powerful institutions have operated in unison to affect change in a number of respects other than attempting to curb gambling. As noted earlier the Catholic Church acquiesced to the government promotion of contraception as part of its population control program. The church also collaborated with the Indonesian government to introduce the ‘healthy house’ (*rumah sehat*) program in the early 1970’s. Dramatic and successful, this initiative provided financial assistance and many of the people of Bajawa moved out of wooden thatched *adat* homes into concrete houses with tin roofs. While the impetus and funds came from the government, the church also promoted the program. Priests would not marry a couple until they had built a house that conformed to certain supposedly hygienic standards (Deidhae 2001: 71).

Land ownership is another domain where the government view of territory and economics is pervasive however the importance of place in Ngadha cosmology cannot be emphasised enough. Corporately held clan land includes named locations, ritual sites, ancestral graves, and particular places which are home to, or associated with, Ancestors or spirits which are fundamental to the continuity of Ngadha life. In the secular realm disagreements frequently emerge over rights to
occupy or cultivate land. A variety of strategies are now available to secure control of land.

In the past, land was appropriated through inter-personal or inter-clan negotiations and warfare. This changed in the 1900s, when the Dutch colonial administration gained control of, and built on land which is now Bajawa town. State appropriation of communal land may still occur today. One civil servant reported to me how on at least one occasion, Indonesian State bureaucrats who were known and trusted individuals, acquired clan land near the town centre for government use based on verbal agreements which were never honoured. Under the 1962 Basic Agrarian Law (Hooker 1978), compensation for state appropriation of land is payable but whether or not these agents of the state realised that compensation would not be forthcoming is not clear. Whatever their understanding, it has left resentment and mistrust amongst Bajawa people. State appropriation of land also feeds into a perception of ‘us’ and ‘them’ with the state cast as a self-serving institution in and for itself.

The Indonesian government has instituted a system of documenting and certifying individual land title known as hak sertifikat (McWilliam 2006a). Disputes are common and court rulings are not always recognised by communities. Transferring land ownership from corporately held clan or family land to individual titles is not a smooth process. Feuds and physical violence are not uncommon; land and property may be set on fire, and people injured or killed. These instances are commonly reported in the local print media, echoing similar accounts from other districts on Flores. While land and resources use is the primary method for asserting ownership, tracing genealogies of ownership and recognition by others is also important to support and challenge claims. For example land boundaries may be marked by physical objects such as a rock, tree or stream, but acknowledgement and agreement about the boundary with the neighbouring owner is also fundamental if staking a claim.

Across Ngada district space is carved-up into government administrative units adding another criss-crossing, overlapping layer to local practices of land ownership and use. Clan land ownership and use is governed by adat as
interpreted by local leaders and is contestable and changeable over time. Fixed government administrative units do not coincide with adat defined boundaries nor are they adaptable to the fluid nature or different sources of authority stemming from adat. New Order administrative boundaries carved up family plots and clan owned land but since decentralisation these arrangements are reverting back to previous boundaries marked out by clan and descent. New regional laws are also reinvigorating the role of the kecamatan (sub-district) where previously the kepala desa (village head) would go straight to the kabupaten (district) administrative level.

Clan land is corporately owned by clan members and is both a physical site and a symbol of interdependence and unity. Kampung land is to be held in remembrance of Ancestors (who until recently were buried in the courtyard, a practice that is now banned due to state health regulations), and for the use of all those who currently live and visit the kampung. It is also held in trust for clan members yet to be born. Some clans have portioned off their land for individual certification but most clans are resisting this as it paves the way for land to sold to anybody without clan approval (Ngani & Djawanai 2004: 87). Bomolo kampung land is owned by the two resident clans; Paru and Dala, and is connected primarily to Paru saka pu'u and Dala saka lobo. Kampung land incorporates an adjacent cemetery and large stand of bamboo trees (an important resource for firewood and construction materials) though the exact boundaries are not clear. Residents do not have the right to sell their house or the land within the kampung complex.

One way the Ngadha people of Bajawa differentiate themselves from other neighbouring groups with a similar language and culture is through the prevalence of matrilineal inheritance and residence. Even other Ngada groups, such as in nearby Were, Mataloko operate on a patrilineal system. Matrilineal inheritance and descent is found only in Bajawa, Jerebu'u, Aimere, and Golewa. Petrus explained that matrilocal residence came about in the 1930’s and previously had been exclusively patrilocal. As life expectancy increased due to improvements in health care and a reduction in inter-clan warfare, it became less crucial to attract women to the house to work and procreate. Hence the desire to pay bridewealth
reduced and families allowed men to leave the house and join other clans, thereby reducing bridewealth exchanges.

Farming land is inherited along family lines but ultimately owned by the clan. If members shirk responsibilities to the clan or house their inherited land can be returned to the clan (Ngani & Djawanai 2004: 87) In Bomolo clan members own adjacent plots of farming land around the kampung, and on the other side of town. Contestation over rights to use land is common with disputes often requiring the intervention of a third party. As the leader of an RW – Rukun Warga (administrative unit approximately the size of a suburb), Willi was often called on to mediate disputes over land rights and access amongst family members. In a similar vein Willi himself was a complainant in a dispute with his brother-in-law over the ownership of a tree requiring the intervention of another senior man.

Ngadha Communities
To discover the ‘true’ or ‘correct’ version of history becomes an impossible task when dealing with oral histories which tend to mythologise events. Senior Ngadha women and men are custodians of knowledge yet their interpretations are open to contestation and counter-claims. Ancestral links, age, sex, reputation, experience, and political ability provide the authority to speak and define the truth of a matter, be that a mundane point of history or a serious dispute over land ownership. When discussing historical events with local people, I was repeatedly referred to senior men such as Petrus and Willi when discussions reached the boundaries of their knowledge, or the extent to which they were comfortable divulging information. Some history is secret and Ngadha believe they may be destroyed should such knowledge be revealed (Djawanai 1980: 5). This culture of secrecy is further corroborated by an ethnomusicologist who noted that the Ngadha songs he recorded are suggestive of deeper meanings concealed from the uninitiated (Kunst 1942: 80).

One way Ngadha define themselves is by differentiating their identity from other adjacent groups. The district of Ngada is conceptualised in the broadest sense as home to three ethnic groups: Ngadha is the south and centre of the district, Riung
in the north, and Nage-Keo to the east. Language is a key marker of ethnic identity. Ethno-linguistic research identifies the above groups, as well as Rembong, So’a, Keo, and Eastern Ngadha speakers, as dwelling within the district (Grimes et al 1997). The number of speakers of Ngadha language has been estimated at 60,000 (Grimes et al 1997: 88) though other research places the figure closer to 100,000 (Smedal 1994: 7). There are however finer variations within the Ngadha language category in different locations. My Flores Mother, Maria claimed she could not understand the language of Ngadha people further inland where her and my Flores Father, Willi have rice fields as, for example, the people there would say ‘ghau’ instead of ‘kau’.

Historical origins are kin-group specific and further differentiate the Ngadha people of Bajawa from other Ngadha in the district. Schroeter’s research among the Ngadha of Langga revealed the title ‘Ngadha’ to be something of a Dutch invention following the instillation of the first king who happened to be from the Ngadha clan (2005: 318). The people of Bomolo classify themselves specifically as Bajawa Ngadha, a sub group who trace their origins back to Magdha, on the east coast of India. I was unable to elicit a description or location of Magdha on a map. This history is based on a narrative of the arrival of an Indian man Djawa Meze at what is now the small town of Aimere on the south coast, about an hour’s travel from Bajawa via a steep winding road. Local people still talk of a site recognised as the place where Djawa Meze lived in Aimere, but I was informed that it is not visited or maintained in anyway. Djawa Meze reportedly had fourteen children, seven girls and seven boys. The seven boys went to Java while the seven girls stayed in Aimere. With the exception of those who have married in, members of the two Bomolo clans trace their origins to one of Djawa Meze’s seven daughters.

Significant to the ethnographer is that in contrast to all neighbouring ethnic groups, Ngadha do not arrange marriage along the lines of wife-givers and wife-takers (Smedal 1994: 20). Rather, rank and social reputation are primary considerations for potential couples and their families. That the couple is three generations removed if there is a family connection is also a concern. Participation in ritual activity is also important for the maintenance of Ngadha
identity. One suggestion of the clearest indication of 'being Ngada' is participation in the yearly Reba ritual and celebration (Schroeter 2005: 319).

Ritual activity forms an important focus of this ethnographic study and is linked to conceptualisations of clan affiliations. In Bomolo the sacrificial post, Ngadhu, and offering house, Bhaga have a striking physical presence in the *kampung*. On the up-sloping half of the central courtyard in Bomolo is the sacrificial Ngadhu post (Plate 3). This is an intricately carved wooden post covered with a small pointed thatched roof resembling a half closed umbrella. The other half of the courtyard slopes downwards and has the Bhaga offerings house (Plate 4). Houses line the central courtyard in which the Ngadhu and Bhaga lie opposite each other. In this sense Bomolo fits the category of a traditional Ngada village as houses make a rectangular border around a central village courtyard on an up-slope - down-slope axis (Molnar 1994: 77).

In order to elaborate how clan membership relates to economic relations I now turn to ethnographic detail on the Ngadhu, Bhaga and associated cosmology as described by Molnar (1994). Molnar's research was conducted with the Ngadha people of Golewa, who further distinguish themselves within the ethnic category of Ngadha as Hoga Sara, but who share the same material culture and cosmology as the Ngadha people of Bajawa. Directly below the cross beam of the roof of the Ngadhu a human face is carved into the wooden post. Below this are carved images of family heirlooms such as gold chains, earrings, pendants and belts. The post is associated with the masculine and buffalo are tethered here during ritual sacrifices. The post is named after the founding male clan ancestor or his first-born son and is representative of this ancestor and the clan. The offering house, Bhaga, is modelled on a traditional house. Elders also meet here before going to war or to collect a tree trunk for a new sacrificial post. The Bhaga is compared to a womb, and is named after the female founding ancestor. In this respect the female founding ancestor gives birth to all members of the clan and so stands for the undivided whole of the clan.
Plate 3: Ngadhu
Plate 4: Bhaga
The female Bhaga and male Ngadhu are seen as husband and wife and are symbols of clan organisation and identity. The offering house signifies the wholeness of the clan and its relations to other clans, and the sacrificial post signifies differentiation and relationships within the clan. They are also seen as the material embodiment of the Ancestors who are crucial to the continuity of the clan and vica versa. Ancestral blessing comes in the form of fertility and is dependant on the correct construction and maintenance of these material embodiments of the Ancestors, as well as the proper performance of rituals and rites. Initially the Bhaga must be constructed before the Ngadhu as a marker of the primacy of wholeness over differentiation.

Ngadha cosmology divides the world into three parts: the invisible world of the Ancestors are associated with the feminine and dwell in objects in the village, the ritual altar located in the field, large trees and rocks, water sources, and below the earth; the sky which is associated with the masculine creator, Dewa and; the physical world of human beings in the village and the fields. Prior to the influence of Christianity, Dewa was seen as far away. He was only to be contacted to witness oaths as contact was fraught with danger, though he would be invited to eat with humans and Ancestors at rituals (Molnar 1994: 243). Ancestors are more proximate and can be addressed directly. Since Christianisation, which began in earnest in Ngada in 1912, Catholicism has been assimilated into Ngadha cosmology and Dewa, a name used by the church to represent the Catholic God, can now be addressed directly through Catholic prayer. In nearby Manggarai, Erb found that ‘...experiences of contact with world religions, and the politics of a modern state has seen life become divided...into religion (agama), tradition (adat) and culture (kebudayaan), in a way different from the past’ (Erb 1998: 34). The fusion of ancestor worship and a monotheistic religion like Catholicism is best summed up by a saying used on another Eastern Indonesian island, Ambon: ‘It is important to pray to the One, but it's often more important not to anger the Others’ (Deane 1979: 123).

Everyday Catholic religious practice is predominately the work of women; many more women than men go to church on Sunday and women work in groups to clean and maintain the church. At my home in Bomolo the front room where
guests are received is adorned with religious iconography. Colourful posters of Jesus and Mary decorate the walls and in one corner there is a small table with more pictures, a statue of Mary nursing Jesus, prayer books, and plastic flowers. My Flores family, mostly Maria and her son Markus, sometimes light candles and pray here privately. Prayer to the Catholic God does not however ensure well-being and fertility, and the Ancestors are still regarded as the source of continuity. Ancestors have the power to sanction the living by causing illness, and after death holding their souls within the village. They also impose sanctions for immoral behaviour, failure to perform rituals or performing them incorrectly, incorrect distribution of food or valuable items, or breaking an oath. Of particular interest here is that sanctions also occur if house construction does not follow adat. This reflects the manner in which mutual cooperation activities and labour exchanges are connected to more than just physical labour. It is not enough that workers, from local and other villages contribute labour. They must cooperate and contribute labour in the right way and in the correct order to ensure that the wrath of the Ancestors is not incurred. Ancestor worship and Catholicism are therefore both fundamental aspects of being Ngadha, creating a shared sense of identity. This comprehension of the world does not begin and end with spirituality and sense of self, but extends into all other facets of life including the economy. In order to tease out the complexity of the Bajawa economy I explore it through the diverse economy framework which maps local economic practices often ignored by a singular capitalist vision (Gibson-Graham 1996, 2006a).

**Anthropology and Diverse Economy Analysis**

The analysis of the economy as plural and diverse has been taken up by anthropology through the alternative economies project as described in Chapter 1. This and other projects have encouraged an ongoing dialogue between post-Marxist feminists in human geography who created this framework and a range of anthropologists. Yang for example draws on the concept of the diverse economy to discuss non-profit ritual expenditure in Wenzhou Province, on the coast of south eastern China (2000). She uses this broad economic framework to explain why rapid economic development and prosperity was associated with an explosion of ritual consumption rather than capital accumulation. In a similar vein
but using different terminology Sullivan documents the role of women and men in
the formal, informal, and hidden economy in Yogyakarta, Java (Sullivan 1989,
1994). Women predominate in the informal sector which Sullivan explained as
crucial in addressing the basic needs of the urban poor.

Attempts to theorise economic practices in more inclusive ways are of course not
new to anthropology. Gudeman in particular divides the economy into two
different but interrelated realms, that of the community and the market (Gudeman
2001). He defines the community economy as made up of transactions that
involve real, on the ground associations and solidarities, constituted through
social relationships and contextually defined values. This is in contrast to the
market economy which consists of anonymous short term exchanges that are
distant, impersonal, global, and abstracted from the social context. (Gudeman
2001:1). In the dominant market paradigm ‘...government holds a regulatory role
but is not an immediate player. Communal transactions, to the extent they exist or
are recognised represent irrationalities, frictions, hindrances or "externalities" to a
system which is otherwise efficient' (Gudeman 2001: 6).

Gudeman’s analysis defines four value domains; base, social relationships, trade,
and accumulation. Of these domains the base is of particular interest here as it
highlights a diverse range of practices including; a community’s shared interests,
lasting resources such as land and water, produced goods, ideational constructs
including knowledge, technology, laws, practices, skills and customs, agreements,
and beliefs that provide a structure for all the domains (Gudeman 2001: 7). In
theorising the economy Gudeman, like Gibson-Graham, shifts his analysis beyond
a narrow focus on the market to value other domains that sustain livelihoods. As
discussed in Chapter 1, Gibson-Graham developed the diverse economy
framework (Figure 2) as an heuristic tool for mapping the economy.
The framework also enables a (re)valuing of practices posited as non-economic by exposing these practices as principal rather than peripheral components of the economy. Such a reading unhinges the understanding of the economy from capitalocentric interpretations. Presented as a table in Figure 2, the diverse economy framework is most intelligible as a matrix. The three columns detail transactions, labour and organisational forms. The first row of cells in the framework represents the economic realm of formal market transactions, wage labour, and capitalist enterprises as discussed above. In the bottom two rows the alternative and non-capitalist economic realms are teased out to draw attention to activities which sustain people lives, and form a significant part of the economy.

When the Bajawa economy is mapped on to the diverse economy framework, it is clear that the majority of what sustains the people of Bajawa is not found in, or
reliant upon the capitalist market (Figure 3). It is in the categories of alternative and non capitalist economic activity that we find the bulk of livelihood strategies. Here lies the strength of this re-conceptualisation of the economy as it makes visible a raft of other-than-capitalist approaches to making a living. It also brings community-based economic strategies into the present, wrestling economic practices away from the behemoth of 'tradition' associated with a previous age regarded as backward, primitive, archaic, outdated. These other-than-capitalist practices and strategies prevalent in Bajawa are outlined in this chapter, and are fleshed out further in Chapters 3 and 4.

Using the diverse economy framework I have painted a broad picture of the Bajawa economy (Figure 3). While the people of Bomolo do seek cash work and manufactured goods in the market place of Bajawa, they are also committed to maintaining kampung-based practices of interdependence. Cash income and purchased goods are frequently used to support and provision practices of interdependence highlighting the coexistence of multiple economic strategies in this location. Gregory argues that the coexistence (or in his words, coevalence) of economic forms is largely ignored in anthropological writing (Gregory 1997: 43). The diverse economy framework exposes the capitalist market as only one component of the economic practices that sustain people's lives. This is clearly explicated by Gibson-Graham using the metaphor of an iceberg (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 70). The capitalist market constitutes the exposed tip of an economic iceberg with the majority of economic transactions especially those grounded in moral or ethical principles located outside or hidden below the surface. Following is a more detailed discussion of the practices listed in the above table.
### Figure 3: The Diverse Economy of Bajawa
*(developed in collaboration with the NGO Sannusa)*

#### Transactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Wage</th>
<th>Enterprise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Agricultural exports</td>
<td>-Pegawai (government bureaucrats)</td>
<td>-Pedagang Cina (Chinese Traders – may have lived on Flores for many generations but locally are differentiated based on ethnicity and business acumen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Local sale of agricultural produce</td>
<td>-Pegawai NGO (non-government workers)</td>
<td>-Pedagang Prabadi (private non-Chinese traders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Cooperatives (see Chapter 6)</td>
<td>-Pegawai Swasta (private employees)</td>
<td>-Pemilik (other business owners who employ staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Bank BNI, BRI, BPD (financial services)</td>
<td>-Kerja kontrak (contract work)</td>
<td>-Kontraktor (contractors for public works such as road construction, development programs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Pedagang Eceran (temporary street vendors)</td>
<td>-Sore kasih: upah harian (work paid daily)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Sembako:sembilan bahan pokok (small stalls selling basic commodities)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Retail stores, restaurants and hotels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Mobile vendors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Alternative Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative Paid</th>
<th>Alternative Capitalist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Ijon (produce sold at a reduced price prior to the harvest)</td>
<td>-Bupati fund (discretionary funds allocated by district head)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Second hand clothes retailers</td>
<td>-Cooperatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Papa Geu (exchange of goods)</td>
<td>-Sekolah Katolik (Catholic schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Renternir (high interest private money lenders)</td>
<td>-Sekolah Negeri (state schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Artsan (saving groups)</td>
<td>-State run water and electricity supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Cooperatives (see Chapter 6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Gambling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-market</th>
<th>Unpaid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Kupon putih (white coupon lottery)</td>
<td>-Mutual assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Bola guling (rolling ball)</td>
<td>-Religious Duties, such as cleaning graves and the church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Card games</td>
<td>-Mementa Mori (labour for funeral. Also name of groups who save money for funerals and/or have a stock of kitchen utensils and crockery for funeral events which is rented out and may be free or discounted for members)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Cock fighting</td>
<td>-Housework (clear gender roles in the division of labour with the majority of housework performed by women. Men responsible for construction and maintenance of house structure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Horse racing</td>
<td>-Titip rumah, tornak, anak oleh tetangga atau keluarga (caring for home, animals, children by neighbour or family, predominately the responsibility of women. Men will nurse and play with young children and preform other tasks in the absence of women)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Non-capitalist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-capitalist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Orang kerja untuk diri sendiri (self employed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Non-government organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-P3A–Perkumpulan Petani Pemakai Air (farmer water user groups)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Non-market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Cars/motorbikes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Large-scale colonial or indigenous trade and exploitation of resources is not a feature of the local economic history. Geographically and politically people subsisted and were organised into clan groups with associated inter-clan warfare, slaving, and trading. Inter-clan warfare continues today but in the early 1900’s clan leadership was superseded by the authoritarian rule of the Dutch, followed briefly by the Japanese and then Jakarta.

There is a history and ongoing enterprise of small-scale trading with migrant traders or seafarers from Southern Sulawesi through small seaports on the north Ngada coast. More recently, imported goods arrive from Java mostly from the trading port of Surabaya. Trucks laden with raw agricultural produce (including rice, coffee, beans, peanuts) travel by road to the larger ports of Ende or Labuanbajo then are transported on ferries to Surabaya and return with a host of manufactured goods from Java, China, Taiwan and elsewhere.

Economic out-migration does occur although there are no official statistics on which to gauge the extent of this strategy. Young men and women travel to other parts of Flores, the Indonesian archipelago or sometimes overseas in order to seek their fortune or gain knowledge either in the form of education or experience. Immigration is also evident, with many small business owners from Java or Sumatra engaging in a range of activities such as shoe repairs, cooked foods, and gold trading. Javanese women move around town with bicycles laden with jamu health tonics.

Tourism is a small niche industry which slumped following the 1997 financial crisis and has never fully recovered. In 2002, domestic tourists made up approximately 60% of the 3,577 tourists that visited Ngada (Badan-Pusat-Statistik 2003). Foreign tourists, predominately European, typically stay in Bajawa for one night on a trip across the island of Flores. From Bajawa, tourists are directed to the Ngadha villages of Langga, Wogo, and Bena where material culture is viewed in the form of woven cloth, traditional homes and the Ngadhu and Bhaga village complex.
The main wage labour sector in Bajawa is the government. Opportunities for casual unskilled day labouring are also open to men in urban house and road construction. Besides government and contract labour, people earn cash through self employment. While people from other locations may come to trade, women from Bajawa dominate the town market selling fresh and dried foods. Both local women and men trade at the fish market, on-selling produce trucked in from both the north and south coasts. Most transport is locally owned by men who may also employ others to drive motorbike taxis (ojek), small mini-buses (bemo), and trucks which are used to carry people and goods.

Wage labour and regular market trading are open to a small minority. So how do people make a living? The cliché of working to live rather than living to work is appropriate here. Making a living in Bajawa for most individuals generally involves a combination of economic strategies deployed at different times of the year or at particular points in their life. Subsistence agriculture is the main source of food yet there are many other ways people fulfil their needs.

**Transactions**

As the administrative centre of Ngada district, Bajawa is a collection and distribution point for agricultural produce destined for local and/or export markets. This capitalist trade is a primary source of cash for many Ngadha people. This income pays for school fees, health care and a host of other goods and services. Increasingly cash is used to augment other-than- capitalist activities for example to hire PA systems and crockery for ceremonies.

The town market is dominated by women who buy bulk quantities of produce to sell on. These traders pay a nominal fee for the space they occupy either in wooden stalls or on the ground where they roll out blue tarpaulins on which to display the produce of the day. Raw produce is also bought ‘at the farm gate’ by mobile traders or sold to bulk traders in town. Bulk produce, including rice, coffee, candlenuts, cloves, vanilla, cashews, and dried beans are shipped mainly to Surabaya on the island of Java. Other produce, particularly copra is exported to domestic markets in Sulawesi via a small port in Riung in the north of Ngada.
Transactions conducted by cooperatives provide a variety of services to members including capitalist market trading. Three commercial banks that provide financial services in the district have their main shop fronts in Bajawa and small sub-branch offices scattered across the district. Retail stores, restaurants and hotels are mostly owned and run by ethnic Chinese, Sumatrans and Javanese. Mobile vendors, again drawn predominately from these non-Ngadha groups, sell fish, cakes, soups, medicinal tonics and household goods from carts, mobile stalls, bicycles, or temporary tents. Small kios (kiosk) sell basic commodities such as cooking oil, sugar, salt, soap, rice, kerosene, fish, vegetables, and cigarettes.

Beyond the formal market place, alternative and non-market transactions abound. Alternative and non-market transactions may have norms of reciprocity but can be differentiated due to the absence of rules of commensurability, and so they are open to negotiation each time by individuals (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 60-2). One example of such a transaction found throughout Indonesia and that is common in Bajawa is ijon; when farmers sell their crops prior to harvest at a lower than market rate. While this can be viewed as exploitative, it can provide ready money for cash strapped farmers without the burden of loan repayments and interest. Another burgeoning alternative market is in second-hand clothes, which more than tripled within a six months period during 2004. Petty traders, mostly internal migrants from Sulawesi buy second hand clothes by the karo (a large sack) off trading boats from Sulawesi which dock in Maumere, the biggest town on Flores, ten hours travel by road from Bajawa. Shoppers negotiate prices on an item by item basis with sellers.

Barter is a popular form of exchange, particularly amongst cash poor farmers. Amongst the Ngadha this is know as papa geu, and in Riung there is a market once a week exclusively for barter exchange. Perishable produce, mostly fruit and vegetables, is typically sold at Rp 1,000 ($A .15) or Rp 2,000 ($A .30) per bundle or small pile, with quantities and availability fluctuating with the season and harvest. One woman described this to me as the adat market where exchange between farmers and fishers is popular. Rice, vegetables and meat produced by
farmers is exchanged for fish and other marine products caught or gathered by fishers. In a study of barter on the nearby island of Lembata, Susar et al (2003) accurately describes these adat markets as operating in the middle of the swift moving currents of the free market. Exchange partners are familiar individuals and relationships may extend beyond the market place.

People often have business relationships with private money lenders. While these lenders can command extortionate rates of interest from borrowers, they are recognized as providing a valuable service in attending to the need for small, quick cash loans. This is particularly important in the event of illness or death when time is of the essence. Arisan is popular throughout Indonesia and Bajawa is no exception. Small groups of women meet, usually on a weekly basis to socialise and contribute a set amount of money. Each week it is someone’s turn to take home the pool of money until everyone has taken home the pot and the rotation starts again. Cooperatives can buy and sell in the capitalist market place but can also operate outside this realm to negotiate prices and exchanges between members and with other cooperatives and businesses. For example a weaver’s cooperative on the coast may exchange woven cloth for coffee with inland growers.

In depicting the alternative and non-market aspects of the Bajawa economy in Figure 3, I have highlighted two types of market transactions, gambling and arson, as sub-categories not present in the Gibson-Graham example of the framework. Illegal gambling is a major aspect of the alternative market in Ngada both in terms of resources and frequency. If not for religious prohibition, a strong argument could be made for the government to license and run a lottery which would significantly boost the district coffers. Given the popularity of gambling, it is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Fire is used to drive game for hunting, and is a popular method for clearing and preparing fields (McWilliam 1999). During September and October burning off occurs throughout the district in preparation for the planting season. However fire
is also used to exact revenge or express jealousy. Arson occurs frequently and is also worthy of a special attention. The local government does not have the expertise or tools to investigate the cause of fires and arson is a widespread phenomena. Property, crop and home fires are often linked to unresolved disagreements over land rights, the escalation of a conflict over another matter, or to sanction those perceived as selfish or stingy. In 2004 a dispute between citizens and the police resulted in police vehicles being set on fire. Arson is not unique to Flores and is also common on Timor and in the neighbouring province of Maluku. While this is an activity very difficult to research, it is notable that people are rarely injured or killed in such incidents, indicating that careful planning is involved on the part of the arsonist/s.

Another illegal activity, theft, falls under the heading of non-market transactions however subsistence farming is a far more important and common practice in this category. Non-market transactions are defined as those transactions where there are no rules of commensurability; goods and services are shared, harvested, given away, stolen, appropriated or (re)allocated (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 60-1). Non-market subsistence farming is the primary means by which Ngadha people feed themselves. Agricultural produce that may be sold locally or for export include includes crops (rice, tubers, corn), gardens (coffee, vegetables, fruits, herbs, spices) and animal breeding (pigs, dogs, goats, cows, buffalo, chickens, ducks. Household flows also include medicinal plants and herbs collected from fields, gardens and paths en route to these plots. Gifts are common and include everyday sharing of harvest, specific gifts for lifecycle events, and the socially important giving of gifts when returning from a trip away. Offering gifts when returning from travel is de rigueur throughout Indonesia even if only small items are brought from the traveller’s foreign destination. More recently birthday gifts for children have become fashionable amongst the small middle class along with sponsorship and prizes for sporting competitions.

Papa Tii is the exchange or provision of goods without calculating the market value. Reciprocity is implied but there is no direct or explicit expectation of return. This practice generally occurs between members of the same family or clan, and may be as simple as exchanging rice for maize, or contributing to a life-cycle
celebration for a relative. Funerals are an important event and relatives of the dead go to great lengths to ensure the safe passage of the soul to the realm of the Ancestors. *Memento Mori* is similar to *papa tii* but is activated through Catholic prayer groups who pool funds specifically for funeral costs. A bereaved group member can expect their share of the pooled funds, and receive assistance with the food and materials necessary to perform rituals and accommodate guests. The sharing or gifting of food and other goods is common at many life-cycle events such as weddings and first communion, and also at important ceremonies, for example the Reba ceremony (discussed in Chapter 3) held every year. *Vai tua*, where neighbours provide hospitality to guests visiting adjacent homes is a practice the people I lived with in Bomolo were proud of, and is an important expression of Ngadha hospitality.

**Labour**

Wage labour is typically associated with workers who do not own the means of production and their surplus labour is appropriated by a capitalist owner. In Ngadha the single biggest employer in the district is the government. Positions in the government are highly sought after as one of the few opportunities for ongoing, full time employment. Staff in non-government and retail outlets may have less job security but in many instances work is regular and on-going. Infrastructure projects, particularly road works which are an ongoing concern due to the poor quality of material and environmental conditions provide casual employment for men. Other unskilled labouring opportunities arise regularly for men such as on construction sites or as security guards.

Alternative paid labour categorises employment where a worker’s surplus labour is not appropriated by another. Examples include worker cooperatives such as Loboleke in Bajawa (discussed in Chapter 6), or producer/marketing cooperatives that sell produce from a range of self-employed activities including farming and weaving. Profit is returned to the producer(s) with a small portion retained for administration, incidental costs, and to fund a social gathering held annually to review finances and activities.
Whether or not they are otherwise employed, all Ngadha people are self-employed in some form of agriculture or animal husbandry; it is simply the extent to which they are involved that varies. My family in Bomolo subsisted primarily on the food they grew and the animals they raised. At the other end of the spectrum a family who has a number of members earning cash incomes may pay others to farm their land, but would still keep some animals around the house such as chickens and ducks, and at a minimum pigs. Small businesses are run by self-employed individuals and families including street and market vendors, kiosks, carpentry, tailoring, and motorcycle taxis.

Reciprocal or unpaid labour is a common way of organising people to work. In Bomolo and throughout the district I learned of many specific names in regional languages or dialects\textsuperscript{14} to describe mutual cooperation. The cosmological foundations of reciprocal or unpaid labour are discussed in Chapter 3, along with the more specific practices and occasions in Chapter 4. People also volunteer labour in unpaid forms, however there is a social impetus to 'return the favour'. Unpaid labour may not attract cash wages but it can be argued that it is compensated for in other ways such as love, protection, emotional support, and companionship (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 62). A sense of identity and spiritual support and comfort are also rewards for unpaid labour. Ngadha people's sense of identity and spirituality is strongly linked to ancestor worship and Catholicism. Religious duties such as preparing and performing ceremonies, attending graves, cleaning and labouring at the church, are all forms of unpaid labour, can instil a sense of well being.

Keeping the house clean and its occupants fed and clothed is the unpaid work of women. Wealthier households may have servants (pembantu), women who live in the household and receive a small salary. However for the majority, housework is performed by the women of the house with men taking primary responsibility for

\textsuperscript{14} For example Nage-Keo speakers refer to \textit{papa jogho} to describe reciprocal labour without calculating the market value, Food and refreshments are supplied. If this is within the family it is called \textit{taka tyingia}. 

the construction and maintenance of the house structure. Women are also the principal child carers, often jointly sharing the responsibility with other women and girls.

**Enterprise**
The final column of the diverse economy framework details different types of enterprises differentiated on the basis of who appropriates any surpluses produced. Capitalist firms appropriate the surplus labour from their workforce. A variety of businesses in Bajawa are sizeable enough to pay a small number of employees. Ngadha people frequently refer to the skills of ethnic Chinese as accomplished in the world of business but the larger (but still comparatively small) formal business establishment such as the merchandise stores in town, hotels and trading companies are run by both Chinese and non-Chinese. Numerous public works companies are registered as businesses and if they are successful in tendering for government projects they generally employ labour on a casual basis.

Alternative capitalist enterprises are distinguished from capitalist enterprise because they allocate some of their profit to ethical practices (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 67). The ‘Bupati fund’ is drawn from the district budget to be allocated by the district head for local social and environmental programs. Cooperatives redistribute profit to members and administrative labour is often performed by cooperatives members themselves. Both public and private Catholic schools reinvest school fees in the maintenance of school buildings and student welfare. State run enterprises that supply electricity and water operate on a not-for-profit basis.

The final category to be considered is non-capitalist forms of enterprise. This includes a plethora of people who are self-employed including carpenters, tailors, shoe repairers, motorcycle taxi drivers, mobile vendors and market sellers. Self-employment can be precarious but does offer flexibility and the opportunity to earn cash income in what may otherwise be a subsistence-based existence. Self-employed individuals can elect to take time off to assist and attend important life-cycle events for kin and clan. Non-government organisations are also a form of
enterprise that are non-capitalist by definition, as they are generally not-for-profit enterprises. Lastly farmer water user groups (P3A) are non-capitalist organisations, meeting to regulate flows to wet rice fields found in a number of locations throughout the district.

**Conclusion**

Drawing on the work of Gibson-Graham I analyse the economy as diverse and plural, challenging visions of the economy as only existing within capitalist paradigms. Viewed through this lens multiple transactions, ways of performing labour, and modes of organisation become visible and are acknowledged as part of what sustains livelihoods. Different cultural logics informing economic decisions can come to light. Here it is worth noting that this approach is not anti-capitalist. The recognition of other-than-capitalist aspects of the economy does not exclude capitalist development. Rather in practice it enables a shift away from purely capitalist development logic, providing the opportunity to identify and strengthen existing skills and resources present in the community.

The diverse economy framework is a practical instrument for mapping the diversity and plurality of economic practices in place. It provides the groundwork for a more thorough analysis and understanding of the complex interplay of these practices, and the logic of the Ngadha community economy. One way of thinking about the economic logic that informs this web of practices is to examine them in light of the cultural norms and ethics that drive people to do what they do.

Gibson-Graham suggest four coordinates: necessity, surplus, consumption, and commons, as a method for discussing the ethics and logic that guides economic practices (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 88). In Chapter 3 I deploy these coordinates to interpret the ethnographic detail of an array of practices as valuable and inherent parts of the community economy. The new conceptual language of the four ethical coordinates opens up new insights to economic plurality not linked to a linear trajectory of time or model of economic development.

In Chapter 3 Gudeman's notion of the base is incorporated as part of a discussion of the Bomolo commons; the shared objects of the material world of village land
and housing, fields, the sacrificial house and post, as well as those that are less tangible; knowledge, skills, *adat*, and customs. This is includes what Gudeman has termed the *sacra*: a central part of the base which has sacred overtones such as the Crown Jewels in the United Kingdom, the American constitution or a patron saint (Gudeman 2001: 30). In Bomolo, the *sacra* comprises the ancestral heirlooms, regalia, and Ancestors who ensure fertility and continuity, embodied in the offering house and sacrificial post which is both physically and culturally the focus of Ngada identity. It is the will of the Ancestors, as defined by senior people, that determines the correct order of village life. While Ancestors exist in a different realm, they are seen as members of the community and in this respect blur the domains of base (or commons) and social relationships, which Gudeman acknowledges contribute to the constitution of each other. 'Without a commons there is no community, without a community there is no commons' (Gudeman 2001: 27). The next chapter examines in depth many of the alternative and non-capitalist practices and their foundations in the Bomolo community economy. In concert with the four ethical coordinates, this marks a shift away from neoclassical economics and other analyses that privilege the market while obfuscating other elements of the economy that sustain and reproduce life.

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15 Recall from Chapter 1 that I am using the term 'community economy' instead of the terms 'informal economy' or 'informal sector' which are more common in the literature.
Chapter 3: Foundations of Interdependence

‘If you do not work you can not eat’

Ngadha proverb

Bomolo *kampung* is in easy walking distance from the market, the heart of Bajawa. Passing through the centre of town a small grid pattern of streets is dotted with shops and government offices, quickly giving way to private homes. Following a string road out of town, privately-held residential blocks end abruptly at the edge of the corporately-owned land of Bomolo. Entering Bomolo the Ngadhu and Bhaga are striking features in the large *kampung* square that is dissected by an asphalt road. Bomolo presents a fascinating intersection, a cultural and physical cross-over point between rural and town living, *adat* and Catholic cosmology, individual and shared economies.

Five generations have now inhabited Bomolo since its establishment by the founding Ancestors. In many spheres Bomolo continues to function independently of the town. Food, wood, and medicine is sourced in the fields and surrounding land. Intra-*kampung* politics and disputes rarely require recourse to government agencies. *Adat* is grounded in the Ngadhu, Bhaga, and *kampung* earth, interpreted and administered by resident ritual experts. Catholicism is also practiced and celebrated within the Bomolo milieu with only a small proportion of residents regularly attending local church services and engaging in other pastoral activities.

However those from the *kampung* are increasingly orienting themselves to Bajawa. Water is now piped to the *kampung* from the town supply and all homes have access to electricity. Economically Bomolo residents may now look to the town as a source of waged employment and its market as a site of trading, buying and selling. They must pay taxes and are subject to Indonesian government rules and regulations. Children attend school and when ill may also attend the local health clinic. While this may appear to be quite an extensive range of goods and services accessed outside Bomolo, on a day-to-day basis these are secondary to
the labour, relationships, religiosity, and resources that make up the community commons of Bomolo.

Economically Bomolo is a site of fusion and fission both in terms of land and labour. State, church, and individually owned blocks of land surround and radiate out from the centre of Bajawa town. Bomolo is a definitive point where these clearly demarcated blocks end and corporately held land begins. With the exception of the one non-Ngadha family renting accommodation in Bomolo, each family unit in the kampung cultivates crops and has coffee and vegetable gardens. For all families this represents their major food source and is a significant part of the base of the household economy. Some families, including the family I lived with, have this agrarian base as their main source of subsistence. The majority of their labour is spent on working the land. Rice, corn, beans, peanuts, and pumpkins are all stored and eaten over time.

Bamboo is a significant resource and all houses have holdings adjacent to, or near Bomolo. It is used as a construction material in houses for both walls and roofs, and to build temporary structures such as marquees for parties and funerals. Bamboo is fashioned into containers for palm wine, chilli, betel nut, and troughs for feeding animals. Rice is now the staple food crop and older varieties of rice are planted sina mense for wet and vivi toro for dry field cultivation. Newer varieties include IR46, distributed across Indonesia as part of the Green Revolution, kisa dane and membramo all of which require capital to purchase fertilisers and pesticides. There are two local varieties of maize planted – red and white, and two newer varieties ‘hybrid’ and ‘bisma’. As with government introduced rice varieties these newer maize seeds oblige the farmer to have capital to purchase chemicals. Harvest from seed stock that requires chemical inputs are regarded as less tasty than local varieties and if they are able farmers prefer to sell this produce rather then keep it for subsistence. Corn can be stored and is also used to feed livestock around the home - chickens, ducks, and pigs. A family’s holding of livestock is also an important economic resource and source of prestige. Pigs are an important animal as they a connection to ancestral traditions, and part of Ngadha identity, rituals and reciprocity.
Responsibility for agricultural labour usually rests with the women of the house. In the home where I resided, Maria took primary responsibility for cultivating the family land about a twenty minute walk from Bomolo. In this field maize is planted annually with secondary crops of peanuts, beans, pumpkins, and tomatoes. Maria’s husband, son, and I also worked the land when extra labour was needed during planting and harvesting. The harvest is consumed seasonally and/or stored for up to twelve months. Maria may sell small amounts of excess produce to get cash in order to gamble, purchase cloth and her chewing tobacco, or the ingredients for the sirih wad she also chews; sirih leaf, pinang nuts and lime.

Tending livestock is a secondary task in terms of time but, in the case of pigs, fundamental to Ngadha identity and economy. Maria and her son Markus take primary responsibility for feeding and tending the pigs. For much of the year they feed the pigs on chokos (labu jepang) picked from the garden around the house. When this gourd is out of season the trunk of banana trees are sliced thinly and cooked in water before being fed to the animals; a time consuming task.

During the year I lived in the Bomolo Maria also wove baskets for a relative in a nearby kampung. The relative is a pegawai, a government bureaucrat, with neither the time nor skill to weave. Maria wove the baskets from plastic packing straps which she thought were far superior to natural fibre – plastic lasts longer and comes in different colours. In return for weaving the baskets Maria received a small amount of cash and extra packing straps for her own use. While showing me the basic steps of basket weaving Maria lamented that her generation will be the last that knows how to weave baskets. If this is the case there will be a significant change in a material link to the practices of the Ancestors. Similarly Maria’s husband Willi, is one of the few remaining blacksmiths in the region and makes large knives and spear tips to order.

The generation gap in Bomolo is most pronounced in terms of economic strategies. Older generations look to reciprocity and an ongoing, unaccounted for, sharing of labour and basic necessities. This interdependence is not without conflict, there is much gossip and I have spent many hours listening to women complain about the amount of work they do which is not reciprocated. One Bomolo neighbour who is renowned as a good cook has started asking for
payment for her services from all but her closest kin. Dissatisfaction is frequently directed towards the children of her generation. Maria criticises her children as they don’t keep the house clean, lamenting that ‘...I know how to work and I have done so since I was young, carrying children on my hip, bamboo on my shoulder, and wood on my head’. Her daughter Dhone often brings her daughter to the kampung to be cared for by Maria, who doesn’t feel that her efforts are reciprocated. Her daughter will arrive and leave the house in a mess, and won’t send bags of pig food (chokos) from the trees behind her house even though requested. The younger generation are more focussed on cash earnings although they maintain a certain degree of interdependence sporadically helping prepare for parties, and the planting and harvesting of crops.

At the other end of the scale from Maria and Willi are families whose household economy is more entwined with the activities of the town. Still maintaining an agricultural and livestock base, household inputs are supplemented by cash from wage labour and/or enterprises. Of the nineteen families residing in Bomolo eight have one or more members engaged in regular full-time employment. The wealthiest family in the kampung also has the most family members residing in the house; eight plus another five in a bamboo house at the back. Two people from this household earn a cash income, one as a civil servant and the other as a contract labourer. Yet another runs a small business selling fish in the market. This family’s landholdings are such that one of the men is a farm manager though he calls himself a farmer. His daily work revolves around supervising labour in a number of locations, selling, purchasing, and completing paperwork. In addition he derives income from leasing out a motorbike for passenger transport (ojek).

Ngadha adat ensures continuity and a culturally prescribed level of subsistence for all members of the Bomolo community. Interdependence is enshrined in Ngadha adat and constitutive of identity; to be Ngadha is to be interdependent to varying degrees with family, clan, neighbours, Ancestors and God. Recall that in Indonesia adat describes the customary manners and practices which extend to the legal, moral, and ethical aspects of life. Adat varies across the archipelago and its practices can be specific to particular communities. It is prescriptive institution yet open to interpretation and contestation hence adaptable and not deterministic.
In Bomolo adat is the central tenet around which the economy is negotiated and enacted. The economy in Bomolo is not a space of action or thought separate from other aspects of life. The delineation of economy, politics, society and culture into separate domains is an aspect of modernity with ideas of ‘the economy’ coalescing around production and labour in the works of Smith, Ricardo, and Marx (Escobar 1995: 60). This delineation is specific to a western\textsuperscript{16} modernity which is now embraced by many as modernity itself. All contemporary peoples are modern, what differs is their style of modernity (Ong 1996).

Re-socialising and re-politicising economy provides analytical space for the constant negotiations required to (re)create the contemporary Bomolo economy. In this sphere economic relations are indivisible from social, cultural, spiritual, and political relations. These relations are reintroduced by conceptualising the economy as a community economy ‘...an open system populated by diverse and incommensurable activities in which path-dependant relationships rather than predictable logics contribute to economic dynamism’(Gibson-Graham 2006a: 93).

The community economy is always under construction and subject to rupture, disjuncture and renewal. To be clear, community economy refers to all economies; capitalist and non-capitalist, formal and informal, personal and impersonal, local and global. So for example, international stock markets are just as influenced by relationships and unpredictable logics as Ngadha adat.

By exploring ethics and relationships, the community economy parallels the sociological concept of total prestation. Total prestation was defined by Mauss in his influential work on exchange, ‘The Gift’. He introduces the idea of total prestation to explain how exchanges involves all members of a group and everything they own and ‘...are at the same time economic, juridical, moral, aesthetic, religious, and mythological... their meaning can only be grasped if they are viewed as a complex concrete reality’ (for more see Mauss [1954] 1969).

Total prestation is reflected in the arguments of Gibson-Graham who propose the

\textsuperscript{16} In the absence of a better term I uncomfortably employ the homogenising term ‘western’ to connote the wealthier nations, their policies and practices which now have such great influence on our extensively globalised world. Regrettably this grab-bag term masks economic diversity within and between countries as well as the diverse effects, both positive and negative, of money and power exerted by the haves over the have nots, or ‘the west’ on ‘the rest’. 
community economy to affect a discursive shift from contemporary
capitalocentric views of the economy as asocial and amoral, and explore
economic diversity beyond the realm of capitalism. The potential and perpetual
vitality of community economies is emphasised by paying attention to the ethics
of interdependence inherent to varying degrees in all economies. These ethics
cluster around four coordinates to be negotiated and acted upon,

'What is necessary to personal and social survival
-How social surplus is appropriated and distributed
-Whether and how social surplus is to be produced and consumed
-How a commons is produced and sustained'

(Gibson-Graham 2006a: 88 authors own emphasis)

These coordinates: necessity, surplus, consumption, and commons emerge
repeatedly over the next two chapters as key bearings for the construction and
practices of economic interdependence in Bomolo. The community economy is
constantly being (re)created and therefore risked. Risk however is mitigated by an
interlacing of these four ethical coordinates which guides individual and
collective action. Gibson-Graham’s language community economy provides a
theoretical lexicon with which to analyse Bomolo economic interdependence as
living and vibrant rather than attempting to distil its essence to produce a static
model. In terms of knowledge and practice, interdependence forms part of the
community economy contributing to the reproduction of the kampung commons.
In particular I will extend the notion of the commons beyond the physical
resources of the community to include ideational constructs and cosmology, belief
and worship of God and Ancestors, the performance of ceremonies, a shared
identity expressed through clan membership and rank, as well as corporately held
land, clan symbols (Ngadhu and Bhaga), shared food and labour.

In the following two chapters I argue that in Bomolo it is predominately the
commons characterised by economic interdependence, and the benevolence of
God and Ancestors maintained by ethical human action which sustains
livelihoods. Capitalist economic relations contribute to the Bomolo community
economy but are peripheral to the core of alternative and non-capitalist relations
tabulated in the diverse economy framework in Chapter Two. In this chapter I discuss the foundations of Bomolo interdependence; belief in God and Ancestors, clan membership, Ngadhu and Bhaga symbolism, ranking hierarchy, and the Reba ceremony.

**Bomolo Spiritual Commons**

A Ngadha woman from the south coast explained that a family’s inheritance is more than just the material items of the spirit ladder, sacred *mataraga* rack, cloth, and gold. Ancestors also bequeath the knowledge and ability to live and work together. To continue *adat* practices and beliefs, and pass this on to the next generation pays respect and gratitude to Ngadha Ancestors. In return Ancestors ensure the fertility of people and land, and guard against misfortune. Honouring Ancestors is a necessary and fundamental aspect of the Bomolo community economy. Ngadha interdependence is premised on a shared ontology which locates human volition as secondary to the actions of God and Ancestors. Coining the term ‘spiritual commons’ Mc William indicates that ‘...belief in spirit agency acting in the world, and the possibility that humanity can engage this realm, provides some of the more powerful motivations and rationale for social practice and collective endeavour’(McWilliam 2006b: 1).

‘*Dewa zeta, Nitu zale*’. God above, Ancestors below. This short, simple phrase encapsulates Ngadha cosmology. For Ngadha there are three planes of existence - that of the divine (God), the material world (human beings) and the exact inverse of the material world (Ancestors). God above and Ancestors below control the material world of human beings. Put succinctly by a senior Bomolo woman ‘...people are in the middle dancing’. These three planes have spatial associations; the invisible world of the Ancestors who live in objects in the village, the ritual altar in the field, large trees and rocks, water sources and below the earth; the sky which is associated with the masculine creator, *Dewa* and the physical world of human beings in the village and the fields (Molnar 1994: 242). Ancestors are tied to place and exert influence over the forces of nature and the fate of human beings whereas God is omnipotent. Prior to the arrival of Catholic missionaries the power of God inspired such fear that people would not utter the word ‘*Dewa*’
(Molnar 1994: 243). God can now be addressed through the medium of Catholic prayer and ceremony. Ngadha people must show respect to both God and Ancestors who care for humans and the material world by performing adat ceremonies correctly and leading moral lives. In this way the spiritual commons, shared by God, living people, and Ancestors is nourished.

Resources, labour and enterprise are frequently marshalled in Bomolo to worship God and support the Catholic Church. Here I will focus on Ancestor worship and the associated animal sacrifice. Offerings and sacrifices ensure the benevolent attention of the Ancestors. As Howell found amongst the Lio people who live to the east of Ngada district on the island of Flores, exchange was not just between people but also between the living and the dead. Animal sacrifice is one type of exchange which '...expresses the moral order of a society and should be seen as a life-giving process - not a reciprocal, time specific act in which two things are exchanged between two individuals' (Howell 1989: 434). Buffalo are the most prestigious beast, sacrificed for Neku (a post-humous celebration of a named Ancestor) and house construction and renovation. Chickens are commonly sacrificed and their entrails examined for signs from the Ancestors (Plate 5). Pigs are a necessary sacrifice slaughtered to honour and feed Ancestors who ensure fertility of people and land.

At the beginning of all funerals, for Reba, and Neku ceremonies, pigs are ritually slaughtered. Once the pigs are trussed and positioned with their heads pointing towards the adat house of the deceased, the ceremonial leader will call out to the Ancestors. He throws a handful of uncooked rice at the head of the first pig to be slaughtered, symbolically giving food back to the Ancestors and expressing remembrance, respect and gratitude. The pig is then killed by splitting the skull between the eyes with a large machete. The killing is always done by men and the crowd cheers if they skilfully kill the pig in one blow, or cringe and loudly suck air in between their teeth if he has to repeatedly chop at the pig. Men and young boys rush in to assist in tilting the pig with its head down so blood running out of the skull can be caught in large bowls to be cooked into a sauce for the pig meat.

17 The ritual leader is always male but I was informed that, at least in theory, there was no reason why it could not be a woman.
Plate 5: Reading the signs from the Ancestors
Some of this fresh blood is also smeared on the sacred *mataraga* rack as a formal offering to the Ancestors. Blood must be offered to the Ancestors who give life, a necessary act for continued fertility and renewal of life. Willi explained that blood was also symbolic of an agreement between Ancestors and people. Spilling blood ensures the Ancestors do not bring bad luck to the living community.

The number and size of pigs killed is an indicator of wealth and renown and most Ngadha rituals continue to involve the sacrifice of pigs and the distribution of the meat (see chapter 6 for a discussion of a shift towards monetisation). Pigs are owned by a family unit, with the majority of labour associated with breeding carried out by women, youths, and children. Pigs are offered by kin or close friends for sacrifice at funerals with an expectation that the bereaved family will reciprocate with a pig at a funeral in the future. *Adat* prescribes no norm of exchange but the desire to give or reciprocate a pig following the death of a family member or friend is strong. For example when my Flores brother’s mother-in-law died it was unquestionable that my Flores family would bring a pig as well as organise a truck to transport clan members to her funeral. Following a ritual slaughter the butchered pig(s) is distributed amongst a wide network of kin. The head is returned to those who brought it, meat and offal are distributed among kin and clan, with more distant relatives receiving a chunk (approximately one kilogram) of raw fat. Distribution of pig meat and fat is generally remembered, and contributing a pig for a funeral is always remembered, increasingly by writing it down. Hence there is both reciprocity and sharing with ethical and practical implications. Ethically this distribution acknowledges kin as known, important persons by including them in the consumption of surplus. Practically it enacts a commons of interdependence, feeding people and distributing the pig(s) to be consumed quickly.

Honouring and appeasing Ancestors extends beyond animal sacrifice; moral behaviour, symbolic and ritual action is also necessary to avert failure. On the day of the wedding for which preparations are described in the following chapter, heavy rain began to fall in the late afternoon, about the time that guests were due to start arriving. A small gathering of neighbours on the front terrace of my Bomolo home watched as the immediate family of the wedding party desperately
poked the tarpaulin roof of the marquee to drain off the collecting rain and prevent the roof collapsing. As we watched the salvage operation there was a chorus of ‘kasihan’ (what a shame), during a discussion that there must have been something wrong with the preparations as the Ancestors obviously weren’t happy. Members of this house were notoriously wayward (nakal), skirting the boundaries of acceptable conduct. I was told that their incorrect behaviour, tributes or processes had been reciprocated with bad weather and the potential failure of the event. Crucial to the success of the wedding party is a large number of guests but many of those invited would not venture out in the rain threatening the success of the event\textsuperscript{18}.

Attracting the malevolent attention of Ancestors is also risked if a Neku ceremony is not held or is not successful. Neku, a posthumous celebration described in Chapter 4 is held often many generations after a person has died, to honour and pay tribute to the Ancestor. Willi advised me that many people will come from as far away as other islands for a Neku ceremony. Indeed this was the case at a Neku held during my stay in Bomolo. At the height of the event during which five buffalo along with approximately seventy pigs were slaughtered, I estimate there were one thousand people present, some whom had travelled from the neighbouring island of Sumba.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter Ngada people identify their culture and politics as a part of their inheritance from the Ancestors as much as much as they do material objects such as gold and adat items. While there is a very serious side to this, there is also a strong element of the enjoyment and sociality linked to Ancestors. Singing, dancing, joking and teasing are common at celebrations as well as social get-togethers. An oft-recited ditty links current and historical social practices.

\textsuperscript{18} In Bomolo and more generally in Indonesia, people are averse to going out in the rain as getting your head wet can bring on flu and other illness.
At all ceremonies and lifecycle events people sit together and drink *moke*, mildly alcoholic palm wine and, when in season, eat com. Babies are given a taste of *moke* and young children will also have a small drink. Consuming palm wine together is constitutive of being Ngadha, as it was in the past, enacted in the present and taught to children to continue in the future. Ngadha names are also passed on from generation to generation providing continuity and a constant reminder of ancestral ties. Ngadha people have a minimum of two names, an ancestral and Christian name, and often as many as four. Ancestral names are spoken to newborn infants who cry or may make some other physical gesture to indicate their choice of ancestral name.

**Clan membership and symbols**

All Ngadha people belong to a clan and membership is reckoned through unilineal descent or in other words the clan of either the mother or father, depending on the marriage arrangements of the parents. Most commonly children are born into the clan of their mother, only joining the clan of their father if bridewealth is paid, now a rare occasion. As a primary identity, descent and clan membership locates the Ngadha individual within complex relationships of interdependence with Ancestors, immediate family and close kin, and other kin and clan members. All of these relationships have economic repercussions with *adat* guiding practices of interdependence, the individual’s ‘...implication in the existence of others’ (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 88). As discussed ceremonies must be held to honour Ancestors, agricultural and livestock surplus is marshalled for these events and also for life cycle rituals for kin and clan. In the secular realm kin and clan relations also provide rights to a basic level of subsistence. In Bomolo this now means enough rice to stave off hunger, and provide shelter and
clothing. In the time I lived in Bomolo no one had an existence marginal enough
to warrant assistance with these basic necessities. Poorer households were quietly
relieved of many obligations and occasionally gifted food and clothing.

Clan members are linked to each other through the physical symbols of the
Ngadhu and Bhaga which locate and connect the clan to a specific place. Clans or
sub-clans come into being with the erection of a Bhaga and Ngadhu hence all
clans have a Ngadhu and Bhaga. Prominently located in the clan kampung they
are grounding symbols of the community economy, a constant reminder of the
clan commons and interdependence with ancestors and clan members.

Members of two different clans, Paru and Dala, live in Bomolo kampung. Clan
Paru has the greatest presence occupying thirteen houses in Bomolo whereas Clan
Dala members live in only five houses. The Ngadhu and Bhaga in the Bomolo
courtyard are owned by Clan Paru who are a sub-clan of the original Paru clan
located on the other side of Bajawa town. Both Paru and Dala clans are internally
divided into two sub-groups saka pu' u and saka lobo. As with the clan, which
sub-group an individual belongs to depends on the marriage arrangements of the
parents (see above). Saka pu' u (trunk riders) members and their associated main
house are directly connected to the female Bhaga. Saka lobo (tip riders) are
directly connected to the male Ngadhu post. Trunk and tip riders refer to the
position of people on top of the sacred Ngadhu post when it first enters the village.
Saka pu' u, the trunk riders who sit near the roots of the tree are the base or
foundation of the clan and must be autochthonous clan members. Saka lobo, the
tip riders sit nearer the top of the tree trunk and may be clan members or have
married into the clan. Saka pu' u are considered the older siblings, saka lobo the
younger siblings.

Each Ngadhu/Bhaga complex has an associated main house for both the saka
pu' u and saka lobo groups within the clan. The main saka pu' u house is signified
by a miniature house (anah vea) on the roof above the adat room. Saka lobo's
main house is identified by the upper trunk, arms and head of a person (ata)
holding a spear and a sword. These main houses represent direct lineages to those
who established that particular Ngadhu/Bhaga complex. All other houses either
within or outside the *kampung* are termed *sao dhoro* (descendant house). *Sao dhoro* rights and ancestral affiliations continue to be traced through the Ngadhu/Bhaga complex and main trunk or tip house. *Sao dhoro* houses must be smaller than the main house to which they are associated. Houses that are ‘branches’ and home to descendants of these main houses have three spiked prongs at both ends of the elongated rectangular shaped apex of the roof. No one I spoke to could explain what the three prongs symbolised but Smedal has identified it as three swords (Smedal 1994: 343 plate 17).

Although there is a primordial connection to one or the other, all people are connected to both the Bhaga and Ngadhu – they form a single indivisible unit. In the same vein *saka pu'u* and *saka lobo* are also inseparable and one group cannot exist without the other. In discussing the clan divisions Teresia, a Bajawa resident explained that if you are alone you cannot do anything, you must work with others and this includes *saka pu'u* and *saka lobo*. This is literally translated into daily life where one must consult and work together with others, setting the stage for an interdependent clan, a close knit community of affines and agnates. *Saka pu'u* and *Saka lobo* are also inseparable and one group cannot survive without the other. Thus the stage is set for an interdependent clan, a close knit community of affines and agnates. Generational ties are strongest and social groups revolve around those of the same age group. Within the *kampung* most adults are related by blood or marriage and call each other older/younger brother/sister, uncle, aunty or grandparent. Using this terminology expresses close familial relationships as well as respect for elders.

**When Interdependence breaks down**

What is the antithesis of interdependence? According to Mauss, the absence of exchange is war. Extending this idea more broadly to interdependence, Mauss’ argument still holds.

...exchange [read interdependence] is not exclusively goods and wealth, real and personal property, and things of economic value. They exchange rather courtesies, entertainment, ritual, military assistance, women, children, dances and feasts; and fairs in which the market is but one element and the circulation of wealth but one part of an
enduring contract. Although prestations appear voluntary they are obligatory and "...their sanction is private or open warfare..."
(Mauss [1954] 1969: 3)

In Bajawa, relations can breakdown on any level; between individuals through to the intra- and inter-clan scale. The deterioration of one social institution or agreement can spill over into other arenas of the communal base. Gudeman has defined the base as ‘...a community’s shared interests, which include lasting resources (such as land and water), produced things, and ideational constructs such as knowledge, technology, laws, skills, and customs’ (Gudeman 2001: 7). In Bajawa I witnessed the ongoing erosion of practices of interdependence within one clan. A dispute with its genesis in rights to land had escalated to a breakdown in communication which climaxed on the 29th May 2004 with the death of one person and four others being hospitalised.

Early in the morning a senior clan woman, went from house to house in the kampung informing Paru clan members that today they would repair the Ngadhu post in the original Paru kampung. At the time it did seem strange that so many clan Paru members had other engagements so pressing that they couldn’t accompany the delegation. At home I sensed Maria’s relief when she was called away to mourn and begin preparations for a woman who had died in the night. Why, I puzzled, had this important task not been discussed until it was about to occur? Why were most of the Paru clan in this kampung suddenly so busy? Only on reflection after the fact did it become obvious to me that other tasks had been prioritised to avoid the impending conflict.

Although more than half of the residents of the kampung where I lived are Paru clan, only a small bemo or mini-bus of passengers, including myself, headed off for the ritual and repairs of their Ngadhu post. Before going to the post, located in Paru kampung on the edge of town, we stopped at another house in Bajawa. Other Paru clan members were there and we ate together while approximately fifty people congregated. As we got back into the vehicles and headed off to Paru, nothing seemed amiss. It was a scene I had often experienced when travelling to other ritual occasions. My first hint that something was awry was when we arrived in Paru kampung to find the family home shut and locked. As I tried to
make sense of what was going on, angry young men from the group I arrived with started banging on the door, threatening to break in. Young women of the group gathered large stones and began building a cooking hearth at the base of the concrete steps leading to the front door. Older women sat on a tiled grave at the front of the house and lit candles to honour their deceased Ancestors.

In the midst of all this activity I noticed people watching us intently from the terraces and yards of the surrounding houses. Some of these spectators came out on the road and started yelling at men from our group (which I’ll call the ‘expatriates’) as they began removing wood from a neighbouring house under construction. The ‘expatriates’ I arrived with were expressing their rights and attachment to place by building a fire, preparing food and remembering Ancestors by lighting candles on the grave. From where we stood occupying a house and land, the Ngadhu post stood in the kampung square, across the road and behind a row of houses. Local (those who live in the kampung) women began unfolding tarpaulins and covering them with coffee beans effectively blocking access routes while three other women started hurling abuse at the expatriates.

As the abusive diatribe intensified, more and more people gathered, watching from terraces and the roadside. Machetes were brandished and pushing and shoving ensued as the ‘expatriates’ moved towards the Ngadhu post to begin the repair work. As the dispute intensified, clearly defined gender roles emerged. Local women were screaming, spitting and making obscene gestures until retiring exhausted when another woman would move forward to take up the attack. The ‘expatriate’ women remained passive and aloof, and most of them stayed at the occupied house rather than approaching the Ngadhu post. Although the butt of the abuse the ‘expatriate’ men remained mostly passive. I did not have enough of a grasp of Bajawa language to make sense of what the local women were screaming but it was apparent that the ‘expatriate’ men were tolerating the abuse up to a certain point. On occasions when a line was crossed, the ‘expatriate’ men would advance, threatening the local women with machetes until they ran behind closed doors, only to emerge a few moments later and maintain the rage.
This situation continued for a number of hours as the 'expatriate' men carried out repairs on the Ngadhu post. After one particularly close confrontation when an 'expatriate' man had nearly caught a local woman, half a dozen police arrived and stood in a semi-circle around the Ngadhu post, holding pump-action shot guns. This inflamed the situation and the large groups of onlookers ran from their vantage points on a number of occasions as it appeared the police would start shooting. Senior men from both sides were called together and escorted to a nearby house for a meeting with the police. This calmed the situation somewhat and as the afternoon became evening a pig was killed as is required when repairing the post. The 'expatriates' were invited into a house right next to the Ngadhu and it seemed the drama was over as we chatted and watched a VCD of Inul (a well known Javanese pop star) while waiting for the pig to be cooked.

However this was not to be the end of the day's conflict. Loud thuds began to echo through the room where we were sitting as rocks were thrown on the roof. This carried on intermittently for a few hours until the power to the house was cut and under cover of darkness local men swarmed in. One expatriate told me he held off two men with machetes by swinging a shovel until he could run away. Others were not so fortunate and sustained wounds with one man dying from the attack.

In the days following this incident I learned of many different facets of the conflict. As mentioned initially, the origins of the disagreement were over the land and house which the 'expatriates' occupied when they arrived at Paru kampung. This had polarized the clan, broadly pitting 'expatriates' (those who had moved to town, a distance of less than two kilometres) against those who resided in Paru. This land dispute had been through the Indonesian court system where the judge had found in favour of the 'expatriates'. However Paru kampung clan members refused to recognize the decision, arguing it was not in accordance with Bajawa adat.

Arriving to repair the Ngadhu post was one strategy for the 'expatriate' members to assert their clan status and exercise their obligations and rights on clan land in the centre of the Paru kampung compound. The consequences of discord over one
aspect of the community base were transferred in this incident to another arena of the base. The unresolved land dispute continued to be fought over the repairs of the Ngadhu post, a key symbol of their clan identity and a link to ancestors. Paru kampung residents complained there had not been a consensual utu bhou meeting and as such they were ‘shocked’ by the arrival of the ‘expatriates’. It was clearly apparent that the kampung residents were aware of the ‘expatriates’ impending arrival, however their appeal to a collective understanding of due process was genuine and served to underscore their knowledge and rights according to Bajawa adat. As of July 2007 the dispute is again before the court and remains unresolved.

**Rank**

Alongside their clan and rider (saka) status, all people have a designated rank. Rank is losing ground as an institution but informal discussions in Bomolo reveal that people are keenly aware of their own rank and that of others. Modernity, globalisation, and marriage with non-Ngadha were suggested to me as reasons why rank is losing currency. However I found people are still reticent to talk openly about rank which is deemed impolite, indicating a degree of ongoing influence in social matters, particularly with marriage partners. Set down in adat, rank is a social hierarchy with economic implications. All three ranks are represented in Bajawa: highest – ga’e meze, middle – ga’e kisah, and the lowest – ho’o, or slave caste. Rank relates to ancestral origins and social standing. In the past these categories broadly distinguished between landowners and those captured during warfare and became landless slaves. *Gae meze* and *gae kisah* can trace their family back to original inhabitants of the land and have direct links to a Ngadhu/Bhaga complex. *Ho’o* are all immigrants (historically this group was mainly slaves) or those who have fallen in rank after they (or their predecessors) were convicted of immoral behaviour such as theft or sexual misconduct. This group may also have links to a Ngadhu/Bhaga complex either through marriage or their status prior to conviction. The following myth offers one version of the genesis of rank and inter-rank marriage rules in Bajawa.

At the beginning of the creation of the world a woman gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl. The Mother put both babies in a basket and hid
them at the edge of the river. The water from the river washed the basket with the babies safely down to the beach. The people of the coast found the babies and raised them separately.

When the baby boy called Wawitoro (Sirius star) became an adult, he went trading to a far away place. When he returned, Wawitoro met a beautiful girl named Kodala (Kartika star). He proposed marriage and Kodala became his wife. Much later Wawitoro asked Kodala "Where are you actually from Kodala?" Kodala answered "I don't know, I don't know who my parents are. The coastal people found me on the beach and according to them I wasn't found alone, they found me with my brother. Now he is some place far away." Hearing Kodala's story, Wawitoro realised his wife was his younger sister.

Then Wawitoro said "We are siblings. If people know the situation they will announce that we are incestuous. Because of this we must part and go far from here so we can never meet again. You can return to where you came from and become the Kartika star, and I will become the Sirius star. When you rise I will set, when you set I will rise. If we meet the world will be destroyed by drought. I am like those of old, a gae meze, a high noble, however you have already gone down in rank, and you will be gae kisa. Your male descendants [gae kisa] are not permitted to take my female descendants [gae meze] as wives; my male descendants [gae meze] can marry your female descendants [gae kisa]. If one of your male descendants [gae kisa] marries one of my female descendants [gae meze], they are committing incest, they have gone the wrong way. Because of this they must be speared to death.

(my translation from Daeng 2000: 100-1)

Despite losing currency 'right way marriages' are still the preferred option particularly by older adat leaders such as my Flores father Willi. When his daughter Dhone announced she was pregnant with Nali she told me Willi was furious. Pregnancy before marriage was one thing, but the main source of his

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19 The gendered dimension of this arbitrary decision is an interesting articulation of male power – a female of equal age has instantly become junior to the male.
anger was that Nali was *gae kisa*, middle rank. Willi and his family are *gae meze*, high rank; hence this was to be a wrong way marriage. Willi was powerless to do anything – Dhone was pregnant and Nali had admitted paternity. Dhone’s children were destined to be *gae kisa*, middle rank.

While discussing rank is taboo in everyday discourse the everyday influence of principles of rank are evident in hospitality and social mores. This was exemplified when I returned home to Bomolo one afternoon to find a visitor in the kitchen. We were not introduced and he sat quietly by the fire. Standard hospitality would have us both introduced immediately. Later when we all squatted around the fire to eat dinner he was not offered food first as is customary for a visitor. Willi and I were first given plates of rice and helped ourselves to the cooked green leafy vegetables, followed by Maria and their teenage son. The visitor was offered food last. This behavior indicated that he was of the lowest rank, *ho ‘o*. The next day I found a quiet moment to ask Willi about him. Talking in hushed tones, as did anyone I spoke to about rank, he explained that he did not know the reason why this man was of low rank, only that his parents had also been low rank. The man had come to town from the remote rural lands near the border with Manggarai where Willi and Maria have wet and dry rice fields. He knows the man as he used to take care of a few head of cattle for Willi. Although he no longer has an economic connection with Willi, he came to stay at the house while in town to organize his citizenship card. As an indicator of socio-economic status and associated hierarchy, rank still holds weight in the ideational commons of Bomolo. The threat and shame of falling in rank is a strong deterrent to anyone contemplating immoral behaviour such as theft as this is the penalty prescribed in *adat*.

Ranking hierarchy varies between ethnic groups, distinguishing closely related cultures from each other. A district government bureaucrat explained that of the other two ethnic groups in Ngada district, some Nage-Keo groups do not have a ranking system while others have two ranks, the general population and slaves. Rank differed significantly between the two Riung villages I visited in connection

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20 All Indonesian citizens are required to have a citizenship card *KTP – Kartu Tanda Penduduk*
with the alternative economies project. In Sambinasi village there are only two ranks; landowners (mosalaki) and slaves (lame burak). However in Taen Terong village there are nine ranks or categories of people:

-door: tuan tanah, land owners, make all decisions, must eat first
-gelarang: government
-pungawa: civil servants
-brambang: police
-ngawasata: espionage, intelligence
-tanga ronon: astronomers weather forecasters, all natural phenomena
-sandi wenerebon: healers
-ata potewera: magic, both positive and negative
-ata biasa: general population

Again there are rules about marriage between the different ranks. For example door can marry gelarang but below that any marriage would have to be carefully negotiated and agreed upon. It is taboo for door to marry the bottom two classes, and if so a person is demoted to that class. Social hierarchy defined by rank is still strong in Riung; all leaders are men from the top three classes except on the coastal fringe where there has been intermarriage with immigrants from Sulawesi. If a lower rank person tried to be village head (kepala desa) in Taen Terong their leadership would not be adhered to nor respected.

Reba: New Year Celebrations

The history of the Reba ceremony is traced back to a time when Ngadha people lived nearer the coast and cassava (ubi kayu) was the staple food. For the people of Bomolo their origin site is near the coastal town of Aimere where their Ancestors are said to have first landed from India. Although there is no documentary or oral historical evidence, I speculate that people migrated to the mountains for the same reason the peoples of many Indonesian islands moved inland; to get away from pirates, slave raiders and/or foreign (other island) or colonial forces. Reba must be performed every year and is a necessary ceremony, fundamental to the survival of Ngadha people.

With each unique enactment Reba brings to the fore all the ethical coordinates of the community economy. Reba negotiations among senior clan people occur
throughout the year escalating to weekly then daily discussions just prior to the event. At the end of each Reba, negotiations begin to decide where the next Reba will be held and at what date, usually in late February or early March for the seven clan alliance that includes Bomolo. By the end of the calendar year the scale of the event will become apparent depending on harvests and livestock numbers. Feasting during the Reba period distributes surplus livestock and agricultural produce amongst an extended network of kin and clan.

Reba maintains the spiritual commons and is held primarily to give thanks to Ancestors and God for the results of hard work and harvests through the year. It is also described as a New Year party, a family celebration, a time to make peace, and an opportunity for flirting with the opposite sex (Djawamaku 2000: 22). With hundreds of people in attendance it also enacts interdependence in planning, preparation and celebration, a microcosm of the day-to-day interdependence between kin and clan. An image that is still important to Ngadha people is that they are tied together - they are of the same blood (Daeng 1985: 294). Reba is also an annual expression and re-affirmation of inter-clan alliances, bringing together groups from seven kampungs to articulate their shared commons that extends beyond the physical space of their residential kampungs. These alliances are strategically important for political support and marriage negotiations. Reba is also a new year party as it is celebrated in the first month of the Ngada calendar, a family celebration, an opportunity for a peace making party if required, and an occasion for young people to make public their intention to marry (Djawamaku 2000). It is also the one time of the year openly flirting with the opposite sex is allowed. Although not a norm, I noted that unmarried women wore a tight ikat woven cloth belt around their waist while married let their sarongs hang loose from where they were pinned on the shoulder.

Following is one version of the Reba ceremony origin story in summary translation. The main character, Sili, is also remembered in O Uwi, the song and dance performed during the Reba ceremony. In the song he is acknowledged as the first son (Sili ana vunga).
There was a farmer called Sili who lived in Bena village. Sili planted a tuber (discorea alata) as the main food for his family but each year this was not enough to feed his family. The land was fertile but the tubers were very small and each harvest was disappointing. Once while sowing his crop of tubers Sili unintentionally used reba wood rather than the usual variety (*ladu uwii*) used to support the tuber plants. Approaching harvest time wild pigs were eating the tubers on one side of the garden, on the other sea urchins were making a mess.

Sili asked all the people of the village to help him harvest. The harvest was extraordinary, and they dug up tubers as if they were never ending. There was an uproar in the community and Sili explained how he had changed the wood he used to support the tubers. After finishing the harvest, that night a senior person (*kakak*) with great authority came to Sili in his dreams and asked for a human head as a sacrifice to pay for the abundant crop. The dream reoccurred frequently over the next few nights. Sili became very afraid until he had serious thoughts about how he could avoid the demands of the senior person. The following night when the same dream occurred, Sili attempted to persuade the senior person to accept a Reba ritual attended by all the village in place of a human head. The ritual would be held every year as a tribute to God to give thanks for the harvest. His attempt was successful. Sili and all the people were saved from the threat of death. Based on this myth all Ngadha clans always hold a Reba ceremony every year.

(my translation from Djawamuku 2000)

The Sili narrative depicts a strong moral dimension of *adat*. If Sili had worked alone much of the harvest would have been consumed by wild pigs and sea urchins. By working together the people of Sili’s village had ample food from the harvest. Sili is an important figure and some clans name him as their original ancestor. Others, like Paru and Dala clans of Bomolo are descendant from...
different Ancestors but continue to honour Sili for his role in creating adat. They also observe the Reba ceremony as an important occasion to maintain the balance between God, people and the environment associated with the Ancestors. As described in the origin story, holding Reba is necessary to the survival of Ngadha people who will die if the ritual and tributes are not performed.

Bomolo is part of a seven kampung complex which comes together to celebrate Reba. In 2005 Bonua kampung, a five minute stroll from Bomolo, was hosting Reba. Two weeks before the Reba all married men in Bomolo were called to an organisational utu bhou meeting. Framing the meeting in terms of who would lead Bomolo in this year’s Reba, this softened the crux of the discussion about whether Willi or Yusef should ascend to the position of senior leader in Bomolo. My Flores father Willi, an acknowledged expert on adat is also greatly feared as a stern, authoritarian man. He is also held in awe because of his ability to mediate spiritual forces, to imbue power in the sword and spears he manufactures, and communicate with ancestral spirits. He is a devout Catholic, upholding Catholic morals and values, but rarely attends church. Willi was frequently at odds with Yusef who, as a retired public servant, draws his authority from the state, bureaucratic connections, and his close association with the Catholic Church.

The meeting was politically charged with power apparent in the spatial organisation of the meeting held on the terrace of a neighbour’s house. The two contesting power brokers – Willi and Yusef - sat together with the other men surrounding them. Of the two most senior men in the kampung eligible by virtue of age, clan, descent, and rank, one was too old and the other too sick to lead and represent Bomolo. Most men spoke during the discussion, often repeating and reiterating each other to emphasise the need to work together for the success of the kampung. No-one openly supported or dismissed either candidate. After all submissions were aired, the meeting chair declared a consensus had been reached and both Willi and Yusef would continue to represent and lead Bomolo. The point of the meeting may have actually been to ensure Willi and Yusef at least maintained a façade of unity. In 2002 when organising the Reba to be held in Bomolo Yusef, in a heated moment, had told Willi to be quiet as he was only an
immigrant, in other words he had married into the *kampung*\(^{21}\). A big rift ensued with the undercurrent of discord emerging prior to ceremonies and *kampung* events.

Following the meeting in Bomolo, we progressed to Bonua for the Reba *utu bhou* planning committee meeting. Men from all seven associated *kampungs* were there and various sub-committees reported on their progress. Photocopies of typed summaries of the agreed plan were distributed by committee members who were government employees. Collectors from Bonua had been busy visiting the seven *kampungs* going from house to house accepting cash contributions\(^{22}\). This cash surplus contributed to the purchase of additional food and other consumables such as betel nut and cigarettes. Pooling cash for *adat* ceremonial consumption ensures the large scale success of the event providing continuity as set down in the story of Sili. The organising committee hoped to pool Rp 7,500,000 (\$A 1,250) and the sub-committee reported they had amassed Rp 5,750,000 (\$A 958). Willi did not see that it was necessary to have such matters documented while the bureaucrats understood this method as bringing government-style modernity and efficiency to the *kampung*.

At home in Bomolo preparations began weeks in advance. Maria began instructing me on the finer points of dancing *O Uwi*, particularly how to dance the steps when two or three women advance into the centre of the circle. In Bomolo we gathered after dark around a fire in the centre of the *kampung* to practice Reba dancing and singing. All holding hands in one big circle we stepped left then right with the circle slowing turning with women and men grouped together in three or fours. It occurred to me that dancing in this fashion symbolically represented Ngadha culture; individuals all move together in one direction with macro-movement occurring slowly and including everybody. Senior men, potential leaders who must take independent decisions and actions, may dance solo in the middle, free to move as they wish. Women may move into the centre but in twos

\(^{21}\) Casting Willi as an immigrant highlighted Yusef’s primordial status as being of Bomolo *kampung*, and his wealth as his family was able to pay bride wealth, hence his wife lives in Bomolo and his children will be part of his clan.

\(^{22}\) Ngadha people also tithe cash to the Catholic Church, supporting a much larger spiritual commons
or threes, dancing prescribed steps. After dancing we gathered on the verandah of one of the main houses in the kampung and ate boiled tubers, grilled corn kernels and drank palm wine. Although there was a short serious dialogue by a senior man alerting us to participate properly, this was a fun occasion with much laughing and joking. Informal socialising surrounding Reba and other ceremonies foster the ties that (re)connect the relationships that are the fabric of the commons.

At every stage the sociality of the event was evident. One week before Reba approximately thirty men worked on constructing a bamboo stage in Bonua to which each family had contributed a length of bamboo. Following the morning of work, Bonua women served food and palm wine to the men who then drank together late into the afternoon. In Bonua a final group practice was held three nights before Reba. In Bomolo we gathered and walked together to Bonua. As was to happen on the day we entered Bonua kampung singing and dancing and practiced the Reba dance. Approximately two hundred people attended this practice. After about an hour planks of wood were laid in rows and we sat down to drink palm wine and eat corn, boiled bananas and bamboo shoots with chilli.

The Reba rituals for each clan began on the day before the ceremony in Bonua. I followed a group of men from Paru clan to a bamboo stand near the kampung for the initial stage of Reba. Each individual clan has an ancestral site for the opening of Reba (see Plate 6) called watu lanu, lanu loka (lanu – meeting place for the beginning of ceremonies). At each watu lanu, lanu loka there is a small paved square with an altar made of standing rocks covered with fibre from the moke tree (from which palm wine is tapped). These standing stones symbolise people with their heads covered in the manner of the Ancestors. The rocks are arranged in a straight row with a large rock in the middle, and smaller rocks to the left and right. Leaning up against the altar is a tangga adat, a miniature ladder which Ancestors use to climb up, and for God to climb down to sit with the living people; a juncture in time and space where the three planes of the cosmos come together. Opposite the altar is a basic bamboo frame for hanging coconuts and pigs heads but none were hung up on this occasion.

As recorded in footnote 3, if its hot or raining you should cover you head so you don’t become confused or ill
Plate 6: Eating with the Ancestors to open Reba
After clearing the site of vegetation that has grown over since last year the Ancestors were called and a chicken ritually killed, its blood collected in a bamboo container and smeared over the rocks. The chicken’s entrails were read for signs from the Ancestors then the whole chicken was cooked on a fire where rice had already been cooked\(^2\). A leaf\(^2\) was placed in front of each standing stone and the Ancestors were offered a few grains of cooked rice and a sliver of chicken meat. We then sat together to eat and drink palm wine. In theory this is also a time to evaluate the past year and discuss future plans for clan members and the *kampung*, such as building a new house, but in practice no evaluation or planning took place. When we arrived back in the *kampung* the next official stage, *dheke* Reba also proceeded with little formality. Food was offered to the Ancestors at both the trunk and tip main houses (*pu‘u* and *lobo*) and at the Bhaga in the central *kampung*. This stage is an opportunity for the entire sub-clan to meet and consider the evaluation and planning discussed at the opening ceremony.

On the next day we were all up early and scrambled to dress and prepare for the day of Reba dancing and feasting at Bonua. On this occasion there was a constant lament from Maria that the new *ikat* woven cloth she had ordered for Willi had not been produced in time. We all helped each other dress, with neighbors calling in to ask Maria and Willi, *adat* and Reba experts, to help them dress correctly. For the women an *ikat* woven cloth sarong was fastened with safety pins at the shoulders which fell to below the knee, and long four-strand bead necklaces (blue, red, gold) are worn around the neck. Hair was wound into a tight bun and a thin red headband with gold motifs tied across the forehead. White chicken feathers were tied to a length of red wool, decorated with gold paper and worn looped onto the fingers of women and children. Both women and men wore a plaited bamboo bag decorated with horse hair slung over the right arm and under the left arm. For the men a maroon coloured cloth was folded into a hat and secured with a headband similar to that worn by the women. Men also wore *ikat* woven cloth sarongs secured at the waist and a white business style shirt with *ikat* tied across their chests and worn as scarves.

\(^2\) This was the only occasion I ever saw a man cook rice

\(^2\) Reba trees only grow near the coast so here the leaves of the *hinga dheke kuku kuda* tree are used – a medicinal plant mixed with lime and used to heal flesh wounds.
Once ready we gathered on the road running through the centre of Bomolo kampung and proceeded to walk the short distance to Bonua kampung. Many women carried arm length sticks brightly decorated with coloured paper. Each of the six visiting kampung groups arrived in a procession and danced and sang their way into Bonua. A small contingent of Bonua residents danced and sang the rehearsed performance at the entrance of the kampung welcoming the visiting groups. Once groups from all the six kampungs had arrived, an extended Catholic service was held punctuated by choir singing and a dancing group. The temporary pulpit adorned with ikat cloth and buffalo horns, and the addresses to the crowd by both Catholic priests and senior Ngadha men.

Following the service it was a massive catering exercise to feed approximately five hundred people, the public distribution of surplus indicative of the economic success of the year. Then the dancing began; first a group of approximately fifty senior people circled the large kampung square all facing the same direction but dancing individually. Then we all joined hands in a circle and danced as we had practiced, moving a few steps right then left with the circle slowly rotating. Apart from the chorus of O Uwi the key refrain which is sung repeatedly during Reba there are also verses which are left to individuals to compose spontaneously, then everyone joins in the chorus. Those brave enough to do so sing out their verses, often ribald jokes, which are then answered by a member of the opposite sex by which time most people are laughing.

The celebration continued through the night and late the next day as people continued to join in the dancing and be called into the surrounding houses to eat and drink. Feasting was the order of the day and answering a request to come and eat with “I’m full” was not acceptable. Each house served adat food; rice, pig meat and palm wine. Wealthier households would supplement this with additional meat and vegetable dishes. Buffalo were also been slaughtered and the meat shared amongst the houses to serve to guests. When you couldn’t take any more dancing, eating, and drinking it was time to quietly exit and rest before returning to do it all again.
Late one evening a week after Reba we gathered at a neighbour’s house to officially close the Reba. A small get-together was held to celebrate and signify the end of Reba. We ate the usual *adat* fare; rice, pig meat, green vegetables, and palm wine with the addition of beer and grilled chicken. We sat eating and drinking together and there was no formal aspect to the occasion. The more formal *Sui Uwi* closing ceremony was held in Bonua. In principle this is when senior men offer rice, meat and palm wine to Ancestors, and may speak about moral and ethical aspects of life: preservation of *adat*, customary law, hard work, honesty, discipline (Djawamaku 2000: 18). They also evaluate Reba and discuss both the difficulties and successes of the event, and make future plans. This is also a time when people may raise issues such as inheritance of land and resources. In practice the *Sui Uwi* I attended was more of a debriefing by the Reba committee with the main discussion surrounding the construction of the temporary altar which was deemed to be too much work, hence the decision to use iron sheeting rather than bamboo next year.

Change, as always, is constant and a Bomolo neighbour commented to me that Reba used to be an important time to pass on knowledge, particularly about how to farm successfully. Now that there are many other livelihood options available the importance of transferring farming knowledge is waning. It is also an opportunity to convey other types of information and the impetus to hold Reba remains clear; God and Ancestors must be honoured and thanked annually to ensure Ngadha cultural survival.

**Conclusion**

Economic interdependence is an expression of moral order and also a manifestation of cosmological connectivity and the spiritual commons. Using terminology offered by Gibson-Graham, this chapter has viewed the Bomolo community economy in terms of four ethical coordinates: necessity, surplus, consumption, and commons. The spiritual commons is the lynchpin of the community economy articulating Ngadha interdependence with their Ancestors and God. The Bomolo community economy privileges this interdependence to ensure livelihood subsistence and guard against misfortune. The spiritual
commons makes a significant contribution to the *kampung* community economy but is not quantifiably recognised nor valued in capitalist economy paradigms

Clan membership and the physical symbols of the clan, the Ngadhu and Bhaga, tie individuals to each other and to a specific place. Clan identity introduces the rights and obligations an individual must negotiate in their lifetime. Rank also locates a person within a social hierarchy. Reba is the most important ceremony on the Ngadha calendar and all clan members are expected to at least try to return to their *kampung* to attend each year. Reba is as an occasion to reflect on the year and reinvigorate social connections while feasting on the surplus of the community. In the next chapter I continue to discuss the Bomolo community economy with emphasis on the practices and organisation of interdependence that (re)create, or rupture the commons.
Chapter 4: Practices of Interdependence

Interdependence is a dominant feature of every day Ngadha life and organisation within and extending beyond the kampung. Frequently people alerted me to the ways in which everyone and everything is connected. The diverse economy framework discussed in Chapter 2 mapped out the prevalence of reciprocity, exchanges, pooling, gifting, and sharing in the Ngadha community economy. ‘Ngadha men and women often explain...that just as large upright stones needs smaller ones next to them in order not to fall over, men depend on women...’ the main adat house needs the support of associated houses, and the Ngadhu is incomplete without the Bhaga (Smedal 2002: 497). The previous chapter illustrated the cosmological foundations of interdependence established and maintained with God and Ancestors. Clan organisation and symbols, land ownership, social ranking and the yearly Reba ceremony all express linked elements of Ngadha cosmology as it is interpreted by adat. This chapter discusses adat and the ways it underpins mundane and ritual practices of interdependence. The Bomolo community economy is further elaborated with the analysis extending to relationships and practices of interdependence with reference to necessity, surplus, consumption, and commons. These four ethical coordinates, introduced in the last chapter, invite a reading of the Bomolo community economy as contingent upon relationships, a site of potentiality with indeterminate futures.

Call to mind again that these ethical coordinates are negotiated in the arena of adat, customary manners and practices that are a keystone of Ngadha interdependence and daily praxis. For every norm or ‘rule I learned, observed or participated in, there were invariably exceptions. As such my analysis does not include an inventory of Ngadha adat rules because at any time these rules are open to interpretation. Rather I note the tacit and ongoing agreements that relate to adat with the crucial caveat that at any time these understandings are contestable, and allow the possibility of change. The interpretation and articulation of adat and the subsequent action of the individual or community is unique to each moment. Bourdieu’s notions of habitus guides my understanding
of human action here as ‘...a set of historical relations "deposited" within
individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception
appreciation and action...' (Bourdieu & Waquant 1992: 17) in a field which is a
dynamic intersection of forces'...in which various potentialities exist' (Mahar et
al 1990: 8). All individuals and communities impose their experience and
understandings on an undetermined future, the infinite possibilities of the future
narrowed down however by the habitus. Bourdieu's sociology, often termed
generative structuralism, resonates with Gibson-Graham's vision of the
community economy as a site of economic potential contingent on relationships
and unpredictable negotiations of politics and ethics.

Inviting examination of the ethical coordinates of the community economy
Gibson-Graham also highlight the importance of the epistemology of how we are
to be one amongst many, or in other words how individuals can be a community.
They draw our attention to the 'inessential commonality of negotiating our own
implication in the existence of others...' advancing the philosophy of Nancy to
envisage '...the foundational relationship between being-in-common and
Being...refus[ing] to suppress the togetherness implied in any singularity, any
identity or concept of Being' (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 82). Obscuring the
primordial commonness of being is particular to, indeed hegemonic at this time,
western philosophy. This vision denies the 'proper plural singular co-essence' of
being (Nancy 2000: 34 quoted in Gibson-Graham 2006a: 82). They find that by
privileged the individual as the basic unit of being, western thought has
problematised how we can be-in-common rather than taking this position as a
point of departure for thought or action. Ngadha cosmology does not labour under
such misconception, In the Ngadha milieu individual independence is not a
coveted state of being, but rather being-in-common is the principal mode of
existence. As a brief illustration, the Ngadha sense of being-in-common can be
emphasised with the everyday example of sleeping arrangements. My Flores
family could not understand, but respected, my request to sleep alone in a bed.
Would I not be scared and lonely? Why would I want to sleep alone when my
Flores sister or an unmarried female neighbour could be called to keep me
company?
In this chapter I argue that the Bomolo community is founded on the ‘the proper plural singular co-essence’ of being; that there is a keen sense of being implicated in the existence of others. Bound tightly in a web of interdependence ‘being-in-common’ is the grounds for action in most every day transactions. I begin by noting different types of alternative and unpaid labour organisation – a highly visible and celebrated part of the Bomolo community economy. Weddings, funerals, and Neku ceremonies also enact, rely on, reconfirm, and reconfigure practices of interdependence, and *adat* is strong in this sphere. As in the last chapter my data is drawn primarily from participant observation during preparations and associated activities for weddings and funerals involving up to three hundred helpers and guests. I was also fortunate that during fieldwork a Neku ceremony, with approximately one thousand guests, was held in Bomolo. Additionally I was frequently a guest at weddings and funerals in other *kampung* affording me the opportunity to observe and compare that which I experienced in Bomolo.

**Preparing for a wedding**

Less than a month after arriving in Bajawa my Flores sister, Dhone came to the house where I was living to visit her family before going to the first planning meeting (*utu masa*), for her cousin’s wedding. The cousin lives in Bomolo and Dhone invited me to join her. Willi, her father, grumbled a mild protest as he felt attending a meeting at this early stage was unnecessary. Dhone prevailed and the two of us went ahead to the meeting. On arrival we joined the women including the bride-to-be preparing the food for the evening.

Although an informal affair, Yusef, a retired public servant and senior Bomolo man, opened the meeting with a short speech and effectively chaired the meeting of about twenty relatives. He noted what would be required for the wedding party, and then item by item there was a discussion about what was needed, the cost, and the best place to get certain items. This discussion followed the format of ideas put forward which were either agreed or was countered with the person deemed most knowledgeable in the group being consulted before consensus was reached. Catering, invitations, decorations, the sound system and transport were discussed.
Items were then called out one by one, and individuals replied with their contributions. The group collectively pledged fifty kilograms of sugar, fifty litres of palm wine, fifteen kilograms coffee, and forty cakes. Dhone and I promised to bring four cakes each and all items and contributors were noted in a book.

The second *utu masa* family meeting for planning the wedding was held three days later, two weeks before the wedding. This gathering was much larger, with approximately sixty people attending. The meeting followed a similar format. This time Yusef gave a longer speech, encouraging people to contribute what they could but not to be ashamed if they could only contribute a small amount. A book was passed around and individuals noted their contributions. A total of Rp 1,350,000 ($A 225) was pledged. Following the meeting we ate the customary pork and rice, and drank palm wine. The atmosphere was quite festive though conflict was simmering below the surface. Willi, an *adat* expert, was incensed that Yusef, a retired public servant, was writing down contributions. According to Willi contributions should be given freely and privately. Drawing authority from two incommensurable sources these two senior men often clash. I now understood that Willi boycotted the first meeting to avoid an open discussion of his contribution and possibly a confrontation with Yusef about protocol. Unlike other incidents there was no confrontation and verbal disagreement on this occasion.

One week before the wedding the men of the *kampung* gathered in the central courtyard, the shared common land of the two *kampung* clans and burial grounds of the ancestors. Arriving with machetes and cigarettes they worked together, *dabu ramo*, to build a bamboo frame for the wedding marquee. The women were working in the kitchen and after a few hours they served the men lunch. Following the meal of rice and pork the men continued to drink palm wine, smoke, play cards and chat throughout the afternoon. Again, this was a festive event, an occasion for family and clan to get together and socialise, passing on skills and knowledge. Young women followed the lead of experienced women in preparing, cooking, serving, and cleaning up. Young men were supervised during the construction of the marquee and spent the afternoon in the company of older men. Working together, in this instance to prepare for a wedding, organises production, consumption and distribution of household surplus as part of the Bomolo
commons. Labour is strongly gendered but if practical or necessary these roles are not so strict as to prevent a woman doing the work of a man and vice-versa. Work related to mutual cooperation tends to mirror daily life with women doing the majority of the work: milling, cleaning and cooking rice; roasting and milling coffee; preparing vegetables, chickens and special meat dishes, and cakes; cleaning and pounding spices; serving food and drinks; cleaning up and all the while caring for babies and attending to children. Men cut bamboo and build temporary structures covered with tarpaulins; provide transport for people and materials, kill, butcher and cook pigs, tap palm trees for wine, direct work parties and the official program. Both men and women collect wood and build cooking fires.

Invitations were hand delivered by young men on motorbikes three days before the wedding. During the afternoon I joined a group of women for preliminary food preparations, shelling a large sack of peanuts while we chatted and chewed betel nut. That evening the final kampung meeting before the wedding was held. This time Yusef used a microphone to address the house which was overflowing with people. He announced the hierarchy of the different work parties for the wedding. Each section had a head, assistant head and members. Additionally Yusef was named as the general manager with three assistants. This was all listed in a small exercise book.

Two days before the wedding Dhone and I went to market and purchased fuel and the ingredients to make cakes. In the afternoon we joined the women winnowing rice, and peeling onions and garlic. The day before the wedding we baked the cakes at Dhone’s in-laws house as they have an oven, an enclosed aluminium box with a glass front which sits on top of the standard kerosene ring burner. With the help of Dhone’s mother- and sister-in-law we produced ten cakes, eight for the wedding plus two which Dhone’s mother (my Flores mother Maria) had requested to have at home to offer guests who arrived for the wedding. We baked all day and neighbours and family dropped by, occasionally pitching in with help or advice.
Wedding preparations (papa do 'o) were underway when we arrived at the house to deliver the cakes that evening. Previously I had asked about the different roles for men and women and was told that a man would be ‘putting on airs’ (gengsi) if he were to join in the women’s work of cooking and washing up. However gender roles were blurred as approximately seventy people from both clans in the kampung, and relatives who had arrived from other locations, were busy preparing food. Women arrived with knives, men with machetes, and working in groups we squatted on the ground or stood at temporary bamboo tables cut and assembled for the occasion. Predominately women prepared spices, vegetables, and diced butchered meat while men were killing animals, butchering and cooking the meat. Seven fires were burning with forty four gallon drums cut in half used to cook meat and even larger aluminium pots for cooking rice. Individually owned items are commonly shared to provision for events. Children were sent to different houses to collect cooking drums, pots, knives, trays, tables, chairs and kerosene ring burners. The atmosphere was jovial with loud music and much eating and drinking. At one point four women dressed up as men and moved amongst the different working groups performing hilarious parodies of masculinity. At times people would collapse into the arms of others or on to the ground, whooping and crying with laughter. The celebration had already started!

On the day of the wedding preparations continued in earnest. At home we also prepared to receive guests with coffee and cakes. We cleaned the house and laid out mats, butchered a chicken and a duck, cooked rice and vegetables, and prepared thirty litres of palm wine. Family and friends would be received in the wedding marquee but also be offered hospitality at other people’s homes in the kampung. Called vai tua, extending hospitality to visitors during ritual events (weddings, funerals, Neku) is an important pillar of Ngadha adat hospitality and interdependence. To visit a house and not be offered food brings shame on the house and kampung, insults the guest, and may spark vicious gossip.

Marriage
Marriage ushers in relationships of interdependence in countless ways. In effect a marriage primarily joins two collectives and secondarily two individuals. Church
weddings situate the marrying couple as the focus of the ceremony. The couple stands before a priest making individual promises. Within the formal Catholic ceremony there is little hint of the far reaching consequences of each particular union. It is in Ngadha adat ceremonies that the social, economic and political ramifications of marriage are triggered and publicly exposed. The union of two people creates innumerable opportunities for economic interdependence through adat exchanges, asking for and rendering assistance. A marriage alliance brings two families into a closer union of being-in-common. It amplifies ethical obligations to assist each other, to provide for the necessities of life and to share each others material surplus. This assistance can take the form of goods either in a time of need or contributing to a ceremony, loans, political backing, and social support. The web of relationships that links the community economy are expanded or reinforced with every marriage alliance.

Matrilineal inheritance and residence is now preferred by many Ngadha clans. The groom moves to the home of his bride bringing his labour and economic contributions to the house with only limited payment of bridewealth. Otherwise he and his family enter into the expensive and lengthy process of paying full bridewealth to the woman’s family (detailed below) to move to their house. Residence is an important factor in inter-familial negotiations and considerations, and adat allows for many contingencies. If there are no children residing in a man’s home relatives can pay a type of bridewealth, tune, so that his children can move to his family home and change clan affiliation to that of the father. This is recognised as dheko lega – returning to the father’s ancestral home. Similarly goods can be exchanged so the children of a woman who resides with her husband’s family (following the payment of bridewealth) may return to the mother’s ancestral home and clan, wado sao ebu to occupy land and bolster clan numbers. I did not come across any situations like this and I speculate that these arrangements were more common in the past when warfare and short life expectancy led to a relative scarcity of people. Below I note the exchanges and important occasions Bajawa people associate with marriage. The following processes and list of exchanges describes possibilities for claims, only some of which are made and fulfilled for any given couple. This fluidity is now even more
pronounced as people look beyond the agricultural economic base of the household to fulfil their daily needs.

The first important ceremony to be held preceding a wedding is that of teeth filing. While this ceremony is rarely, if ever held now, its name *kuku laka* now describes the fine a man's family must pay to a woman's family if pregnancy occurs before marriage. Also if the couple are known to have had sex already the father of the woman will ask for a teeth filing (*kuku laka*) fine before any negotiations can proceed. I briefly mention teeth filing here as this female rite was an important occasion both as a rite of passage for women and an occasion to activate the community commons and share surplus. In the past parties celebrating teeth filing would last between three days and a week with much eating and drinking, distributing agricultural surplus. The government banned the ceremony in the late 1960s as wasteful with the backing of the church which at that time was still pushing to inculcate Catholicism and stamp out *adat*. During *kuku laka* a young woman's teeth were filed then inspected by her aunts and female siblings. If her teeth bleed it was a sign she has already had sex and she must confess and name her partner. Ideally *kuku laka* is held when a woman is in her twenties, but my Flores mother Maria had her teeth filed when she was seventeen. Following *kuku laka* the woman's teeth would be blacken with nutmeg juice as a sign that she was ready for marriage and to make her more attractive; Maria's teeth were blackened when she was eighteen and she remembers the process took about one week.

Before any *adat* marriage ceremonies or exchanges are entered into, it must first be established that the couple are of the same rank. I found that there was no consistency in views on just how crucial rank is in marriage alliance. While my Flores father, Willi, continues to disparage his son-in-law as being of lower rank and therefore below his daughter, others point to the waning value of rank in affecting choices of marriageable partners. If the male is of the middle rank, *gae kisah*, and the woman of higher rank, *gae meze* this union is *la'a sala*, literally the wrong way and a *nuka nua* ceremony must initially be held. *Nuka nua* involves killing a buffalo, brought by the groom’s family, to the woman’s *kampung*. Any meat not eaten on the day must be thrown away. Following *nuka nua* the families are now ready to enter into marriage negotiations.
The first step to officiate a marriage is the *adat* ceremony *bere tere oka pale*. The groom and his family visit the village of the bride’s family. Commonly known as *masuk minta* in Indonesian this is when the man formally asks the woman for her hand in marriage. This very public occasion formalised the agreement of the families to form a new social/economic/political alliance of interdependence linked by the young couple. While I was living in Bomolo this ceremony was held in the *kampung* for a young woman and her husband-to-be. The young man resplendent in *ikat* woven cloth sarongs, arrived with his family, offering *sirih*, *pinang* and *kapur* – the ingredients used to make chewing wads of betel nut. He declared his aspiration to ‘know the house’ (*beo sāo*) of his potential bride. In order to know the house he announces his intention to cut wood and feed the pigs at the house. ‘Knowing the house’ is explicitly economic, a verbal statement of intent to contribute to the household economy should he be accepted into the family. As is frequently the case, the next step involved the negotiation of a fine to be paid because although no pregnancy had occurred he had been a frequent visitor at the house so it was assumed that they were sexually active\(^\text{26}\). In this instance a fine of two horses was agreed upon. Interestingly many Ngadha women are pregnant before marriage and parish records show between fifty and ninety percent of couples in the archdiocese of Ende (which includes Ngada district) live together before a church wedding (Deidhae 2001: 1). A ribald joke my Flores sister-in-law told me makes light of pre-marital pregnancy. She had a child before marriage and she joked with me that her husband, my Flores brother, had *minta masuk* – asked to enter her (body) before he *masuk minta* – entered to ask (marriage proposal).

Having agreed on the fine, two pigs were killed with the now familiar process of throwing rice at a pig while addressing the Ancestors before the sacrifice, then examining the liver in front of the sacred *mataraga* altar. At the invitation of close kin the groom-to-be and his family visited the homes of the immediate neighbours, socialising, eating and drinking with the clan of his future children. During this

\(^{26}\)In fact this may have promoted or accelerated the marriage process as gossip about the couple’s nocturnal activities was rife throughout the *kampung*.
time (about three hours) a large group of Bomolo residents gathered in a stand of coffee trees to the side of the house, gambling on cards or watching the game. Back inside the house the adat room was becoming the focus of attention. The bride-to-be’s family placed six plates of rice and pigs liver, and six glasses of palm wine above the mataraga altar for three female and three male Ancestors. In one corner of the room was a collection of baskets of uncooked rice brought by the young man’s family; both a symbolic and practical contribution to the ceremony. The senior women and men of the clan sat chatting while smoking, and chewing betel and tobacco. Offerings to the Ancestors were made but before we could eat the same meal and palm wine had to be offered to the grandmother of the future bride living in a nearby kampung, who was too frail to attend. Once it was confirmed that the delivery had been made, we also ate but only a little as the main part of the day’s feasting was yet to come.

Late in the afternoon the young man and his family completed their round of visiting other homes in the kampung before returning to the house for the ceremonial crescendo of the day zeza, which is the official acceptance of the man into the woman’s home. A large flat plaited tray (kala dai) with a plaited bowl in middle, full of rice and covered in pig meat with a pig’s head in the centre is placed in front of the groom and his kinsmen. All the meat from one pig can only be eaten by the groom-to-be and his kin. The bride-to-be and her family must eat meat from a different pig. Once they had finished eating we were all served rice and meat. The couple are now officially ready to go to church for a Catholic wedding. Having held zeza, if one partner breaks the engagement the offending party must pay a buffalo as a fine. The feasting continued until sunset when the groom and his family left. The bride-to-be and her extended family continued to eat, drink, smoke and chew betel nut well into the night discussing the appropriate marriage exchanges (pasa) that should be made. Only one woman was active in this discussion amongst the men, a particularly outspoken, respected and politically active aunt of the bride-to-be. Numerous types of contributions may be called for, delayed and contested.

27The term zeza is also used to describe the same ceremony when the woman is formally accepted into the man’s family’s home or after a birth. When a new born child first enters the home this is also zeza or lawi and a juvenile animal is killed, a pig for the first child, a chicken for the second and subsequent children, to acknowledge their acceptance into the home.
Possible prestations are listed below and depend on where the couple is to reside.

If the male moves to the female’s home his family is liable for:

**Kaiu Ranga**
One horse given by a man’s family if he moves to the woman’s house. He must also undertake to work at the house gathering wood and pig food.

**Polu**
If the bride was raised by a family other than her own, one buffalo is to be given to them by the man’s family.

**Sao Meze**
One buffalo paid by the man’s family to ‘know’ the main adat house. This is given to the family living in the main house whether or not it is the bride’s immediate family.

If the female moves to the male’s home his family is liable for:

**Polu**
If the bride was raised by a family other than her own, one buffalo is to be given to them by the man’s family.

**Sao Meze**
One buffalo paid to ‘know’ the main adat house. This is given to the family living in the main house whether or not it is the bride’s immediate family.

**Poli Ngeko**
One buffalo is given to the woman’s mother’s male relatives.

**Pu’u ka’e**
One buffalo given to the woman’s family.

**Pire Ine Ame Mae**
One buffalo to be paid if the couple are second cousins.

**Pere**
One buffalo is paid if the man is marrying up in rank.

**Pu’u Ro’ruRepo**
One buffalo is paid to signify all marriage exchanges have been paid except wai susu.

**Wai Susu**
Two buffalo are paid to the woman’s main house symbolizing her two breasts. Each buffalo must be reciprocated with a pig from the woman’s family.

**Wai susu** is the last bridewealth to be paid. Once received a woman’s family must give peso bere, gold or land to their grand-daughters, described as a type of insurance against bad times. Marriage exchanges may stretch over generations. If a woman is to move to her husband’s house, officially she may do so after her family have received five buffalo or the equivalent and their children will join their father’s clan. A total of (the equivalent of) 28 twelve buffalos may eventually be paid, thirteen if the couple are second cousins. At different points in time both before and after the actual marriage ceremony, many strategies for (re) producing the community commons come into play. Immediate kin and clan pool resources to hold the wedding reception, and the practices of adat prescribes numerous exchanges between the families but these prescriptions are more of a starting point for political negotiations. What comes into play here are struggles to define the ‘correct’ exchange of goods and under what circumstances. The stakes are

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28 Two horses is equal to one buffalo. In the past gold Portuguese and Arabic coins were also exchanged at the rate of 60 gold coins to one buffalo.
high for both families with conflict and discord emerging over expectations and correct processes. With harmony or friction, marriage alliance introduces new relations of interdependence for the both the couple and their families. The individual that moves to the home of their marriage partner immediately enters into incalculable relationships of reciprocity with the family and kin of their in-laws. Labour and material contributions to the community commons continue for a lifetime, and exchanges of pigs, buffalo, and horses may carry across generations.

Working together
Nico, a senior Ngadha man visiting Bomolo pointed out to me that there are three important aspects of Bajawa culture. As is common in eastern Indonesian societies, Nico spoke to me in the manner of a loud oration during a lull in an adat ceremony. In a familiar display and dissemination of knowledge, people sat listening and nodding, with other senior men chiming in occasionally to support and add details. Nico listed the three most important aspects of Bajawa culture which he identified as influential:

1- demokratik musywarah (decision making through group consensus) most powerfully demonstrated through communal rights and responsibilities.
2- persatuan kesatuan (unity and integrity) symbolised by the adat house, the Ngadhu and Bhaga to which everyone is attached through clan membership.
3- gotong royong (interdependence). Nico expressed this using the example of food. Everyone must bring food and everyone must eat. He also articulated gotong royong as ‘...one person’s problem is everyone’s problem’.

Social solidarity is known as a cultural trait or marker of Ngadha identity and was often described to me as gotong royong. Gotong royong is a Javanese term used in Indonesian to describe collective action or as an attitude or spirit of cooperation. When interrogating practices of interdependence I generally had to prompt people to define gotong royong in Bajawa language. This was a difficult task for many and I found people would struggle to translate to/from Indonesian and Bajawa language. It was only I who struggled for precision in terminology and translation as Bajawa people incorporate the two languages in their speech. It may be that my use of Indonesian was simply responded to in Indonesian. But the use of the term
'gotong royong' also hints at how localised mutual cooperation has been
harnessed by the state and the penetration of state rhetoric into Bajawa discourse
(see Chapter 5). The term gotong royong is part of the language of the modern
Indonesian State. To speak of gotong royong is to be a contemporary Indonesian
citizen. To speak in Bajawa language of papa laka or rau zo is to be parochial.
Whatever the language, working together enacts the community commons and the
self-defined Ngadha way of life, a conduit for the proper plural co-essence of
being. Small domestic tasks of short duration such as sweeping the house or
feeding pigs may be done individually though usually with a friend or relative
keeping company. Being alone and particularly working alone is pitied, described
as heavy, and borders on deviance, inviting suspicion. Being together is the
preferred mode in which to live and labour. Any work to be done away from the
home or that is time consuming is ideally done with others. In Bajawa language
there is no collective term for labours of mutual cooperation which may also
contribute to categorisation under the rubric of gotong royong. Rather there are
specific terms applied to different practices. The list below then is an emic
perspective of occasions where people work together all of which have the
potential for reciprocity at some future point in time and space.

- **Utu bhou**: gathering family and neighbours for a planning meeting
- **Utu masa**: gathering of family members
- **Papa do o'**: mutual assistance (by invitation)
- **Papa laka**: working followed by a meal
- **Dabu ramo**: mutual assistance (spontaneous/voluntary)
- **Rau zo**: reciprocal assistance when farming
- **Tako lima**: another term for Rau zo
- **Maku manu**: one day’s labouring followed by feasting

All organisational meetings are **utu bhou**, called for a variety of reasons including
announcing and planning weddings, repairing or building a new **adat** house or
Ngadhu/Bhaga, and holding ceremonies such as Reba and Neku (discussed
below). Along with contributions and arrangements for large scale events,
community members have another social responsibility. The families arranging
the celebration have a right to expect other families in the **kampung** to provide
hospitality to guests. This is **vai tua**, eating and drinking at **kampung** houses when
there is a party. **Utu bhou** are held in people’s homes and coffee is served on
arrival. People seat themselves on mats on the floor leaning up against walls.
facing each other. Once assembled a meeting is held to discuss the issue at hand. Rice and pork is served in plaited bamboo leaf bowls to all. Extra bowls of meat and colanders of rice are brought out to be passed around with encouragement for guests to take extra helpings. Seasonal vegetables may also be offered and a small bowl of chilli is also passed around. Jugs of *moke* are brought out and served by a young man who sits in the centre of the group, attentively serving drinks to the guests. Eating together is an act of being-in-common constantly repeated at meetings, work activities and ceremonies. It provides the basic necessity of food in a social, often convivial atmosphere. Reaffirming shared understandings of *adat* norms of hospitality and consuming food together also distributes the surplus of the house amongst kin, clan and others in the *kampung*. Sharing food is a conscious ethical decision to nourish both a community of being-in-common and corporeal bodies.

*Utu masa* is distinguished from *utu bhou* only in so far as it is a meeting of family members primarily to request financial assistance to pay wedding costs or send a child to school. *Papa do’o* is the activity of mutual cooperation and implementation of the *utu bhou* planning meeting(s). *Papa do’o* describes the work carried out in the preparation and execution of Reba, Neku, weddings, and repairing or building a new *adat* house, Ngadhu or Bhaga. I was told that the drive to contribute to *papa do’o* invokes a feeling of responsibility likened to the obligation which you would feel towards your immediate family. In Bomolo it was described as a taken-for-granted assumption, an unexamined response to assist others in some way when requested. The degree to which people contributed and how they worked was the topic of much discussion as judgements were passed on the particular situation and (in)correct behaviour. Failing to participate when invited to contribute labour did occur and, in the absence of a reasonable excuse such as ill health, this transgression would attract anger and ire. Non-participation interrupts *adat* prescribed practices of working together, part of the commons of being-in-common which goes to the heart of what it means to be Ngadha.

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29 When not able to provide their labour I witnessed those in paid employment offset their contribution in advance with the provision of materials, cigarettes, or cash.
Papa laka (literally mutual help) has the connotation of a voluntary pooling of labour with a stronger ethic of reciprocity than is associated with papa do’o. Both papa laka and dabu ramo are similar to papa do’o but are more spontaneous as both occur without an utu bhou meeting. While primarily marshalling labour for funerals, both terms papa laka and dabu ramo are also used to describe donations or pooling of goods such as rice or sugar on these occasions. Primarily dabu ramo occurs in case of a funeral (spontaneous) but can also refer to pooling cash for school fees, or wedding exchanges. Despite being spontaneous and voluntary, there is a sense of reciprocity as expressed in the Indonesian translation I was also offered, baku bantu literally reciprocal assistance.

Rau zo (literally to give work) and tako lima organises agricultural labour exchanges and is most popular for working larger tract of land for the labour intensive crops of rice and maize. Relevant in the Indonesian context rau zo does not involve rights and obligations to share the harvest as do other reciprocal labour arrangement such as on Java (discussed in Chapter 6). Rau zo was not common in Bomolo as many residents employed casual labourers, mainly from the neighbouring district of Manggarai, to work the fields. On the more distant rice fields, land-owners such as Willi rented out land in return for a percentage of the harvest. Again, those renting and working the land were often from Manggarai. Rau zo arrangements differ from group to group but it is common to work three or four fields concurrently so all are finished at the same time. This is an ethical decision so that no one loses or benefits any more than anyone else from weather changes or any other variables. Workers take turns supplying food, betel nut, make, and cigarettes, and lunch may be supplied by the owner of the field(s) being worked that day.

In one group associated with our action research project on the Ngada south coast, rau zo now also incorporates cash equivalence for labour. Cash based rau zo within the group is charged at Rp1,000 ($A 0.16) per hour or Rp 5,000 per day. Individual workers supply their own lunch. If there is a no-show the person pays a fine, half of which goes to the group, half to the landowner. The group will also work for farmers not in the group which is remunerated at Rp 2,000 ($A0.30) per hour or Rp 10,000 ($A 1.65) per day per person. This has not replaced exchanges
based only on labour which operate within the group. A maximum of five fields are worked each day as this is the most that can be completed within a five day working week. Saturday is reserved for going to market and Sunday for rest. Interestingly this group also used *rau zo* labour organisation for the subsistence crops of rice and maize as well as cash crops such as cashew nuts.

*Maku manu* (literally meaning, banana chicken), was described to me as a day’s work by invitation, followed by a feast. The food must be of a high standard, meat and *moke* palm wine must be served. There is no immediate expectation of reciprocity and the work is over in a day. In describing *maku manu* to me people’s eyes would light up as they recalled specific *maku manu* work parties with great fondness. While work needed to be done, it was the socialising and feasting that stayed in people’s minds and was emphasised to me.

Labouring together with a shared sense of purpose goes to the dynamic core of the Bomolo community economy. The many occasions on which people work together to provide for their needs is central to the constitution of the Bomolo community, (re)generating the multiple strands of interdependence. The different manifestations of Ngadha labour organisation discussed above are all guided by understandings of *adat* ethical norms which are held in common yet are always contingent on the interpretation and articulation of those present on the day. Work is productive, harvesting a crop or repairing a house, but production is not just for production’s sake. Labouring in accordance with *adat* is of more concern than the efficiency and effectiveness of work practices. Emphasis is placed on the how of working together, the being-in-common of the occasion rather than the efficacy of the task at hand. Interdependence is a key indicator of Ngadha identity and is expressed in a popular local song about working together.
Popular Music Ngadha Style

Pop music in Ngada language is enjoyed by all age groups in Bajawa. When played at weddings and celebrations, the dance floor, denoted by a square or rectangular space free of plastic chairs, quickly becomes crowded as young and old, female and male, dance as a group facing the same direction and moving in a circle around the available space. The following song *Papa Do'o* is by a three piece Ngadha outfit called Fantasi Group from the small market town of Mataloko about five kilometres from Bajawa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Papa Do'o</th>
<th>Baku Bantu</th>
<th>Helping Each Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ngadha</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indonesian</strong></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai-se kita sama-sama</td>
<td>Mari sudah kita sama-sama</td>
<td>Come here we are the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedu patu se ngaza</td>
<td>Kita omong sata kata</td>
<td>We speak one language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai-se kita pedu po soro</td>
<td>Kita baku omong seia</td>
<td>Together we say all the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mogho se boro</td>
<td>sekata sama satu mulut</td>
<td>same words with one voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazi ngo Ngani, le papa pani</td>
<td>Bicara tentang perkerjaan, kita baku ajar</td>
<td>Talking about work, we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Tusa mula nge tei wali</td>
<td>1 Kita bercocok tanam supaya dapat hasil</td>
<td>invite each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sama uza nge tei wali</td>
<td>2 Dengan hujan bisa dapat lagi</td>
<td>1 We work the soil so that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kita wi su'u le papa su'pu</td>
<td>Kita mau pikul baku bantu</td>
<td><em>we have a crop</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhapi sa'a le papa laka</td>
<td>Kita pikul sama-sama baku kasihan</td>
<td>Carrying on our heads we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngo molo molo papa do'o</td>
<td>Kerja baik-baik baku kasih</td>
<td>help each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngo molo molo papa do'o</td>
<td>Kerja baik-baik baku kasih</td>
<td>Carrying on our shoulders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>with mercy for each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Working well together with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Working well together with</td>
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<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>love</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ethics of *adat* labour cooperation are also extended to more recent innovations in the community economy not necessarily involving labour. Drinking coffee around the fire one morning in Bomolo, my Flores Father Willi asked me why I was interviewing the neighbour about prayer groups (*kombas*). I explained that it was of interest as it was another instance where I had seen people working together to a shared aim. Willi nodded in agreement saying that the organising structure is the same; it is just the agenda or ceremony and the moment that is different. He explained that acts and expressions of interdependence begin at home and extend out. From here it can expand to include kin, neighbours and so on to incorporate the entire nation-state. Specifically he listed off examples that included community and institutional groups such as saving and loans groups, funerals, post-funeral prayers, weddings, and parties to honour ancestors and *adat* traditions.

Although the basis for interdependence is not labour but social relations, a number of different groups draw on the same source of trust and a sense of the individual’s involvement in the lives of their fellow human beings. *Arisan, memente mori, and kombas* all occasion social interaction as a basis of providing for the needs of its members. Members are family, friends and neighbours. A common get-together throughout Indonesia, *arisan* are regular social gatherings where members take turns contributing to and winning a sum of money. Groups of women meet regularly, often at each others homes, on a rotating basis. Membership is restricted to married women. Each woman contributes a set amount of money and takes turns collecting the pooled amount. In the groups I have visited a small sum of money, usually Rp1,000 ($A 0.16) is also collected to contribute to the cost of refreshments (coffee, tea and small cakes). In Bajawa these meetings are popular as an opportunity for women to relax together, catch up with friends, and share information and news. These meetings can also be a forum for the dissemination of official information. At one meeting I attended a local official came to inform the group of the new structure of the *PKK* *Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* – Family Welfare Empowerment Movement. The local health centre (*posyandu*) also organises an *arisan* style savings plan for expectant mothers, helping to ensure women have access to cash immediately after childbirth for necessities such as food and medicines. In this
way individual needs are socialised as being-in-common as part of the community economy.

Another form of arisan I encountered in the kampung adjacent to Bomolo was family arisan. A group of eight related families gathered once a month, usually in the first week of the calendar month when a number of the members who were government employees were paid. This arisan was a convivial social occasion and in 2004 had been going for three years. Held on a Sunday after church the families eat lunch together then spend the afternoon playing cards and gambling, chatting and discussing family matters. The house hosting that month's arisan receives the cash pool. In this instance each family contributes Rp 250,000 ($A 42) so the pool collected by the house was the substantial sum of Rp 2,000,000 ($A 333). They also had a system of making funds available to each other for important expenses. The group adjudicated what expenses were deemed necessary and worthy of family support such as education or health care. Contributions were written down in a book and the recipient was expected to offer the same amount in return to the donors when they in turn requested money for a necessary expense.

Dasawisma literally translates as ten homes but groups can vary in size. The groups I visited are similar to arisan savings groups with additional pooled funds used to save for kitchen item needed for large scale catering such as glasses, plates, large rice cookers and woks. Income from hiring out these items is then divided amongst members. At a neighbour's funeral the family paid Rp 100,000 to hire plates, forks, spoons, glasses and serving dishes for a period of two to three days from a dasawisma group. One of my Flores brothers who is married and lives in his wife's kampung is a member of a housing dasawisma which pools materials for house construction. Arisan and dasawisma create and sustain relationships of interdependence by provisioning for the frequent requirements of individual or family needs as part of the community commons.

Memento mori is a Latin term and I speculate that it is a remnant of the influence of Portuguese Dominican Priests who proselyted across Flores from the 16th to the
18th Century. Group members contribute a small amount of money each month recorded on paper by the group secretary and treasurer. Individuals contribute for named members of their family and when that person dies the contributing individual receives a lump sum of cash and other group members assist with labour and materials for the funeral. Kombas (komunitas umat basis) are Catholic prayer groups which meet once a week to pray or every night during the festive months of May and October. Memento Mori savings groups often have the same membership as the komba group. Four neighbouring prayer groups collaborate to form a pastoral sub-area which has sixteen different liturgy groups such as choir, education, and health. Heads or members of these sub-groups will visit each prayer group to discuss any activities or issues. However this is more of a list of potential people that can be called on by the group head should the need arise. They have no funding, work is done voluntarily and members are expected to have their own bibles. An appointed head reports to the local pastoral office of the Catholic Church providing a direct link to this religious authority. Usually the influence of the komba group does not extend outside the weekly meetings but contributes to the spiritual commons and the social relationships of the group. A major exception here may be to mobilise labour for the church. In early 2005 I encountered a large group of people working on the construction of a new meeting hall adjacent to one of the Catholic Church in Bajawa. They had been called on as members of komba groups and mobilised to contribute labour as part of Lent activities.

Funerals
A death immediately calls forth a complex set of obligations and requests as the community economy is mobilised to execute funerary rites and cater for large numbers of guests. In death the body of a Ngadha person has its last moment of being-in-common in this world before passing to the realm of the ancestors. The deceased is at the centre of activities until they are burial. The corpse is dressed and placed in a coffin in the front room of the house where it is mourned over, guarded, and offered food and palm wine. Family and kin networks swing into

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30 To this day the Catholic Church in Larantuka on the eastern tip of Flores holds its Easter mass in Latin.
action as the word of a death spreads. Early one morning in Bomolo we woke to
the news that one of my Flores brother’s mother-in-law had died. A messenger
was dispatched on a motorbike and all the immediate family and close kin
gathered within hours of receiving the news. Intense negotiations ensued as
decisions were made about who to call to join the funerary delegation from this
family, and what they and the immediate family should contribute, particularly
the size of the pig. Pig husbandry is emblematic of Ngadha identity and adat
prescribes the sacrifice of pigs at all Ngadha funerals. This requisite act preserves
the spiritual commons and satisfies the need to provision for guests while
distributing a surplus of meat no one family could consume alone before spoiling.

Faith in Ancestors and Catholicism is evident during each phase of funerary rites
from the moment a person dies until one year later when a service is held to
remember the deceased\textsuperscript{31}. The first funeral I attended was on the day after I had
moved in with the family in Bomolo. After a year I learnt that attending funerals
was an unpredictable but regular event in Ngadha lives. The first funeral I
attended was held in a kampung about ten minutes away by truck for a man who
was a relative to many in Bomolo including my newly self-appointed mother
Maria. We all wore ikat woven cloth. Ngadha style ikat is a plain black or
patterned cloth with small white motifs such as horses or earrings, but on this
occasion many people were wearing the distinctive Nage-Keo cloth of black and
gold. I followed the women who entered the kampung in a single file procession
balancing baskets of uncooked rice on their heads. The men followed up at the
rear walking in a cluster with a pig.

After handing over the rice to women of the kampung who approached to meet us,
we crowded around the dead body, spilling out of the small front room where the
corpse was lying, and prayed. We then moved off to a neighbour’s house to sit
and eat, drink palm wine, smoke and chew betel. After a few hours we were
called to attention via a PA system with roving mike installed outside the house of
the deceased. We crowded around as pigs were dragged out, trussed and lined up

\textsuperscript{31} Here I do not include Neku, a ceremony held many years after a person dies (discussed in the
next section), as it is not a funerary right per se but rather a celebration honouring ancestors which
is wholly located in the adat realm.
in front of the house. Bomolo men attended to the pig we had brought and in a
similar manner other men of the family who brought pigs crowded around the
animal they had brought. Finally the younger brother of the deceased dragged in
an enormous pig which was positioned in the centre of the front of the house.
There was an atmosphere of escalating excitement as children were shooed away
from the men and pigs. The names of those who brought pigs were called out over
the PA system. The deceased’s brother straddled the pig and struck it with his
machete between and slightly above the eyes. This continued as the other
followed suit with their pigs. Once the blood was flowing the pig’s head was laid
over a short stump and its brain was bled into a basin as a man continued to scoop
its brains out by hand and with a stick into the basin. After bleeding the skull the
pig was then dragged out the back for butchering.

Following the pig sacrifice we returned to another house to sit and eat rice and
pork while drinking palm wine. Eventually, just before sunset we were again
called to the house of the deceased for a Catholic service. The social, jovial
atmosphere turned sombre with many people crying softly. After prayers, hymns
and a reading, the female children came to the coffin to wail, followed by the
male children who cried more softly. The coffin was then nailed shut with one of
the deceased’s sons helped to drive in the final nail. We then moved in a wailing
procession behind the coffin to the dead man’s adat house and waited outside
while candles were lit and a prayer said before continuing the procession to the
grave. Following more Catholic prayer the coffin was lowered into the ground
and we moved back to the house for more eating, drinking and socialising.

There is no adat prescribed criterion for bringing a pig to a funeral. A pig may be
presented for the funeral of a relative or friend. Repaying the debt of a pig for a
funeral may carry across generations and is seen as a responsibility to the honour
of oneself (waka) and ancestors, as well as being a reciprocal obligation of honour
and respect. There is an expectation that a pig brought to a funeral will be
returned at a future funeral and in Bomolo this was always a concern when
someone died. In Willi’s view, expressed as a principle of adat, all pigs brought
to a funeral should be killed and eaten and any remaining meat distributed. The
number and size of pigs sacrificed at a funeral is an indication of the age, status
and influence of the deceased and their family. The greater the number of pigs a person and their family contributes to the funerals of kin, the greater the reciprocity of pigs on the occasion of their death. Investigating the origins of this exchange in Bomolo I was repeatedly told it had always been this way since the time of the Ancestors. As with the documentation of wedding party contributions, Willi decries the public announcement and writing down of the names of those who have brought pigs. According to Willi this is not due process, people know and should remember who has or has not received or given a pig.

However a major change is underway with the monetisation of funerary pig exchange practices. Government bureaucrats and others with cash incomes have started to bring envelopes of money to funerals. In Bomolo, Yusef’s extended family, many of whom are also government bureaucrats, now only kill enough pigs to feed guests with any extra pigs kept for future exchanges or ceremonies. Increasingly also they no longer bring pigs but envelopes of money, the current going rate for a funeral envelope\(^{32}\) is about Rp 300,000 ($ A 50), the cost of an average sized pig. For those with steady cash incomes the sacrifice of so many pigs at a funeral has become an unnecessary expenditure of surplus.

Younger generations also express a desire to move to the exchange of cash as a more practical, expedient, and useful funerary exchange than pigs. Young and old complain about the burden of caring for pigs. My Flores sister Dhone listed off the reasons why she thought pig exchanges would soon be a thing of the past: pigs are a lot of work; cash is more useful to purchase items for the funeral and requirements of the family; and young people see cash as simpler and easier. At the going rate Dhone equated one pig to approximately Rp 200-300,000. While pigs are part of Ngadha ritual obligations to acknowledge and honour ancestors, it is conceivable that in the future only one or a small number of pigs be slaughtered to fulfil this requirement. The shift to envelopes of cash in place of pigs is indicative of the coexistence of economic forms, and the resilience of Ngadha adat. Cash has neither replaced nor superseded exchange relationships; rather the

\(^{32}\)When giving a cash contribution in Indonesia at weddings, funerals and other lifecycle events it is polite to hand over the cash discreetly in and envelope. So \textit{amplop} is a now a colloquial term in Indonesia for giving money. Interestingly \textit{amplop} also refers to bribery, a term stemming from the practice of journalists accepting an envelope of cash for (particular) coverage.
adat ethic of surplus distribution within the community has incorporated cash, a relatively new object of wealth.

Each Ngadha person relies on family and kin to care for their body and perform the correct funerary rites so that after death their soul can pass into the realm of Ancestors unmolested by evil spirits. Funerals activate interdependence amongst the living as they go about preparing and holding the ceremony. It also brings to the foreground the proper plural co-essence of being between the living and the dead. The living ensure the safe passage of the soul, and the recently deceased will in turn care for the living as a powerful Ancestor. The spiritual commons extends from this moment into the future as the Ancestor watches over the living, when the living make offerings of food and palm wine, sacrifice animals and read the entrails for signs from the Ancestors, and hold a Neku ceremony.

Neku: Celebrating the Ancestral Commons
Neku is a ceremony held to honour deceased relatives at a time when their descendants can muster the resources required to successfully hold the event. As part of the spiritual commons, Neku is a necessary ceremony which in effect distributes agricultural surplus when it becomes available. Performing Neku attracts benevolent attention from deceased relatives and is a preventative against possible misfortune wrought by ancestral displeasure. Neku is also referred to as Kenduri, an Indonesian term with Islamic origins for a ritual feasting party. Organisation for the Neku I attended was on a scale similar to the clan-based Reba or New Year Celebration held annually over three days in the month of February. However the Neku ceremony is held in one day with clan and extended kin travelling and staying on for days or weeks necessitating large-scale organisation, and stock piling of food and palm wine.

In Bomolo a Neku ceremony was held in 2004 to honour four ancestors, attracting approximately 1,000 people to the kampung from across Flores and the neighbouring island of Sumba. The four ancestors are from two saka lobo clan Dala families. The two family’s main adat house is in Bomolo with the associated Ngadhu post and Bhaga house located in a nearby kampung. Neku is not a regular
event and the last one held in Bomolo was in 1996. Performing the rituals for more than one house lineage at the same ceremony is not unusual. At another event, the ancestors of three families were honoured at a *ka sao* (literally ‘eat the house’) ceremony I attended in a rural *kampung* to ritually close three renovated *adat* houses. Pooling resources for a jointly held ceremony is an expedient option and ensures the success of the event which is primarily measured by the number of people attending.

One month before the 2004 Neku the first *utu bhou* meeting was held in Bomolo to decide the structure of the organising committee. Preparations for this large meeting began two days earlier with a large network of family members being called on to attend and assist. Women from the two principle families borrowed large catering size pots and woks and began preparing food for the meeting a day in advance. The young men of Bomolo built a temporary extension to accommodate the meeting out the front of the main *adat* house of the ancestors to be honoured. A week before the Neku preparations began in earnest. Six sturdy bamboo posts with supporting cross beams were dug into the ground in front of the Ngadhu post to tether the buffalo to be sacrificed. A large low platform was constructed from flattened bamboo in front of the main *adat* house to serve as the butchery for the many buffalo and pig carcasses. Temporary cooking areas were made ready at the back of three houses. Following the day of work, *papa do'o*, Bomolo people sat together and ate the usual *adat* of fare rice, pork, and palm wine. In addition there were plates of green leafy vegetables and chicken dishes.

After eating another *utu bhou* meeting was convened. Four senior men who reside outside Bomolo but are descendants of the celebrating houses were seconded as organisational heads and Bomolo residents were asked to be ready to receive guests, *vai tua* (described above). Rice and meat would be cooked in the temporary kitchens and distributed to respective homes for serving to guests. Another *utu bhou* meeting was scheduled to be held in two days time. Men were requested to bring their machetes. Walking home Willi explained the key events of the Neku ceremony;

-  *basa sao* killing pigs to start proceedings and prepare meat for the guests
- *dhoro ra'a manyu* killing a chicken in front of the *mataraga* (ritual altar) in the main *adat* house

- *nazo kabar* the first buffalo is to be killed. In this instance the sacrifice will occur at the clan Dala Ngadhu post in a nearby *kampung*. Other buffaloes will then be killed at the Ngadhu post (associated with clan Paru) in Bomolo.

As each house continued its preparations the political lobbying continued. Over early morning coffee we heard how two men were clashing over whose buffalo should be sacrificed first, the animal from the main *adat* house or the other house with the oldest ancestor? A great influx of resources began to pour into the *kampung*; truck loads of wood for cooking fires, enormous transportable water tanks were brought in then filled by the town fire-engine, kerosene in reused plastic five litre “Bimoli” oil containers, salt, mono-sodium glutamate (msg), sugar, oil, tea and cigarettes. Each household processed their own stores in preparation; rice was husked and winnowed, coffee dried and roasted. On the day before Neku perishable goods including palm wine, vegetables, and chilli were stockpiled in the kitchens of Bomolo. At home Willi’s daughter had returned for the ceremony from the neighbouring district of Manggarai where she works in a supermarket. His other daughter Dhone was also at the house, arriving early to assist with preparations.

Before dawn on the day of Neku the men of the *kampung* gathered to kill the first pigs *basa sao*. By 8 am huge pots of rice and meat were cooking as guests began entering the *kampung*, most dressed in *ikat* woven cloth, bringing pigs and uncooked rice. Guests arrived in a semi-formal procession, the women walking in one line balancing *bere* (woven baskets) of uncooked rice on their heads, the men following up the rear with the leashed pig(s). Initially these delegations would approach the celebrating house to which they were connected. The uncooked rice and pig(s) were received before they were ushered to other houses to be accommodated and served coffee and cake, followed by the first of many serves of rice, pork, and palm wine for the day.
Mid-morning I joined the senior men and women in the main *adat* house where we ate rice and pork, and drank palm wine. While we ate the women carefully nursed a young chicken. After eating, the chicken was sacrificed in front of the *mataraga* ritual altar in *dhoro ra’a*, the second important step of the Neku ceremony. After addressing the ancestors a senior clan Dala man placed a knife in the chicken’s beak then sliced back towards its head. The blood was smeared directly onto the oldest man in the clan, from the bridge to the tip of his nose and also on the *mataraga*. The chicken’s liver was examined and after much discussion it was declared that today the signs were good, though the Ancestors had cautioned us to proceed carefully. As we sat chatting, sipping moke, men smoking, women chewing tobacco and betel wads, there was a minor earth quake. Chuckling, the men and women told me this was the Ancestors shaking the earth to see who was up there.

Along with the senior men I was ushered into a car for the very short journey of less than five hundred meters to kill the first buffalo at the Clan Dala Ngadhu post in a nearby *kampung*. The buffalo was roped around the neck, the rope then threaded through the fork of the Ngadhu post and secured to the Peo, a single rock partially buried directly behind the Ngadhu post. The buffalo’s nose was tied to another rope attached with a slip knot to a forked bamboo pole. Pulling both ropes taunt two groups of young men struggled to hold the animal still. The eldest living man from the celebrating lineages, still sporting the smear of chicken blood down the length of his nose, stepped up and symbolically cut the buffalo’s throat. Willi then stepped up and with one great hack to the lower throat killed the beast. Young men rushed in with bamboo containers to catch the blood spurting from a major artery. Blood was smeared first on Clan Dala’s Ngadhu and Peo, to which the buffalo was tied, and then also applied to all the other adjacent Ngadhu posts (linked to other clans) to feed the Ancestors. Once severed the buffalo’s head was placed at the base of Clan Dala’s Ngadhu post. The buffalo carcass was cut up into sections including separating the ribs which were placed in the fork of the post to feed the Ancestors. At this part of the ceremony only about thirty men

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33 My privileged position as a resident foreigner propelled me into the middle of the action with the added dimension that I was also co-opted, as the bearer of a video camera, to be the resident documentary filmmaker for this and other events.
from Bomolo were in attendance. Women from the *kampung* we were visiting filed out with trays offering coffee and tea.

We made our way back to Bomolo with the buffalo now in pieces and minus the head. Back at Bomolo another five buffalo were to be sacrificed. This was to be the main event and as we all gathered around I estimated there were one thousand people present and the atmosphere was electric. Eventually one of the buffalo was ready with both ropes tied in the same fashion as described above. Deliberations about the correct *adat* procedure followed with senior men furiously yelling, consulting, and arguing with each other. The buffalo on the left must be killed first progressing through to the last one on the right so there was debate about which way was the correct left to right direction, facing to or away from the Ngadhu post. Yusef marched up and angrily untied the second rope holding the buffalo from the bamboo pole and threw it to the ground. The set up was then changed in order for the buffalo to be killed first to be tethered at the other extreme of the bamboo posts. Willi killed the first buffalo and in one clear blow to the throat the buffalo fell quickly to its knees with blood spurting from a major artery as young men rushed in with bamboo containers to catch the blood. Later Willi told me that in the minutes he stood ready to make the sacrifice he was in communication with an Ancestor who had entered the buffalo. The Ancestor told him when the buffalo was ready to be sacrificed. Willi explained that he has the power and knowledge to communicate in this way which is why he can make such a clean kill in one blow; a skill much admired and appreciated by all. One by one the buffalo were sacrificed each by different Bomolo men, and then dragged away by groups of younger men for butchering. Yusef, Willi’s main political opponent in the *kampung*, killed one of the buffalo taking a number of blows to fell the beast. This is significant to the tension in the relationship between these two senior men. Willi’s prestige and *adat* authority being further enhanced in comparison to the less sophisticated kill by Yusef.

Having dispensed with the buffalo, beasts of the highest and most prestigious order, it was time to kill the many pigs that had been tethered around the *kampung*. Small groups of boys and men converged around each pig, trussing its legs and positioning it to face the main house where the first pig would be killed. The
screaming of approximately seventy pigs was deafening. Each man that was to kill a pig stood astride the trussed animal ready to deliver the fatal blow – a single chop from a sharp machete (parang) brought with a great swing of the arms between the ears and eyes of the pig. Using a microphone a senior man addressed the ancestors and threw uncooked rice on the head of the first pig. When he finished speaking this pig was killed, signalling all others to do likewise. Men and pigs were screaming in unison as the pigs were slaughtered, some in a single clean blow, others needing a number of attempts to render the pigs immobile. Men barked instructions to boys on how to hold the pigs and where to place the bowls or bucket they held to catch the draining blood and brains (to be used in cooking). The pig is held on an angle by a number of men so the blood can drain from the skull, and brain matter is scraped out with the sharp end of the machete or a stick. As the cacophony of the killing subsided to a dull roar, Bomolo and neighbouring residents drifted back to their homes, calling and inviting guests to join them for more food and socialising. Others swung into action to butcher and cook the buffalo and pig meat, and rice.

At sunset two gigantic woven baskets (Plate 7), positioned at the front of one of the celebrating houses began to fill up with cooked rice. Groups of women emerged from Bomolo houses carrying covered woven baskets, the size of large cake tins, bursting with cooked rice. Women of the celebrating house were on hand to meet them and accept their contributions. Half the rice was put in an enormous basket, and half was left in the smaller baskets which the women took back with them, symbolically reciprocating rice. Out the back the meat was nearly cooked and young men from all the houses gathered to distribute the rice and meat. Working in unison they lined up before entering each house in single file. This was the final organised part of the day. For the rest of the evening Bomolo was abuzz as both young and old socialised, ate, drank, smoked, chewed betel nut and tobacco.

The day after the Neku ceremony our neighbour died following a brief illness. She passed away in hospital and her corpse was brought back to kampung and laid out in the front room. Our house was the main staging place for food preparation and fires burned almost continuously outside my room for three days.
After all large ceremonies a debriefing occurs but given the circumstances this did not happen until three months later. As with the Reba debriefing, this was a low-key affair; rice, pig meat and palm wine was offered to the ancestors. We ate and chatted about the ceremony, recounting who came and did what, evaluating the success of the event and what could be done differently in future.

Neku is an occasional yet key event at which the Ngadha spiritual commons is publicly enacted and celebrated. Named Ancestors are recognised as important and ever-present members of the clan. In this way Neku is an expression of respect and an acknowledgement of the power they wield. The maintenance of the benevolent attention of the Ancestors is an integral part of all Ngadha practices. Neku achieves this and at the same time distributes surplus on a grand scale. As Neku is only held when a family is able to muster the necessary resources, it works as an ethical practice of surplus distribution. This is an opportunity to redistribute surplus in a socially acceptable manner in accordance with adat.
Being-in-common is another important feature of Neku both for the living and the Ancestors. The coming together of many families and clans from far away places reconnects people, and people to place, particularly their kampung land and clan Ngadhu and Bhaga. It also articulates the inter-connectedness of people and Ancestors who ensure fertility and the continuity of Ngadha clans.

**Conclusion**

A dense web of relationships meshes Ngadha people together; the proper plural co-essence of being is ever present in daily life. Being-in-common is understood as the perpetual and enduring state of existence in life and in death. In the present adat guides the individual in the cooperative practices of interdependence. So for example my Flores mother Maria has the following connections to another woman, Lena: as co-residents of Bomolo they come together in the labour and ceremonies of Reba, Neku, weddings, funerals, house construction and renovations; as neighbours they also share childcare, household items, social and psychological support; they attend the same church; are in the same memente mori and kombas groups. These connections not only link Maria and Lena but draw their families into an associational relationship. Although of different clans, which would mobilise another constellation of relational ties discussed in Chapter 3, a web of interdependence binds them inextricably, and implicates them the existence of each other.

Always provisional and open to modification, adat guides negotiations and definitions of what is necessary and surplus in the lives of Ngadha people. Providing necessities for all is central to Ngadha identity, actively endowing individuals with an immutable sense of being-in-common. Labouring together brings individuals into each others lives, homes, and fields ensuring physical and spiritual sustenance as part of the community economy. This chapter has described Ngadha relationships of interdependence which bring individuals together for production and consumption. Beyond daily needs culturally defined surplus is regularly shared by all comers to a busy schedule of ceremonies. Geared towards group surplus distribution through consumption these ceremonies are cast as uneconomical by the Indonesian government, Catholic Church and development agencies. Focussed on individual surplus accumulation as the path to
economic development these institutions are at odds with Ngadha cosmology and practice which privileges interdependence.
Chapter 5: Cash and Surplus

Interdependence is an intrinsic part of Ngadha life so how do people negotiate and maintain these ties in tandem with the opportunities for individual surplus accumulation offered by cash? In Bajawa I asked one of the few Ngadha entrepreneurs how he managed the clash between the obligations of *adat* surplus distribution and his personal accumulation of wealth from a number of small profitable businesses. He explained that he would often invoke an old saying; *mami le mogo negta bhaghi ngia* - what is cooked we share, what is raw is for the individual. Fielding requests for cash he would indicate to the borrower that cash is raw and therefore must be repaid to the individual. He would furnish loans to people but if they did not return the money he would refuse any further requests. In this way he managed to stay a viable member of his family, clan, and community by drawing on the ethic described in this Ngadha phrase. In addition many of his business concerns were out of town so the extent of his wealth was not readily apparent. He had no fear of supernatural sanctions as he reported that most of his profits were to be spent on a cultural centre he planned to build in his *kampung*. This he envisaged as a place to hold musical and dance performances and where women could weave. It would serve both as a meeting place for the community and a business where tourists could pay to watch performances and purchase cloth and other handicrafts. He predicted the centre would provide employment and generate revenue for his community. In this way he felt he was sharing his wealth so was not in danger of attracting the malevolence of God or his Ancestors.

While instructional, the economic strategies of this Ngadha entrepreneur are exceptional. The institution of *adat* has an historical authority and continues to guide Ngadha practices of surplus distribution on a daily basis. It is crucially importance to note here that the ethics and practices of interdependence do not exist in isolation, in a category called economy. Practices of interdependence which clothe, feed, and shelter people are inextricably meshed with other aspects of Ngadha culture. Cash is a recent innovation that is not only transformable but
has the potential to divorce labour and objects from community practices of interdependence. *Adat* provides little guidance on how to handle cash and its durable, highly transformable nature.

Negotiating the terms of interdependence is complicated by modes of institutional authority, cash transactions and new material items. Altruistic motives and a shared sense of responsibility, hallmarks of Ngadha *adat*, inevitably become enmeshed in a wider field of power and strategies. In 2006, I arrived back in Bomolo to find a simmering discord between my Flores family and the relatives next door. The previous year the neighbour's elderly father had died. In order to pay the significant costs of the funeral the neighbour approached my Flores father Willi to purchase a small parcel of land with a stand of coffee trees adjacent to the *kampung*. Willi had a large sum of cash on hand having just sold a parcel of land.

Willi knew that his neighbour, also a relative and of the same clan, was in a tight corner and needed cash quickly to perform the necessary death rituals and associated social obligations. This was not land Willi aspired to purchase but he reported that he did so for two reasons: to help his neighbour/relative in a time of need, and because the land was shortly to provide a substantial return. A government project had been put to tender to repair the small bridge adjacent to Bomolo. While these works are in progress the plan is to divert traffic across the *kampung* square joining up with a side road via the land the neighbour was selling. He informed Willi that the government would clear a four metre wide path to allow cars through. Whoever owned the land would receive compensation for the use of the land and clearing of coffee trees. In a seemingly straight forward cash transaction driven by the ethical imperatives of interdependence, and financial gain, Willi purchased the land.

This straight forward transaction began to get complicated a year later. The government now decided to reduce the size of the path cut through the *kampung* and adjacent land to two meters, only wide enough to let motorcycles through. This effectively decreased the compensation payment by half. Willi held his neighbour/relative responsible for this because he is a government bureaucrat so assumes he had prior knowledge of this change. Dissatisfaction on Willi’s part
intensified when the neighbour approached Maria, Willi’s wife, and asked to harvest coffee from the land. Willi was outraged “He sold the land and trees to me last year. How can he ask for the coffee? And if he wants to harvest my coffee he should ask me. It is my land not my wife’s! He only cares about money. I am a poor farmer and yet I loan him money. He still owes me money borrowed to pay his sons’ university fees three years ago!” Moving towards cash as a medium of exchange, which can be impersonal and anonymous, challenges not just practices of economic interdependence but Ngadha cosmology. In sharp contrast to group surplus distribution particularly of agricultural surplus which has a limited shelf life, cash is durable making individual surplus accumulation possible in the moment and into the future as cash is an object which can be saved.

This chapter focuses specifically on surplus – one of the four ethical coordinates I have been using to discuss the Bomolo community economy. I argue that without precedence and only a short history, cash is treated primarily as surplus to the necessities of life provided by the agricultural base. I make this argument with the important caveat that cash has now become necessary in order to send children to school and to buy small consumables like sugar and cigarettes. Since the 1970s the impetus to send children to school has been high. However for the poorest Ngadha people, this is a discretionary activity which can cease during difficult times. Likewise, cash is desirable to pay for a greater range of health care products and services now available. A certain amount of free health care is available at government and church clinics but better medicines or treatment are now on offer in Bajawa, with the wealthiest people travelling to Kupang or Jakarta for treatment.

Paying cash for health care or children’s schooling does not interfere with practices of subsistence and the worship of God and Ancestors so fundamental to the community economy. Cash may be used to purchase food or livestock in support of ceremonial activity but has no direct role in the schema of *adat* and as such is surplus to relationships of interdependence at the core of the Ngadha community economy. Cash is therefore not a necessity in this sphere but may contribute to the commons or be used to purchase food for consumption both on a daily basis in people’s homes and for ceremonies.
Surplus
Surplus enters the discourse of anthropology through the writing of scholars drawing on Marx and Engels, who defined surplus as the difference between what people produce and what they need to survive (Wilk 1996: 11). Marx argued that this occurs within the household where surplus is extracted from women and children by men, then moving into the public sphere in the form of slavery, tribute, taxes, and capitalist appropriation of labour based on ownership of private property. Surplus has also been a topic of investigation in relation to great estates, the dominant economic institution in Europe prior to feudalism. Only in the late thirteenth century does surplus appear in account-keeping as the goal on great estates was self-sufficiency with a focus on economising what the estate produced (Gudeman 2001: 75).

Surplus is not absolute but relational depending on how the individual defines and differentiates between needs and wants which is influenced by the socio-cultural lens through which they view the world. As slippery as concepts come, it is not inconceivable that something an individual sees as surplus in one moment may not be the next. Surplus is a sphere of choice, of ethical decision making and redistribution, shaped by discourse and historical and current practices. While understandings and allocation of surplus are steeped in culture it is individually specific in space and time. In this discussion surplus is specifically surplus value or surplus product, and excludes an analysis of surplus labour, another type of surplus identified and examined by those writing in the Marxian tradition (Gibson-Graham 2005: 13).

Prior to the introduction of cash, Ngadha people stored material surplus in the form of food, cloth, gold and sacred items stored or displayed on the *mataraga* ritual altar. Food surplus was, and still is, stockpiled in the short-term. In the physical world, to exceed the material wealth of your elders and Ancestors is to shame them. That is not to say that Ngadha cannot accumulate wealth. For Ngadha, to accumulate enough wealth to build a house is the absolute pinnacle of economic success. *Adat* prescribes that the primary economic goal is for a person to have enough food, pigs and buffalo so they can fund the construction of an *adat* house, make gold necklaces and hold a feast; they are then regarded as
having attained the highest stage in life sadho – accomplished (Djawanai 1980: 309). In this instance surplus can accumulate but how it is expended has precedence in normative cultural practice and discourse. In housing construction, historical custom endorses contraction in preference to growth. Every new adat house built must be smaller than the main clan house and its roof must be lower. During the erection of a new house in the kampung adjacent to Bomolo the foreman was not a master builder but a master carver and authority on adat, on site to direct and ensure both the processes of construction and the building conformed to adat.

The completion of the construction or renovation of a house occasions the holding of a ceremony. This is another occasion on which agricultural surplus is regularly distributed besides births, weddings, funerals, ancestor worship (Neku), Ngadhu/Bhaga construction or repair, and New Year celebrations (Reba). This list of ceremonies is now supplemented with the ceremonies of the Catholic Church; first communion, and additional wedding and funeral ceremonies which entail similar hospitality of guests and hence another opportunity to distribute surplus. Ngadha adat ceremonies direct surplus in the produce that is consumed and exchanges and agreements that may be reached when people meet on these occasions. Following is an account of a ka sao ceremony, an example of adat prescribed surplus distribution culminating in mege, which is an instance of collective surplus distribution par excellance. Ka sao literally means to eat the house. This ceremony is held any time an adat house is renovated to ensure that all who live in the house will be successful, work hard, raise many animals and be safe. Animals are sacrificed and their blood and coconut juice is poured in the corners of the adat room, the house and on the roof. I travelled to a ka sao ceremony held in Tololela village at the invitation of Petrus, a senior clansman who has links to this village through his deceased wife. As we drove along the dirt road Petrus’s daughter, now in her mid-forties, recalled travelling the same route from Bajawa to Tololela on foot and horseback when she was a child.34

34 It is important to note how differently people now move across the land. With the advent of motorised transport the surrounding environment is now a moving landscape, mostly untouched by the traveller and viewed from a slightly removed position on the back of a motorbike or from the perspective of a vehicle window. The intimate knowledge of sacred sites, land, plants and
Tololela is a striking village set against a large limestone outcrop on the cone volcano Mount Inerie. Arriving at the base of Mount Inerie we joined other people abandoning their vehicles to walk the final kilometres up a steep and very rough track to the village. Three adat houses had been repaired so in this instance there were many kin and clan arriving for the ceremony. On the outskirts of the village we paused, regrouped with our party and entered as one in a semi-formal procession. The village is built on two separate levels each with three Ngadhu/Bhaga complexes signifying the presence of six clans. In the upper village, houses are built along three sides of a large rectangular courtyard. Both levels of the village follow the uphill/Ngadhu, downhill/Bhaga location pattern and there are also numerous Ture, squared-off mounds of rocks under which Ancestors are buried.

It was very hot and dusty when we entered the village, people were dancing, the band of gongs and drums was set up under the small terrace of a Bhaga house and many people were sitting on the terraces of the surrounding houses. Ngadha houses follow a general blueprint and the homes in Tololela are similar to homes in Bomolo. The significance of the house as a reflection of social and cosmic order and its symbology in Flores is addressed in the work of Erb (1999), Lewis (1988), Molnar (1994), (1994) Smedal, and Tule (2001), and throughout the Austronesian world in a volume edited by Fox (1993b). In Ngadha homes the wooden adat room is central with seven planks of wood on the front including a sliding plank for the door and thirteen posts. The front is decorated with auspicious symbols: chickens (so people will wake up), horses (so they can ride and look for food), earrings (so they will have gold) and buffalo horns (to protect the house and occupants). Cooking is done at the side of the house or in the adat room. Some houses have wash rooms and latrines in separate out-houses at the back.

On this occasion all the houses of Tololela were entertaining guests as three adat houses had been repaired. This was a joint ceremony attracting kin and clan with animals gained by walking through territory is curtailed as we bump along the dusty roads of progress.
connections to each of the three houses. Holding one ceremony for multiple families is not unusual, as was the case for the Neku ceremony held in Bomolo to honour four Ancestors described in the last chapter. Holding shared ceremonies defrays the effort and expenditure of the celebrating houses to some extent, and ensures success in the secular realm which is gauged by two key factors – the quantity of food on offer and the number of people who attend. The more people present, the greater the prestige. Abundant food supplies mean not only meat and rice for continuous feasting but also left-over surplus for everyone to take home or eat on the journey home. Holding the ceremony for multiple houses draws a good crowd and pooling resources provides ample food particularly in provisioning large beasts such as buffalo for sacrifice.

On entering the village we went directly to the house of Petrus’ wife’s family where we rested before changing into dancing attire. For women this was an *ikat* woven cloth sarong (*lavo*) cinched at the waist with an *ikat* belt fastened at the shoulders with safety pins. Two yellow sashes were placed over each shoulder and crossed in the centre. Hair was pulled back into a tight bun and a red headband decorated with gold coloured motifs was tied across the forehead. A red string hung from the middle finger of each hand and was adorned with white chicken feathers. Long necklaces of plastic beads and a plaited bamboo leaf bag fringed with horse hair were slung over one shoulder. Once dressed we entered the central courtyard and joined others doing the *burung elang* dance – the outstretched arms and movement of women’s hands mimics a bird soaring over the fields looking for prey after the seasonal burning off of the land in preparation for planting. We moved off after a few turns of the courtyard, changed out of the dancing outfits and went about the business of eating and socialising. Dancing continued until sunset while the women of the village with some assistance from men and visitors bustled around preparing food and carting water late into the night.

The next day started early when young boys began playing music on drums and gongs. Along with the other single women sleeping on bamboo mats in one of the rooms, I woke before sunrise to the sounds of this music and the barking of dogs being killed and butchered for the day’s feasting. We sat chatting with a
procession of visitors and in turn visited neighbouring houses. Mid-morning we made our way down to the lower half of the village to witness the sacrifice of five buffalo. As with the Neku ceremony the buffalo were tied to the Ngadhu post and killed by a sharp blow to the jugular vein. Young men rushed in with long hollow lengths of bamboo to catch the blood spurting from the neck of each beast to anoint the repaired homes and to be used in cooking. After the buffalo sacrifice we made our way back to the upper village for the pig sacrifice. Approximately eighty pigs were killed in front of the three celebrating houses.

As the pigs were being killed a huge mound of cooked buffalo meat was accumulating. The meat was piled up on bamboo mats and contained on three sides by wooden planks (about the size of a door) in front of one of the celebrating houses. Over the next few hours the pigs were butchered and cooked, and baskets of cooked pig meat were added to the ever growing tower of meat. This accumulation of meat along with huge quantities of rice cooked at the back of houses was being prepared for a single event of surplus distribution on a grand scale. *Meze* literally ‘eating together’ gathers everyone present to sit in the central courtyard of the village and eat together. Large bamboo trunks are split in half and placed in rows on the ground for people to sit on. In this instance approximately five hundred people congregated in Tololela for *meze*. This was a breath-taking sight and a feat of large-scale catering and organisation. Plaited bamboo leaf bowls were distributed then men moved along the rows of guests serving first rice and then meat. At the same time rice and meat to take-away was being parcelled up in *kaladai* – large plaited bamboo leaf containers covered and tied with leaves. *Meze* typifies Ngadha interdependence; pooling, sharing, and distributing surplus amongst kin and clan.

For Ngadha people performing ceremonies, acknowledging and honouring Ancestors is the primary path to immediate and future prosperity. Ancestors are omnipotent hence even individual accumulation of surplus hidden from the living will invite sanctions from the dead. The creation of genuine desire (as opposed to
fantasy desire), the primordial state for creation of the need to produce permanent or long term individual surplus (and hence the question of allocation of that surplus) is actively resisted by Ngadha institutions and influences the choices of individual. Marketing and mass media also influences individuals but this is tempered by community interdependence.

In Bomolo a façade of financial equality is maintained with two or three generations of each family dwelling in a similar style of home on corporately-owned clan land. Doggedly chasing economic gains would bring shame on the waka (pride) of an individual and her or his family. There is little incentive for the individual to do extra work or be enterprising as you either have to share the fruits of your labour or be socially ostracised. Conspicuous consumption is not prevalent, with social pressure ensuring that the opposite applies. Wealthier families save their money and only purchase material items within certain acceptable social boundaries to prevent jealousy, accusations of being gengsi (putting on airs) or sombong (snobby), and social ostracism. Socially acceptable items to purchase include motorbikes, televisions, video players, and satellite TV dishes. Since Bajawa became connected to the national mobile phone network in April 2004, cash is also spent on purchasing mobile phones indicating both disposable savings and the means to pay for the ongoing cost of calls and text messages. For most people it appeared there were usually small amounts of rupiah available to buy cigarettes or contribute to the collection plate during Catholic services. Jealousy and social sanctions encourage people to live at approximately the same standard. Ngadha people do not ‘keep up with the Jones’s’ rather they ‘keep down with the Jones’s’.

Conversely, individuals do influence and transform Ngadha institutions through daily praxis; different networks are activated and new material items are introduced. Improved transportation has recently brought consumer goods into Bajawa on a large scale. Almost daily new furniture, whitegoods and computers appear in stores and the market place. The appearance of such big ticket

35 By fantasy desire I refer to that which people may desire in the abstract but would never take up even if available (constraints or limits of the field) as opposed to that which each person perceives as achievable (as defined by the individual habitus).
merchandise fuels people’s acquisitive desires. In this relatively remote mountain
town Ngadha people now face the possibility of ‘being modern’, able to emulate
practices seen in print media and programs of satellite television. However to act
on desires of a foreign modernity, to transgress normative economic practices,
immediately dislocates the individual within the Ngadha milieu. Watching a
popular TV soap opera from Mexico ‘Mari Mar’ with a group of young women
exemplified this point. While marvelling at the outfits and lifestyles of the
characters the women made jokes and laughed about how they would like to live
in such a fashion but never could. It would be snobbish and beyond them. They
are kampungan (of the village, ‘country hicks’), kasar (rough) with frizzy hair
and flat noses. To dress and live like the characters on ‘Mari Mar’ would be to
deny their obligations to kin and insult their honour.

Cash

According to a Ngadha Catholic priest that I interviewed, cash became a widely
acceptable form of exchange in Bajawa during the 1970s. He recalls money
initially being the privilege of teachers, nurses and bureaucrats; those receiving a
wage from the government. In the late 1980’s Webb found that the cash economy
was not understood by many on Flores despite the wide-spread use of cash (1990:
11). In Bajawa I found people to be fluent in the handling and trading of cash but
the reasons behind fluctuating commodity prices and money markets were not
part of most agriculturalists’ knowledge.

This continuing shift to cash is bringing about significant changes in socio-
economic relations. For example, less time will be required to care, feed, transport
and butcher a pig for kin funerals if envelopes of money are offered or the pig is
purchased in the market place. This shift to cash severs a link with ancestral
practices and Ngadha identity. One way Ngadha people are defined is as pig
breeders, particularly in opposition to Indonesian Muslims who due to religious
prohibition do not touch pigs or pork but are identified as goat breeders. Another
indirect transformation of Ngadha culture is through the use of cash in marriage
exchanges. Now that the value of buffalo, horses and cloth can be calculated in
cash they are seen as expensive commodities rather than objects integral to
marriage exchanges. This commensuration with cash, the priest explained to me, is one of the reasons many Ngadha women are now getting pregnant before marriage. Pre-marital pregnancy can circumvent many exchanges and reduces the pre-wedding time available for negotiations. Also the smaller the marriage exchanges are, the less the married couple are beholden to their families. Cash offers individuals an option of autonomy not available thirty years ago. For this reason many young couples co-habit prior to performing an adat or church wedding ceremony to further reduce their obligations to family. Parish records show between fifty and ninety percent of couples in the archdiocese of Ende, which includes Ngada district, live together before marriage (Deidhae 2001: 1).

Cash is also bringing about a subtle shift as the control of wealth moves from senior members of the household to the individual. Cash may be lent or borrowed but it is generally seen as the property of the individual. Within the house where I lived, cash was managed, handled and kept discreetly by individuals. Although my teenage Flores brother Markus went to school and had no form of income he usually managed to acquire small sums of money to buy snacks, gamble, and occasionally purchase clothing. It was his Mother’s responsibility to ensure sugar was purchased for making morning coffee. She would regularly pull small bills out of her sarong and send a reluctant Markus to the kiosk to buy sugar. When I asked her why she did not buy larger packets of sugar from the market she told me that Markus was greedy and would eat it all very quickly. This may have been the case but purchasing small packets of sugar or single use sachets of washing powder was common place in the kampung. Purchasing these items in larger quantities from the market is more economical in terms of cost per kilogram but when purchased in quantities in excess of immediate need the remainder may be borrowed therefore less economical. I also observed that Maria and other women of her generation in Bomolo would avoid purchasing goods from the market. To leave the kampung and return from the market with commodities offended their sensibilities as high rank individuals, petty tasks like this were the work of lower rank or younger people.

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36 For an explanation of rank see chapter three
In the same vein, to sell in the market place is not the purview of men such as Willi. As an accomplished blacksmith, Willi produces knives and spear tips to order in his bamboo workshop behind the house. I asked Willi why he did not make more of these and sell them in the market. This he found amusing, it was inconceivable to him that a man such as himself would do something so common. If people wanted his knives or spear tips they must come and ask him! As a ritual specialist, Willi is not just any blacksmith banging out metal objects; he creates specific items for particular people. This enterprise involved the transaction of cash or goods which was always done discreetly and in private. Numerous traders were always welcome in the kampung and would go from house to house selling their wares. These traders, mainly from Java and Sumatra, were often successful selling Indonesian health tonics (jama), kitchen utensils, clothing, blankets and furniture. Local traders would also pass through the kampung selling soup, cakes, and raw fish from mobile carts.

Despite the reticence of some Ngadha people to openly engage in the market place, most people now need cash to pay for primary school for their children, and increasingly secondary and tertiary education. Previously formal schooling was the privilege of the elite who were eligible to attend the Dutch run school in Bajawa which opened in 1911 (Deidhae 2001: 44). During the 1970s the Suharto government set up schools across the archipelago that were open to all. Sending children to primary school is now the rule rather than the exception and requires sums of cash for fees, books, uniforms etc. Cash has now become a necessary part of the household base and as I observed in 2004-05 and 2006, even the poorest families now send their children to school albeit sporadically.

Distribution of agriculture surplus is guided by historical practices and adat institutions. These patterns of distribution are not strictly prescriptive or inherently egalitarian; they are nonetheless normative, tried and tested methods of distribution. Cash however has no such precedent to draw upon. Agricultural surplus has a shelf life whereas cash is durable. Yet cash is not necessarily perceived as something to save. Ngada farmers are well aware of the fluctuating value of the rupiah and market prices for their produce. While farmers can and do save cash in commercial banks, these institutions are not widely trusted hence
attract a degree of risk. Agriculture constitutes the largest single part of the base of the Ngadha community economy and in practice is consistent with Scott's notion of risk aversion and safety first. Scott's thesis is that an agrarian society is more concerned with ensuring subsistence than the more risky business of maximising profit (Scott 1976). Overwhelmingly however there is no sense of risk aversion with money, 'safety first' is not applicable to cash in Ngada. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Cash is something that can be risked and can therefore be seen as surplus beyond the '...defensive perimeter around subsistence routines within which risks are avoided' (Scott 1976: 24). As long as it doesn't endanger the agricultural base, cash can and is risked through gambling on a daily basis in Ngada. Paying school fees is now a necessity but there are many opportunities to borrow cash if all has been lost gambling. Indeed I wonder whether gambling with money is even perceived as risk-taking behaviour in Ngada. As an indigenous priest told me, Ngadha people are much more concerned with social than economic risk. Gambling does not heighten social risk and if anything it further solidifies social connections between gamblers. Gambling increases the scale and frequency of interaction without altering the way people relate to each other (Maclean 1984: 53). Gambling does not directly interfere with the community commons and only provides more opportunity for social contact.

**Gambling**

Gambling with money is perceived as no more of a risky enterprise than agriculture. As Maria explained 'plant one seed, you may get ten beans, bet Rp 1,000 on the lottery and you may get Rp 10,000.' This enticing logic links agriculture and gambling through the common thread of risk. As comparable economic strategies, the similarity between gambling and agriculture are clear; variables beyond human agency can determine the outcome. It may be the will of God or Ancestors. In the case of agriculture this is the weather and climatic conditions, with gambling it is the luck of the dice or the roll of the ball. Risk in gambling is also comparable to the risk associated with financial investments. In the middle of the last century Bloch(1951) found that in the United States gambling was condemned while stock market speculation was approved yet these are both strategies of chance. He points out that chance provides a genuine
possibility when there are few opportunities or alternative routes to increase financial wealth (Bloch 1951: 217). This is certainly the case in predominately conservative Ngada society where the maintenance of social practices is privileged over innovation - gambling has a precedence but entrepreneurship does not. It poses no direct threat or deteriorating disorder to social relations and organisation (Bloch 1951: 216). Assuming no foul-play, it is the ultimate level playing field. While there can be elements of skill involved in certain games giving one punter an advantage over another, there is always an element of chance for example in the way the cards are dealt or the way a horse runs a race.

A group of young men I have dubbed ‘the Bajawa boys’ organise and manage gambling activities in and around the town of Bajawa. ‘The Bajawa boys’ are always involved in some way with illegal betting on the popular rolling ball game, white coupon lottery, cock fighting and card games (described below). They either manage the gambling, including financing and acting as croupiers for the rolling ball game and cards, or work as collectors and couriers for the lottery and cock fighting which is financed by wealthier concerns. ‘The Bajawa boys’ group has two male first cousins at its core. Other young men rotate in and out as assistant croupiers, collectors, couriers and security. Trust is high and even itinerant members of the group are kin with closely related familial ties. I found no element of criminality associated with gambling among these young men. Other young men that did not engage in agricultural work or gainful employment were disparaged as lazy and a burden.

Although engaged in an illegal economic activity ‘the Bajawa boys’ are, if anything, admired for their ability to manage large sums of money and collaborate with, or bribe agents of the state while risking incarceration, and also play an important role in the local community. Within their kin network they make contribute to the ritual work of guarding dead bodies. Conventionally the corpse of the deceased is laid out for two to three days before burial so by attending to card games twenty four hours a day, ‘the Bajawa boys’ keep people amused and awake while they protect the recently deceased soul in its liminal state (see Turner 1967) from molesting witches and spirits. After burial the Catholic ceremony of
third-night prayers is always followed by a meal and rowdy gambling on the rolling ball game often set up and run by ‘the Bajawa boys’.

Illegal gambling dominates alternative market transactions (see chapter two) in Bajawa in terms of time, resources and frequency. The white coupon lottery, cock fights, cards, rolling ball game, horse races, games of ‘hand quicker than the eye’ and chance are all popular. Different types of gambling are associated with specific temporal, spatial and life time events in Ngada. Here I do not want to focus on state prohibitions of gambling but rather as a dimension of Ngada society and economy. This is a different point of departure from other anthropological literature on gambling. Geertz’s classic study on Balinese cockfighting examines the deep play and symbolism of the cocks, the fight and associated gambling (Geertz 1973). In his thesis on livelihood strategies on Java, Nooteboom discusses gambling as a type of risk-taking behaviour, in the same vein as criminals, prostitutes, gang leaders along with youths and migrants deemed economically irresponsible (Nooteboom 2003). He states gambling is associated with other activities deemed nefarious but this is not the case in Ngada.

Gambling is wide-spread throughout the Indonesian archipelago and pre-dates written colonial records. A Dutch account from the 1930’s describes how men from the island of Buton (south-east Sulawesi) travelled around Maluku picking up casual labour and described them as '...diligent and sober people who save their money on workdays but who turn into feckless dice players on holiday, and fanatical bettors at cockfights. They wander from island to island...and then gamble half a year's work and hunger away in one mad night' (Vuyk 2000 [1972]).

The Indonesian word for gambling is judi and has no other meaning. However untung - luck also means profit, fortune and successful. In the local languages of Ngada gambling is dhudhi (Bajawa) or dhudhu (Riung). A priest from Riung reported that corn kernels were a popular device for gambling prior to the introduction of playing cards. A ‘croupier’ would scoop up a handful of loose corn kernels and deal out four piles of kernels. Punters would then gamble on how many kernels were left in the croupier’s hand. Bets were made with animals, knives or anything else of value.
Cash is now the preferred medium and the Catholic Church, a dominant force in Ngada life, is well aware of the popularity of gambling and proselytises about the negative economic impact of this past-time. Every five years since 1987 the church has held a *Musywarah Uskapan* – a meeting at the diocese level to analyse problems and define priorities based on information from *umat basis* (the smallest level of congregational organisation in the church) meetings held every year. At the last *musyawarah* the main problem identified within the community was gambling. According to one Catholic priest I met in Bajawa, it is poverty that makes people gamble along with a short-term economic view; looking for a quick fix. Another priest concurred with this desire to get rich quick as a prime motivator in the popularity of gambling. He thought people perceived life as uncertain so looked for certainty and thought gambling was certain, providing a way to get rich quick.

Many lay people I spoke to saw gambling primarily as a form of entertainment in the absence of other amusements. Often it was referred to as 'refreshing' an English word that has come into common Indonesian parlance to mean relaxing (Immajati 2005 pers comm). Ironically gambling is most popular during Catholic funerary rites and on Sundays, the Christian day of rest. The white coupon lottery is held, card games are the main leisure activity in the afternoon for women and also for those men who are not attending the cock fights.

One of the ways gambling practices are linked to a wider, indeed global, field of transactions is through a popular lottery. The white coupon lottery is held five times a week on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. I could not ascertain why the lottery was not held on Tuesday but think it is safe to assume that it was not held on a Friday due to prayers in this predominately Muslim country. The lottery is illegal and completely underground with the complicity of corrupt security forces. Bets are collected and noted locally by men in their own homes and then transported to a central collation point in each town. In one remote location I am aware of, bets are collected then couriered twenty five kilometres by motorbike to the nearest operator. No one man collects bets for too long for fear of being caught by the police so there is a shifting network of
operators whose location is common oral knowledge. In this respect the white coupon lottery relies on strong trust at the lowest level of organisation.

Runners, usually young local men, collect bets and money then deliver these to a secret central location in town. Results, I was told, are then phoned through from Singapore or Malaysia. ‘Malaysia’ is a term used to refer to anywhere outside Indonesia and there was no consensus as to where exactly the lottery numbers were drawn. In order to bet in the lottery people pick between two and four numbers and/or pick from one of twelve animals (shio). Many people have photocopied pages or small guide books on how to relate dreams to numbers and animals. These guides are set out to correspond to shio, different types of animals based on Chinese earth geomancy (Tapp 2005). In Indonesian shio refers to twelve different astrological signs (a tool of Chinese geomancy), relating to the Chinese Mandarin word Sheng Xiao with the same meaning (Li 2005: pers comm). The minimum bet is Rp 1,000, approximately $A 0.15. Most commonly I have seen people bet between Rp 5-10,000 ($A 0.75- 1.50) with the highest bets up to Rp 500,000 ($A 70). Early morning conversations will often revolve around what people had dreamt about the night before and how this can be interpreted and related to different animals or numbers.

I was puzzled as to why people believed that their dreams could be linked to animals or numbers to be drawn in the white coupon lottery, particularly as shio is based on Chinese geomancy. I began asking people where their dreams came from which mostly elicited a confused response. My Flores Father Willi told me that our dreams are the experiences of our souls which wander while we sleep. One informant said they came from Ancestors but only after I prompted her with the suggestion of God or Ancestors. What she and others were clear about was that if they do not win it is because the interpretation was wrong or they placed the bet at the wrong time. God and Ancestors do not make mistakes; human agency is always to blame.

People will also look for signs in and around their environment, for example if a guest arrives by motorbike they use the numbers on the license plate. A local priest is commonly contacted for additional information to relate to the lottery if a
member of his congregation has dreamt of him. Other popular methods used to pick lottery animals and numbers are strong feelings and looking for signs in coffee grains. Coffee is grown locally in Bajawa and after drying and roasting is roughly ground before drinking. Filters are not used so a thick sludge is always left behind in the glass. After drinking the coffee, the glass is turned over until the sludge stops running down the inside of the glass. The pattern this sludge has left on the inside of the glass is then examined for shapes and signs.

Card games are a popular activity engaging players of all ages and classes in Ngada. It is an important hub of social interaction. Card games also serve to socially include peripheral persons. A migrant worker who along with his family has lived in the kampung for twelve years does not participate and rarely attends ceremonies but is socially included as he and his wife are avid card players and his home is often the venue for cards. Another ‘outsider’ young woman who has married into kampung told me she plays often to relieve boredom and loneliness. Through cards she gets to know people, becomes part of the community, and is often relieved of the sole care of her son.

Cards are frequently played without gambling but a Bajawa lady commented ‘gambling makes it more interesting’. A common addition to the game in the absence of cash is the use of pegs. Each time a player loses a game he (and I only witnessed men doing this) would have to place clip a peg to his face, ears or neck. Card games that do involve gambling range from daily games in the kampung where bets are small and games easily dissolved due to the needs of children or other commitments, through to all night games where men often gamble large amounts. While there are no rules or norms of sex segregation, card games in the kampung are mostly frequented by women, and by men for funerary rites.

Gambling is officially illegal so any legitimate gathering such as a funeral is a good front. From the time the body is laid out in the front room and until the end of third night prayers, a house of mourning can resemble a casino. Card games go on twenty four hours a day with bola guling (rolling ball) held after the third night prayers. Bola guling is played on a fold out sheet of canvas or a wooden table painted with every possible combination of four different shapes and three
different colours, so twelve possible bets. The ball is rolled and where it stops indicates the winning coloured shape. Rolling ball is popular with women and men of all ages, including children. The minimum bet is Rp 1,000 which attracts a 10,000 return, that is ten-to-one odds. There are usually two or three tables operating and the atmosphere is very *ramai* (busy and noisy). At one particularly well-attended funeral, a priest took the microphone to say prayers late in the evening when the gambling was in full swing. Everyone looked up from the tables, stopped briefly to cross themselves and carried on gambling in hushed tones while the priest prayed. At the table with the largest crowd people were still hushing each other when the prayer had finished.

Saturday is market day in a nearby town about fifteen minutes from Bajawa. In a back corner and slightly removed from the main trading area, six rolling ball tables are set up on a two tiered dirt patch under a makeshift tarpaulin tent. The tent is located adjacent to a bamboo stall selling plates of rice and dog meat, a local delicacy. Next to the dog meat stall, two women sell coffee, cigarettes, snacks and also deliver drinks to the gambling operators. The gambling tables operate from approximately eight in the morning to four in the afternoon and each table is worked by three or four male operators, placing and paying out bets to punters all of whom are men. The crowd is quite mobile, some just watching, others betting and moving between tables along with children mixing through the crowd selling cigarettes, boiled eggs and small cakes. My head count revealed between twenty and fifty men crowded around each of the tables. An exact number was elusive due to the continual movement among tables with some punters oscillating between two or more tables. So at one point in time approximately one hundred and eighty men were betting. An inner ring of operators and punters squat around the betting table. Behind them stand a ring of men, sometimes two or three deep, with the odd curious teenager (female and male) peeking a look. Although this is an open air temporary venue, the air around the tables is a miasma of thick clove cigarette smoke.

One of ‘the Bajawa boys’, Leo has been operating a rolling ball table at this market for the past four years. Each table in the arena is individually owned and operators need at least ten players to minimise risk for the house. In the last four
years Leo reports that he has only had to carry losses three times, his biggest individual loss was Rp 9,000,000 ($A1,500), and biggest win in the vicinity of Rp 20,000,000 ($A3,333). At Leo’s table he employs two young men to run the table and pays them each Rp 50,000 ($A8.30), a princely sum approximately five times the average pay for a day’s casual labour. He also employs hidden security who are remunerated with cigarettes and drinks. However there is generally no trouble and a punter who has gambled heavily and lost will be given “some money back to go home with”. Refunding some cash demonstrates a social ethic not based on market logic. It reinforces ‘the Bajawa boy’s’ identity as Ngadha; they run the game but are not selfish or untouched by the predicament of the loser.

Cockfighting is technically illegal but in practice is popular amongst men including government security forces (police and military). These agents of the state take a five percent cut from the money gambled on each fight for ‘security’. The cockfighting arena is off a dirt track in a small clearing behind a stand of coffee trees, well hidden but only a few minutes from town. Players arrive on motorcycles parked in a clearing in the trees not visible from the road. Fights are held in a square ring with two entrances. These two entrances represent the two opposing cocks and owners join one side or the other when they arrive depending on their feeling. Magic is involved, vested in individuals, the roosters and the blades. Negotiations for a fight begin with the two roosters being brought together in the ring and held close to see if they will fight. If so, and the owners agree then betting begins and a sharp blade is tied to the ‘ankle’ of each rooster. On the day I attended the fights one side had the same man present the cock each time. Quite a ‘cock whisperer’, he would hold the cock sideways with his face next to its stomach before the fight began.

The crowd swelled from approximately one to two hundred as the afternoon wore on, commencing about one in the afternoon and going through until about six in the evening. The gambling crowd was a cross-section of men of different ages from different classes and backgrounds; including ethnic Chinese, police, army, government bureaucrats, farmer and petty traders. A small number of women were present with a few watching the fights, others selling drinks and snacks (coffee, corn, peanuts, water, soft drinks, smokes, boiled eggs, peppermints).
Many children were present either selling drinks and snacks or playing and watching the fights.

Bets ‘inside’ (run by organised bookies) are collected by runners who call out totals to the other ‘side’ until betting is complete and both ‘sides’ have bet the same amount. Winners double their money, minus ten percent for the house, five percent for the landowner, five percent for security – army and police. ‘Outside’ gambling, referring to small-scale interpersonal betting that goes on between individual punters, does not attract a ten percent fee and is popular. Owners of the winning rooster claim the defeated rooster, dead or alive, anything they have bet, and a measure of prestige. When betting as a ‘side’ for a rooster the minimum ‘inside’ bet is Rp 500,000 ($A83). I witnessed only one fight called off as one side couldn’t raise enough money. Another ended in a draw because both roosters were injured and couldn’t go on (before finishing the owners picked them up, blew in their mouths and let them fight one last time).

Cock fights are held every Sunday and on public holidays. After the roosters have been selected and before each fight ‘the Bajawa boys’ consult with each ‘side’, calling out total bets made as part of the group betting as a ‘side’, which as mentioned above must exceed Rp 500,000. ‘Inside’ betting on fights I watched totalled , in millions of rupiah, 1.6, 3, 1, 1.5, 1.2, .55, 1.5, 1.1, 1.1. Over the ten fights betting totalled Rp12, 550, 000 ($A 2,100). In one fight alone a policeman lost his rooster and Rp 2, 400, 000 ($A 400). Of the ten fights I watched a total of Rp 12, 550, 000 ($A 2,000) gambled. I attended the fights with my Flores uncle who noted that there are usually more fights and with greater sums of money gambled but this was a bonus fight-day, on the occasion of a public holiday for the Presidential election, so was quieter than usual.

By retroactively comparing the work of Geertz with my empirical data it is evident that cockfights in Bajawa follow similar processes, and to an extent the logic, of the fights on Bali. Although I did not specifically interrogate the symbolic and metaphorical qualities of the cockfights in Bajawa, male prestige and power was apparent in the attention directed to those who had cocks fighting that day, those that ran the betting, and the big winners. However the mytho-
magical aspects of cockfights on Bali and betting allegiances were not evident in my observations of cockfighting in Bajawa.

In late August 2004 a week long racing carnival was held at Wolo Bobo, not far from the town of Bajawa. A clan from nearby Langga owns the land and collected an Rp 2,000 ($A 0.35) entrance fee per person. This is a festive event and the crowd cheers as young boys without saddles cling to their steeds as they gallop around a dusty bush track. The government controls proceedings and private corporate sponsorship is raised for prize money. Punters gamble amongst themselves aside from the official gambling auction where bids are taken for the right to bet on a horse. The highest bid wins and there is only one bet per horse taken for first, second and third place. The committee taxes ten percent of the total bets for each race to put towards the prize pool. In comparison to cock fighting official horse betting involved much smaller bets suggesting that unofficial gambling would involve more substantial amounts of money.

**Gambling – Where does the cash go?**

While I have cast gambling analytically as an alternative or non-market transaction, I want to make a further distinction between gambling where money circulates within the community and what I will term here business gambling where money leaves the local economy. Community gambling includes all games where cash is won, lost, and circulated among local gamblers; cards, cockfights, horse racing, rolling ball. Community gambling redistributes cash within the *kampung* (cards), among extended kin at funerals (cards and rolling ball), within the town (rolling ball and cock fights), or district (cock fighting, rolling ball, horse racing). Certainly there are different degrees of how far the effects of wins and losses may spread and these local flows do have a financial impact on individuals and families, for example affecting their capacity to send cash to students studying elsewhere. This is distinct from the white coupon lottery which operates as a business and cash flows are linked to a larger, unknown organisation that controls the game. The lottery turns a profit hence there is a net one way cash flow not only out of Ngada district, but out of Flores and Indonesia.
While interdependence among kin is hierarchical and oriented to a kinship network, gambling is amongst equals and oriented to the individual (Mitchell 1988: 648). Betting is an individual transaction but when gambling within the community realm there is the possibility of activating the ‘something for everyone’ distributive aspect of adat. There is no recourse to the operators if you have over-gambled in the white coupon lottery but there is the potential for recourse within the community such as ‘the Bajawa boys’ who report they will return a percentage of a punter’s money if they have gambled and lost a large sum of money. That said, an individual who has had a big win does take home a large amount of cash but this is socialised cash. It is open and public knowledge that the person has had a windfall. This is significantly different from the individual who quietly stashes away money. Such behaviour is seen as stingy and while the cash may be hidden from the living it places the individual in danger of supernatural sanctions. In the corporeal world there are other significant disincentives to individual accumulation such as increased demands for goods and cash, being social ostracised for insulting the honour (waka) of others by displaying greater wealth, and in extreme cases arson and sabotage is also used to exact revenge or express jealousy. A person perceived as selfish or stingy may find the family crops or home burned. Gambling is one way to alleviate the tension caused by cash between the individual and the group, and private accumulation versus group distribution. Gambling can offer a socially acceptable medium to use and redistribute cash surplus.

Coexistence of Economic Forms in Bomolo
Ngadha people identify themselves as farmers who ‘eat corn and drink palm wine’ (makan jagung, minum moke). My Flores parents Maria and Willi are both in their fifties and continue to do most of the manual labour on the family’s land in walking distance from kampung Bomolo. Both feel that their children are lazy as they do not always help when the fields need to be tended. Neither of their two married sons who live at their wives homes are expected to work. However their youngest son who lives at home and their daughter Dhone, who with her husband and two young daughters live on her family’s land on the other side of town from Bomolo. As the eldest female she and stands to inherit the family home and is
expected to contribute agricultural labour. As well as working the land Dhone continues to be an active member of the Bomolo household economy and periodically takes home farm produce such as corn, coffee, rice and beans from the family lands.

Younger generations are increasingly freed from agricultural labour and presented with opportunities to pursue cash incomes while enjoying food security as older generations farm and store produce in the short-term. For those roughly in their forties and older, maintaining their agricultural base is still a priority as a means of subsistence and is tied up with notions of self and group identity. With the exception of a small number of bureaucrats and wage earners, non-agricultural economic activities are secondary and cease when it is time for planting, weeding or harvesting. This work is no longer as labour intensive as it was when Maria and Willi's generation were children. Agricultural practices have changed and Bomolo families now pay cash to hire a tractor and driver to plough the soil rather than hoeing their fields by hand. This is the most laborious task however planting, weeding, and harvesting is still done by hand. Cash is thus entangled in the agricultural base and does not belong to a completely separate sphere of exchange.

For Maria and Willi, food is sourced from their land, gifted or exchanged with neighbours and kin. Sugar and cigarettes are the only processed store bought items consumed on a regular basis in their home. Agriculture and animal husbandry is the mainstay of their household economy so other economic activity must be carried out at times in the agricultural cycle when they are not required to be working or processing their produce. Maria weaves baskets and Willi is self-employed as a blacksmith. These arts are practiced when their labour is not required during the agricultural cycle. Weaving and blacksmithing are skills Maria and Willi learnt prior to the introduction of cash money but both now use their craft to generate cash income.

In the absence of medium and larger businesses, manufacturing, extractive industries or other enterprises, the opportunity for salaried employment in Bajawa is limited to entering the government or the less secure nascent service and transport sectors. Even those employed in the small number of full-time on-going
positions continue to source food from the land either through family members contributing produce to the household economy, hiring labourers to work their land, or at the very least by continuing to keep pigs and poultry. With the exception of the clergy I have never met or heard of a Ngadha person not keeping pigs for ritual exchange and consumption.

For those not yet in their forties whose time and identity is less entwined with agriculture, cash-paid work is often short term or sporadic. In addition to her small kiosk business Dhone will often pick up periodic government work. While I was in Bomolo she earned casual wages officiating at the 2004 presidential elections and collecting census data in 2006. Her husband regularly brings home a wage from a variety of unskilled positions. In the past he had worked as a runner for the white coupon lottery cartel in Bajawa. On my last field trip in July 2006 he had just commenced work as night security at the warehouse of a small construction company.

To better gauge the diversity of Ngadha economic strategies and the prevalence of agriculture and cash paid work I conducted a survey in January 2005 in Bomolo. In each household I began initially by cross-checking genealogy data I collected previously. Asking direct questions about income and land-holdings was met with mixed responses. Cultural factors, particularly jealousy and shame prevent people from openly discussing their holdings. Tactfully responding without actually answering questions is a necessary skill and ‘...Ngadha people can be very evasive or euphemistic in order to maintain social equilibrium’ (Deidhae 2001: 126). Even within the immediate family, parents and children will be secretive about cash and material items. At the same time there is little privacy and people will readily go through other’s pockets, bags and bedroom. In every instance except one I am confident income sources and landholdings were under-reported.

37 In Bomolo there is one non-Ngadha family, a migrant worker, his wife and two children from the neighbouring district. I collected data from this family but have not included them in the results here as they are not Ngadha, they have no clan affiliation or rights to land, and are not deeply enmeshed in house/family/kampung/clan interdependence. Their status while long-term is temporary.
As such the data is indicative and rather than an exhaustive complete picture of each household’s economy. It is impossible to measure exactly the flow of goods and cash in Bomolo households due to a number of factors: the cyclical and uncertain nature of agricultural work which may be interspersed with casual wage or self employment; secrecy and the prevalence of gambling; cash may be saved and spent sending students and workers to other locations in Indonesia or abroad. Also as a Bomolo resident I am seen as closely linked to the family whom I live with making some respondents reticent to provide accurate economic data. There were also some questions I was unwilling to ask, as when my Flores family were in the midst of a dispute over ownership of trees with Maria’s brother. At the time I was reluctant to ask them or the brother’s family for information about holdings of bamboo and other trees.

Of the eighteen houses surveyed all kept pigs and farmed their own food with some families supplementing their stocks with market-bought produce. Livestock other than pigs included chickens bred by thirteen households as well as smaller numbers of ducks, cows, horses and buffalo. All but two houses had stands of coffee trees. Twelve houses reported owning wet or dry rice fields and fifteen had corn fields. Ngadha people identify themselves as agriculturalists and pig breeders so this aggregate of farming and breeding practices is consistent with this view. Even so, all households with the exception of one whose sole resident is an elderly woman were also engaged in government, private wage, or self-employment either through labouring or trading bringing cash into the household. Eight houses had holding of cash-crops; vanilla plants, teak and mahogany trees. In addition all houses may sell surplus agricultural produce or livestock to traders in the market. For instance I once met a young neighbour on her way into town carrying a large bag of coffee beans. She was on her way to sell the coffee to a trader in the market to get cash for purchasing her school stationary requirements.

Cash income is also fed back into contemporary agricultural practices. Since the Green Revolution many farmers now purchase seeds, fertilisers and pesticides for their crops. Chemicals, the use of tractors, and other innovations are used in conjunction with, or supersede more labour intensive methods. I asked my Flores father Willi why he paid cash for a tractor to hoe the family land before planting...
corn. He explained that hiring a tractor would take a few hours to prepare the land and cost Rp 200,000 ($A 33). In Willi’s view this was more economical than hiring labour which would cost Rp 20,000 ($A 3.30) per worker per day plus food. It would take a week for two or three workers to prepare the field and Willi would have to be present the whole time. In the past this work would have been performed by family but labour is now difficult to muster as other economic opportunities now present themselves and people are no longer completely dependent on agriculture for living. A young man in his twenties in Bomolo told me that he and Willi’s son would often stay in the bamboo shelter in the gardens for days while working the land. He recalled these as good times but now holds a job as night security at a government office so can no longer be absent for days while working on the land. *Rau zo*, reciprocal agricultural labour is now difficult to organise in Bomolo due to the many more economic opportunities now available in Bajawa. I only observed *rau zo* among women processing food by hand in the *kampung* including drying and shelling coffee and red beans.

Examining the economic activities of residents in Bomolo and how they earn and spend cash highlights economic diversity and the coexistence or coevality of the cash and non-cash economy. In order to account for and analyse a variety of economic values and rationales, Gregory suggests we acknowledge the existence of more than one economic value system and break away from a tradition of the denial of coevality in anthropology (Gregory 1997: 8). Exposing this bias in the literature, Gregory writes about standards of value, the cognition and rationale informing the resultant economic actions of the kind that Gibson-Graham prompt us to analyse through the diverse economy framework(2006a).

The interesting anthropological issue here is not so much a question of whether people make rational economic choices, but to see what underlying rationale provided the basis for their choices. In this instance the rationales are divided between *adat* and the more individual economic strategies now possible with the advent of cash. Each person makes economic choices based on their individual values, inculcated in the individual habitus, and informed by different value systems. Hence the values of an individual are fluid and liable to be transformed at any moment. Within the house individualistic values compete most clearly
between generations. My seventeen year old Flores brother Markus, ideologically more oriented to the desires for consumer items and cash, struggles against the values of his parents who attend more closely to the domain of the house (including farming land and animals) and associated subsistence activities.

Coexisting economic forms create a broader range of economic options which may exist in parallel, be complementary, or create tension as the individual chooses which value system they will privilege. In Bomolo Teresia, an active woman in the ceremonial and adat realm of the kampung also engages in the direct marketing of food supplements and commercial natural therapies called “High Desert”. Indonesian language glossy brochures pushed an American style promotion of these goods. With evangelical zeal she told me that “High Desert”, imported from the USA could be taken for just about anything and once you have taken a therapy that illness would never return. This style of home selling is done at her own convenience so can be pursued in parallel to cyclical agricultural work and adat practices.

Complementary strategies also are exemplified by one of Maria and Willi’s sons who has studied animal husbandry. He visits the house in Bomolo to administer vaccinations to piglets. Paid for in cash at the government department of animal husbandry, these injections prevent disease and support the adat economy of pig exchange and consumption. However tensions do emerge and within Bomolo kampung these are represented by proponent individuals, Willi and Yusef. More than just the tension between two personalities, economic coevality sees each man drawing on the ethics, rationales and values logic of different economic forms resulting in clashes over issues significant to the kampung community economy. Willi draws on ancestral precedence and the moral and ethical principles of adat whereas Yusef introduces the more individualising values associated with cash transactions and government fiscal arrangements.

Another telling example of tensions between economic values is the commoditisation of fruit. Sitting with a group of children in Bomolo in 2006 two of them decided to pick some mandarins from a nearby tree as was common practice. An older child admonished them saying that this year her Aunty who
owned the tree was charging Rp 1000 per piece of fruit. Harsh words were exchanged as the children argued trying to make sense of this change. Commoditisation of mandarins is a minor example of a broader trend of monetisation and changes in lifestyle occurring with the expansion of markets. A school teacher in her forties from Aimere on the south coast of Ngada district remarked on changes within her lifetime. She remembers when work and play were interspersed throughout the continuum of daylight hours. Labour and recreation rolled into one when working in gardens and fields. Now recreation and interaction often occurs in the market, a vastly different environment. Whereas you could help yourself to food in the fields, in the market it must be purchased. She recalled when fruit, tomatoes, indeed all food crops did not have a cash value.

Conclusion
Examining the coevality of the agricultural base and cash transactions highlights the porous character of the economy. Individuals make economic choices which can be parallel, complementary or conflicting but always reflecting their self-identity and the sum total of their experience or habitus. Younger generations born since the introduction of cash and raised in an era of rapidly expanding consumer options are often keen to explore economic strategies such as wage labour or farming cash crops which provide more opportunity for individual cash surplus accumulation. Older generations are more prone to ground their authority and identity in agricultural subsistence, therefore are more entrenched in the adat economy of family and kin surplus distribution. While most people still rely on it, the agricultural base is now the preserve of the older generation and a small number of their children. With access to agricultural technology (tractors) and health services (lower infant mortality and longer life expectancy) the labour of many children and grand-children is freed up to seek cash in the form of wage labour. But what to do with this hard earned cash? Whether earned as a wage or profit from an economic development initiative, there is great risk in flaunting wealth either through consumption or cash savings.
In Bomolo many daily needs are met through local agrarian production. The Ngadha economy predominately produces, appropriates and distributes surplus according to the logic of kin relations and interdependence. Yet a vibrant community economy does not erase the desire of the individual for goods and services from outside the community’s productive base. However this economy of interdependence tempers people’s ability to use or accumulate surplus cash while still remain active and viable members of the Ngadha community. Gambling effectively redistributes and socialises cash without challenging *adat* norms of surplus distribution.
Chapter 6: Mutual Cooperation and Government Cooperatives

This chapter begins by looking at mutual cooperation or gotong royong in the broader context of the Indonesian nation-state, and how this common yet little studied phenomena of mutual assistance operating at the village level has been deployed as a political tool to foster ‘unity in diversity’ the catch-cry of Indonesian nationalists. English language literature in anthropology reveals scant details on the institution and practices of mutual cooperation. References to gotong royong is embedded in broader ethnographic studies of the region with the notable exception of an article by Bowen (1986) and a short treatise by Koentjaraningrat (1961). These studies are examined to illustrate the politicisation of the term and to draw out the conceptual and practical commonalities of mutual assistance found throughout the Indo-Malay world.

Mutual cooperation or aid is frequently glossed in Indonesian as gotong royong. It is a term used commonly in government rhetoric, academic writing and daily life. Despite being common parlance there is a relative dearth of analysis of this social institution. However the term gotong royong invokes an almost supernatural sanction, assumed to be in the common interest and for the benefit of all. In a different language and register gotong royong expresses the proper plural co-essence of being discussed in chapter four; ‘...the deepest meaning of gotong royong can be explained as a philosophy of life that takes the collective life as the most important’ (Sinar Harapan quoted in Bowen 1986: 546). It is also touted as a characteristic of Indonesian-ness particularly in contrast to western capitalism which is perceived as individualistic but with the important caveat of being this ‘and a great deal more...the intent is to evoke outlooks, not to anatomise codes.’ (Geertz 1983: 183). Gotong royong literally means ‘collective bearing of burdens’ but is generally translated into English as ‘mutual cooperation’. Koentjaraningrat defined gotong royong as cooperation between members of a community which can be elaborated to include idealistic connotations of spontaneity and a desire to serve the common good (1961: 2). It has also been described as an ideology of practice and sharing (Sullivan, J. 1982, 1987), and reciprocal, collective work.
(Bowen 1986). *Gotong royong* is now a term used across the Indonesian archipelago that may simply describe mutual cooperation, or loaded with insinuation and political meaning.

Bowen suggests that the term *gotong royong* is a relatively recent Indonesian construction but notes that in Indonesia the expression is understood to have a long history derived from the Javanese word *ngotong* meaning several people carrying something together (1986: 546). At the national level the first Indonesian head of state President Sukarno propelled the term *gotong royong* into the national consciousness in his 'Birth of Pancasila' speech in 1945. Backed by Hatta, his influential Vice-President, Sukarno sought to marshal the idea of *gotong royong* to create a national economy organised around worker/producer owned cooperatives. *Gotong royong* became an integral part of the political rhetoric of Sukarno, later adopted by his successor Suharto and his New Order government. *Gotong royong* continues to be used by the Indonesian State today as an instrument for mobilising village labour, a symbol of national unity and pan-Indonesian culture (Bowen 1986: 546). *Koperasi* (cooperatives) underpinned by *gotong royong* was the Indonesian hope for a national economy that was neither communist nor capitalist. Ultimately though, government intervention in cooperatives was more problematic than supportive. There is a significant disjuncture between national government directives to form cooperatives for political and economic ends and mutual cooperation governed by community specific *adat*.

A study of six villages on three different islands showed that the stronger community's engagement in *gotong royong*, the less likely that government formed cooperatives would succeed (Soemardjan & Breazeale 1993). Other factors such as patterns of leadership and authority emerged as significant, as did levels of education, meeting a pre-existing need, and a sense of familiarity and ownership. In one instance members of a government cooperative did not believe they had to repay a bank loan as it was a gift from Suharto, a rationale in keeping with the then President's authoritarian style of rule (Soemardjan & Breazeale 1993: 120). Frequently communities had no choice but to passively accept government orders and hence took no responsibility for the effects or outcomes of
those orders; if a cooperative failed it was the fault of the government not the people.

Cooperatives still exist throughout Indonesia but those created and closely tied to the state are broadly seen as corrupt and failures. In contrast to this view I introduce a cooperative in Bajawa, KUD Loboleke, and examine its success despite the overwhelmingly negative connotations that state-sponsored cooperatives evoke. This leads to a discussion of the disjuncture between community and government styles of mutual cooperation. Beyond the influential worker/producer owned KUD cooperatives rolled out across Indonesia, district governments have their own initiatives to promote worker-owned cooperatives. In the recent period of decentralisation the Ngada district government has commenced offering assistance to small groups to stimulate economic growth. These groups, sometimes as small as four people, can be categorised as cooperatives following the definition of a cooperative as an ‘...organisational structure in which all are equally workers and managers, so exploitation is absent’ (Nash & Hopkins 1976: 10) and a user-owned and user-controlled business that distributes benefits on the basis of use’ (Cropp 2005: 1). Some cooperatives fit this description but in the Indonesian context there are many others that can not be so easily characterised given the prevalence of state intervention in management, operations, and finances (Soemardjan & Breazeale 1993: 129). Given the negative connotations now associated with the term ‘cooperative’ many use proper names for their businesses, such as Loboleke or Pelipedha, rather than identifying as a ‘koperasi’.

Since Sukarno first introduced the concept of gotong royong into political discourse it has also been used to legitimize state intervention in rural Indonesia. During the Sukarno era gotong royong described horizontal interactions between groups actively joined in a national struggle. Under Suharto’s New Order it became vertical, describing authoritative and prescriptive state interventions (Bowen 1986: 552). The paternalistic top-down state interventions of the New Order sidelined community driven, locally specific manifestations of mutual cooperation in favour of government directed gotong royong, providing labour for a national rather than local agenda. Government development demanded labour
also be directed to projects prioritised by agents of the state but due to corrupt practices there is great cynicism about such works. On Java a village head mustered the community to plant fast growing trees on village land under the rubric of gotong royong. According to local law the person who planted, or ordered the planting of the tree is the owner who has the right to cut down the tree and sell the wood, hence this man shored up a future profit for himself (Nooteboom 2003: 155). Here then is an example of the appropriation and transformation of gotong royong by a government official allegedly for development but ultimately for corrupt ends.

In Ngada I was told how indigenous practices of mutual cooperation became skewed and in one incident spectacularly backfired. A community group from Rakateda about fifteen minutes from Bajawa criticized two government projects in their village, one for interrupting and the other for excluding local involvement. Prior to a new road being laid through their village, groups would work every Friday in a rotating roster of mutual cooperation work to carry out road repairs. Since the government paid a contractor to lay an asphalt surface, work on the road is seen as a ‘proyek’, a project for which labour should be remunerated. Labour’s use value has been transformed to exchange value. People now expect cash payment for road repairs. Routine maintenance is not carried out resulting in unrepaired damage and flooding. Problems with the road are further exacerbated due to poor materials being used in construction. To boost their incomes contractors often use a thin, low quality asphalt mix which is cheaper but breaks easily resulting in crumbling edges and holes. The road through Rakateda now has perforated edges and pot holes, slowing the traffic to a walking pace.

The ‘proyek’ is now ubiquitous as government at all levels tender infrastructure works to private contractors. In Rakateda the residents learnt of government plans to put out to tender the construction of a new school in their village. They approached the government with a plan to use community labour to build the school. The community decided this was one way to work with the government which would boost casual employment in the village. It was mutual cooperation in the sense that it mobilised the community to work productively with the government. It would also bypass using a contractor who has to pay 12 \( \frac{1}{2} \)\% tax as
well as make a profit for their company. With community labour they argued, there is more money for materials and locals get a wage, as well as reducing taxes and commercial profit margins therefore the overall cost of the project. The government refused and were in the process of evaluating tenders the last time I visited Rakateda. Whether or not local people had the skills to erect the planned building was not a question I broached, but what endured was the feeling that they had been denied the opportunity to work with the government and inject cash into the local economy. At the forefront of people’s minds was that they had no say or involvement in the construction of the school, which they resented. After all they asked, was it not their children who would attend the school in their village?

In all its forms mutual cooperation can be invoked on three different bases:

1 labour mobilised as a direct exchange (balanced reciprocity)

2 generalised reciprocity (obligation as a member of the community ‘...a continuum, from the open-ended support of close kin to the recorded contributions of other villagers, which will be carefully balanced by return contribution sometime in the future.’)

3 labour mobilised on the basis of political status (can resemble corvée labour)

Bowen (1986:547-8)

However, what people understand by mutual cooperation encompasses more than just labour, and its manifestations are unique to each village. In Bajawa it is intimately linked to Ngadha people’s beliefs, morals and ethics as described in Chapter three and four. Another study conducted in a suburb of Yogyakarta on Java found gotong royong was important in informing and sustaining women’s ‘cells’ - social groups of co-operation and sharing of both material resources and psycho-social support (Sullivan 1994). Additionally, Sullivan found that the nature of the relationship between men and women was explained in terms of gotong royong, based on principles of mutual cooperation. This resonates with a view of my Flores Father Willi who told me that ‘gotong royong starts at home’.

In 1961 the Indonesian anthropologist Koentjaraningrat wrote a short anthropological account of gotong royong in rural Tjelarpar and Karanganjar, central Java. To date this is the most comprehensive published examination of
mutual cooperation at the local level in Indonesia. In Koentjaraningrat’s study, he and his assistants documented seven different types of mutual cooperation associated with many facets of people’s lives recorded with specific Javanese or Indonesian titles. Of the seven different types of mutual cooperation observed, all included contributions of labour, four involved the provision or donation of food, and three the provision of money. The different types of *gotong royong* Koentjaraningrat documented in Tjelarpar and Karanganjar and those that I observed in Bajawa are mapped on to the diverse economy framework in Figure 4. Analysed through the lens of the diverse economy framework, all these forms of mutual assistance fall outside the scope of the formal capitalist economy.

Contrasting mutual cooperation practices from Tjelarpar and Karanganjar with those from Bajawa exposes the similarities and subtle differences of these locally specific practices.

Two of the mutual cooperation institutions from Tjelarpar and Karanganjar are framed as non-market activities. *Tetulung* and *tulang lajat* relate to helping in connection with condolences for a funeral or family calamity. Relatives of the deceased usually organise activities and take care of the corpse. Neighbours do most of the work and contribute money for a ritual feast. All local officials and others in the village contribute money and food. This is spontaneous without expectations of return. *Ndjurung* refers to contributions made following a request for help from those that you are associated with. This occurs when someone institutes a feast for a wedding, circumcision or similar celebration. Food preparation labour, food and money are donated. Assistance is freely given with the certainty that, in time, it will be returned.
The Diverse Economy of *gotong royong* as noted by Koentjaraningrat (1961) is mapped below in bold type along side Ngadha practices of mutual cooperation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transactions</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Enterprise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>Wage</td>
<td>Capitalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Market</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alternative Paid</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alternative Capitalist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transaction</td>
<td>Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Market</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wage</strong></td>
<td><strong>Capitalist</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Market</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alternative Paid</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alternative Capitalist</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grodjogan (reciprocal agricultural labour)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rau Zo (reciprocal agricultural labour)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maku Manu (day of labour followed by feasting)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Market</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unpaid</strong></td>
<td><strong>Non-Capitalist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transaction</td>
<td>Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Market</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Market</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unpaid</strong></td>
<td><strong>Non-Capitalist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetulung (helping) / tulang lajat (helping in time of need). Funeral or family calamity.</td>
<td>Kerigan (a necessary task done in an orderly, organized manner) Works instigated by bureaucrats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ndjurung</em> (contributing) through sambatan (requesting help) through gujuban (through friendship). Celebration or feast.</td>
<td><em>Kuduran</em> (obligatory assistance) regular work at the home of government officials.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papa Do’o (spontaneous labour to assist family/clan for example funeral)</td>
<td><em>Gugur gunung</em> (make a mountain fall down). Public Works.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dabu Ramo (planned labour to assist family/clan eg wedding)</td>
<td><em>Rerukunan</em> (connection through friendship). Care of ancestor’s graves and feasts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utu Masa (assisting with school fees)</td>
<td>Sambat-sinambat (mutual asking for help) gujuban (through friendship). Help around the house.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Papa Laka (laboring without calculating the market value. Food and drinks supplied)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4: The Diverse Economy of gotong royong in Tjelarpar and Karanganjar, Java**
Another two activities can be designated as alternative paid activities within the diverse economy framework. *Grodjogan* is always associated with agriculture. Assistance is often rendered by people with neighbouring plots of land for the hoeing, planting and weeding of rice. Lunch is provided. *Grodjogan* teams usually work together and often establish small cooperatives. The other five mutual cooperation institutions documented by Koentjaraningrat can be categorised as unpaid labour. *Kerigan* involves doing a necessary task especially in an orderly, organised manner. The initiative always comes from village officials or from higher authorities via local leaders, to carry out public works such as street or water ditch cleaning, or repairing roads or bridges. Conceived in a similar fashion is *Kuduran*, which is obligatory labour, performed for a village official. Work is done around the home of village officials at fixed intervals as directed by them. *Gugur gunung* means avalanche, literally to ‘make a mountain fall down’. This is initiated at a regular village meeting every thirty five days and is usually of a public works nature such as the construction or repair of a dam or mosque. It is led and organised by the village head and workers bring their own tools and food. *Rerukanan* means association and also connotes friendship. This practice involves caretaking and donating money for the erection and care of ancestral graves and associated ceremonial feasts. *Sambat-sinambat* is mutual requests for help through *gubujan*, friendly association. This form of cooperation is instituted for helping around the house like roof repairs, pest control, digging a well or pounding rice for a feast. People attach importance to the way help is requested, usually by a formal visit. These requests may also be made to neighbours who bring along tools and are given food during the work time.

Working with a structural-functionalist approach Koentjaraningrat’s study does not provide any sense of individual agency or the wider social implications of *gotong royong*, nor what happens when expectations or obligations of assistance are not met. In a recent study on livelihoods which foregrounds individual strategies and agency Nooteboom broadly categorises *gotong royong* in Krajan, East Java into three groups; *giliran* where farmers work each others land on a rotating basis, *keajegan* which provides assistance during emergencies and in processing agricultural produce, and *tolong menolong* for house construction and periodic public works which is now negatively equated with government cooption.
of labour (2003: 150-1). Nooteboom critiques Koentjaraningrat’s division of gotong royong into the four different domains of agriculture, domestic, ceremonies and parties, and emergencies and death (2003: 172 note 19). He argues that these categories often overlap and further that clearly demarcated activities may actually be closely linked such as agricultural harvests and ceremonies.

Similar types of cooperation are practiced in Bajawa however my research that mutual cooperation incorporates more than just the practical contributions of labour and resources noted in Koentjaraningrat’s work. As the short account of the wedding in chapter four shows, mutual cooperation activities are not only about the physical results of shared labour and exchange. Mutual cooperation activities have a strong social ethic and foster a sense of responsibility to the community as well as to neighbours. It is also an important avenue for building relationships between neighbours and strengthening inter-community cooperation and ties, and at times corrupting them. Mutual cooperation is a taken-for-granted practice that underpins the socio-economic base not just in Ngada but the majority of Indonesian communities albeit it in different guises. Another example of mutual cooperation was described to me by a student from the small village of Nangapanda on the Ngada/Ende border where Muslims and Christians assist each other to prepare for their respective religious ceremonies. At Christmas, Muslims will help clean the church, and for Idul Fitri Christians will cut the grass and clean up the area surrounding the Mosque. In Nangapanda mutual cooperation serves to bridge religious and social differences. While promoting inter-religious harmony and familiarity on Flores, it must be noted that such reciprocal relations in Ambon known locally as pela, did not prevent the outbreak of mob violence in 1999. It is certainly not a panacea for disruptions to societal unity. Practices of mutual cooperation have also been documented by anthropologists in Malaysia (Peletz 1988) and the Philippines (Russell & Alexander 2000).

**Indonesian Government Sponsored Co-operatives**

Over the last sixty years the Indonesian government has attempted to marshal mutual cooperation for economic development primarily in the form of worker
producer owned cooperatives. Organising Indonesians to work together cooperatively was borne out a desire to develop outside the two major economic forms of the age; capitalism and communism (Soemardjan & Breazeale 1993: 113). Mohammad Hatta, an influential economist and first Vice President of Indonesia believed so strongly in cooperatives that he declared ‘cooperatives are indeed the weapon of weak’ (Hatta 1954 quoted in Rice 1983: 63). At the macro-economic level a number of key historic factors have influenced Indonesian government economic policy and practice; nationalism rationalising state intervention, faith in the efficacy of cooperatives especially for the poor, and anti-colonialism exploitation particularly in the form of free markets and foreign capital (Kawagoe 2004: 178). The link been economic practices and mutual cooperation is enshrined in the Indonesian constitution of 1945, paragraph 33, 1 which states that economic affairs are to be organised as a joint effort based on family principles. This has seen the proliferation of small scale cooperatives formed to access agricultural inputs, credit or markets particularly under the auspices of the government (Rice 1983: 65). He argues that large scale cooperatives would have ‘probably retarded economic growth’ yet acknowledges that as most medium- and large-scale enterprises are privately owned, the majority of surplus is enjoyed by a few, exactly what Hatta was striving to prevent when advocating cooperative organisation. Hatta’s vision for the Indonesian economy to be based on cooperatives, backed by an ideology of gotong royong, harked back to a time when capitalism was actively acknowledged and challenged as but one of a number of coexisting economic forms.

In an historical analysis of the essentialising political left critique of cooperatives, Gibson-Graham traces the history of worker-cooperatives from nineteenth century Europe (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 106-11). Capitalism, afforded the primacy of the first way was challenged by the second way – Marxist revolutionary socialism as a precursor to communism, and the third way – worker-owned cooperatives and community distribution whose main proponent was Robert Owen. “Owenite aspirations” were dismissed as unworkable utopian socialism but worker cooperatives persist today as viable economic enterprises. As a case in point Gibson-Graham examine the Mondragón complex of worker-owned industrial,
retail, service, and support cooperatives of the Basque region of Spain which has thrived since the 1950's and is one of the most successful cooperatives in the world (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 101-26). The Mondragón Cooperative Corporation employs over thirty thousand workers and is what Gibson-Graham term an 'intentional economy...that treats the economy as a political and ethical space of decision making' (2006a: 101). This is in contrast to the supposedly pre-designated linear trajectory that capitalism follows. Their discussion highlights an overwhelmingly negative approach to cooperatives which inflates any flaws in their operations as proof that cooperatives pale in comparison to capitalist organisational forms while simultaneously ignoring the flaws of capitalism. Carefully examining the successes and difficulties Mondragón faces exposes the specificities of this successful enterprise but also the possibility and viability of worker-owned cooperatives. Similarly a negative rhetoric surrounds government sponsored KUD cooperatives in Bajawa yet a number of KUD continue to be successful enterprises.

**KUD - Village Co-operative Units**

Village cooperative units or *Koperasi Unit Desa - KUD*, continue to operate throughout Indonesia despite a tumultuous history sullied by government manipulation and corruption. The following short history of KUD is drawn from Soemardjan and Breazeale (1993). Cooperative legislation was first drafted in Indonesia in 1915 in order to make agriculture produce more commercially accessible to the Dutch colonisers. The shift from cooperatives as an economic enterprise to also being a political tool began with the fledgling national government of Sukarno in 1949. During this era *koperasi* (cooperative) became synonymous with *korupsi* (corruption). In 1967 a new law on the basic regulations for cooperatives was enacted and agricultural co-ops were renamed village unit cooperatives – *KUD*. Government commitment to cooperatives continued with the establishment of a union called the Indonesian Cooperative Council in 1966; integration into the *repelita* - development plans produced every five years; the creation of a Ministry of Cooperatives; an allocation of the equivalent of one million US dollars in 1969 to set up a Cooperative Training Centre firstly in Jakarta then in the provinces to educate bureaucrats and
cooperative members in managerial and new technology skills; and provision of credit to restart banking or credit cooperatives and provide farmers with the capital required to purchase inputs to increase rice production\(^38\). During the seventies and eighties \emph{KUD} also became the organisation through which the national government distributed fertiliser and pesticides, and purchased rice at a fixed government rate.

On Flores cooperatives, which must be registered with the government, and groups, which do not, are a ubiquitous form of organisation. Details of a cooperative formed in Mangolewa, Ngada in 1947 reveal the function of cooperatives has not changed greatly since this time (Ende van den 1957). Activities then and in the present include preparing gardens, marketing produce, building houses, saving for education. Cooperatives are popular in Flores as they are ‘up close and personal’, and linked to the community economy where members are known and trusted (Gudeman 2001). The end of one cooperative does not spell the end of relations between members as it is likely they have a host of other connections; residential, family or clan relations. However trust is sometimes breached and there are many stories of corruption and theft.

While there is certainly rhetoric of government corruption, farmers from a sub-district fifteen minutes for Bajawa, explained their negative stance in reference to past experience. In the late seventies they were forced to join their local \emph{KUD}. It was set up as a producer’s cooperative with the idea that farmers would pool their harvest to gain some control of marketing and hence better price for their crops. This sounds fine in theory but was distorted in practice. Book-keeping and marketing was not transparent. Farmers were pressured to join the \emph{KUD} run by public servants who would sell the crops at a reduced price taking a cut for themselves or their families, or benefiting through other avenues such as preferential business partners or patron-client relationships. A particular example that farmer’s recalled was when they were coerced into selling their candle nut crops to the \emph{KUD} for Rp 1,700/kg when the market rate was Rp 3,000/kg.

\(^38\) Now known as the Green Revolution, the national government in its efforts to achieve rice self-sufficiency introduced high yielding rice seeds, fertilisers and pesticides for farmers to ‘voluntarily’ purchase through the \emph{Bimas} program.
KUD cooperatives began in the 1970's and proliferated with a Presidential Decree (Inpres) as part of the national development plan (Repelita) in 1983 when one KUD per sub-district (kecamatan) throughout Indonesia was provided with funding and management training. If there was not a pre-existing cooperative that could be transformed into a KUD then one was created. Self-motivated organisation was not encouraged and government support strictly controlled the design and establishment of cooperatives (Kawagoe 2004: 175). KUD have been widely criticised as a policy, and there are many instances of corruption. Despite government support, at the macro-level KUD is not seen as a success (Shigetomi 2004: 145) which has masked the success of numerous individual KUD. At a meeting with Ben Mboi, the former Provincial Governor of East Nusa Tenggara, we discussed the mixed fortunes of KUD cooperatives in the province, including Flores. He put the failures down to the imposition of a European concept of voluntarism which didn’t take hold, explaining that in eastern Indonesia leadership was important, backed by a strong ethic of economic solidarity.

Cooperatives like KUD Loboleke (discussed below) that were formed from family or village units tended to succeed while cooperatives created under direction from the government were more liable to falter. KUD Loboleke is just one type of cooperative that distributes income equally amongst workers. Farmer cooperatives can also stockpile and sell their agricultural produce in bulk reducing the cost of transportation and attracting a better price from traders. Cooperatives engaging with cash markets are not limited to just workers or producers and in Indonesia, village bank (savings and loans) cooperatives are also popular. In many instances cooperatives function as both, serving the worker/producer and as a banking facility for members. According to 2003 Ngada government statistics there are twelve KUD and forty one non-KUD cooperatives in the district (Badan-Pusat-Statistik 2004: 330). The largest KUD to date is Pelipedha (meaning ‘up to you’) in the town of Boawae which began in 1974 and now has 2,850 members. They have active management, savings and loans facilities, a shop, and are also a purchasing cooperative where they buy raw produce and sell it to traders in Surabaya. An indication of the success of this cooperative is that farmers from
other areas will travel and transport their harvest in order to sell their produce to Pelipedha.

*KUD* Loboleke (Plate 8) is another example of a successful worker owned production cooperative in Bajawa. Loboleke is the name of the hill being mined by cooperative members all of whom are from Clan Paru who have corporate ownership rights\(^1\). Beginning in 1954 the hill was mined for sand, gravel and rocks but only a few well connected people benefited. In 1978 clan members began to work together as part of a *KUD*, Mora Masa, in order to break the monopoly of the few. *KUD* Loboleke functioned as a branch of *KUD* Mora Masa but they broke away and have been operating independently since 2001. As with other *KUDs*, Loboleke report to, and can apply for assistance to the district government’s office for cooperatives, and small to medium enterprises (*Dinas Koperasi dan Usaha Kecil Menegah*). This government agency examines all the financial dealing of each registered *KUD*.

Plate 8: Two Staff at *KUD* Loboleke

\(^1\) Not all clan members have rights. Agreement about who has rights was decided verbally within the clan. Often clans do not want to certify land ownership with individual members as this paves the way for land to then be legally sold (Ngani & Djawanai 2004).
Loboleke has five management staff (head, assistant, secretary, treasurer, and worker representative) and twelve office workers. Assets include a truck, the office/meeting building and a computer. All manual labour is done by cooperative members. On the fifth of each month profits are shared amongst the approximately three hundred members. Offering casual employment means the cooperative does not need to manage too many human resource issues but if someone is injured at work the cooperative pays half the medical costs. One person died last year and the cooperative helped the family financially. In 1994 KUD Loboleke received government assistance in form of safety equipment (shoes, masks) however nobody working the hill the day I visited was in safety gear.

It was emphasised to me that Loboleke staff do not receive a wage; they are paid for their work on a casual basis which can fluctuate depending on the demands of the worker and the market. There is no impetus to work regular hours. Workers labour if they need cash and when it suits them. The managers had no problem with this organisation of labour and reported an ample supply of labour. In this way paid work is not privileged over other social or economic responsibilities. Workers are able to prioritise farming and actively participate in other aspects of the community economy such as important life cycle events (funerals, weddings) for kin and clan.

Workers are not constrained by linear business timetables and may not work for days or weeks should they need to focus their attention on other socio-economic events. Both men and women dig and receive Rp20,000 ($A 3) per truckload. A person can usually dig enough for one or two trucks a day. Loading the trucks is done by men only. For one truck they receive Rp10,000 ($A 1.50) which is usually done by three men who split the money equally. Men can usually load five or six trucks a day. This is roughly commensurate with local day labour rates which are generally between Rp10-15,000. Workers own a share of both the resource being exploited and the means of production. Their surplus labour is appropriated by the KUD and distributed amongst the workers who are all kin and clan related.
From Community to Government *gotong royong*

Appeals to *gotong royong* in order to expedite government driven economic initiatives takes this generalised pan-Indonesian practice away from much of what drives the individual to engage in collective practices of mutual cooperation. Locally specific *adat* ethics and morals which underpin mutual interdependence are modified to varying degrees when transferred out of the community realm to provide labour or tap resources proffered or forced on people by the national government. *Gotong royong* as an abstract national characteristic is one thing; the practical action of mutual cooperation in a specific location is another.

At the macro level, incorporating and linking family values to mutual cooperation and then to cooperatives is awkward. An important caveat is that family values are not intrinsically cooperative and egalitarian and neither is mutual cooperation. At the household level family members often work together but not necessarily in a harmonious or unproblematic fashion. Individuals can resist or reject responsibilities bestowed upon them. Gender is a significant factor with a disproportionate amount of labour being performed by the women of the house. Similarly in Bomolo there was a core of individuals who ensured mutual cooperation tasks were performed, others who would also work but less consistently, and more peripheral persons who were noted as poor contributors. Cooperatives operate on a principal of equality and user benefit. Equality is not an inherent mutual cooperation value in fact quite the opposite is true; the division of labour and power within the family or the village is unevenly distributed according to gender, age and other status indicators such as rank. It is often family and kinship relations that underpin the formation of any type of cooperative and raises issues of power and access to resources (Kelly 2005: 39). These ties would invariably be supportive at the outset and may be strengthened by the connectivity between members of a family and a cooperative group. However, ruptures in family relations will then have a flow on effect into relations within the cooperative. That said, the danger of other social relations intruding on economic relations is present in any form of organisation; cooperative, capitalist or other. Alternatively, in the Indonesian context, to ignore familial ties and obligation is to court disaster.
Chapter 3 and 4 explored the dense web of ties to kin, clan and ancestors that inform Ngadha social action and ways of being in the world. In Bajawa there are specific Ngadha terms for meetings to plan group action (*utu bhou*, *utu masa*) and the undertaking of an activity (*papa do' o*, *papa laka*, *dabu ramo*, *rau zo'o*, *maku manu*), for example a wedding. Surplus is gifted or exchanged in the form of livestock, cloth and/or gold between the families of the marrying couple, and food is distributed for a number of days amongst a large number of kin and clan who assist, and are also present as guests. With few exceptions, all Ngadha people expect to marry so each will ‘have their day’ as the beneficiary of this collective action. Just as importantly wedding preparations, the ceremony and party is an expression and validation of community, one of the countless ways being-in-common is publicly enacted and reaffirmed. Not to participate is to marginalise oneself from that community. Labouring and contributing goods asserts one’s status as a member of a moral and ethical community. It affirms the individual’s state of belonging to the community and to themselves, and to others both living and deceased.

In contrast, as a non-capitalist cooperative enterprise using alternatively paid labour, *KUD* cooperatives were transacting in formal market places, particularly during the seventies when farmers needed to sell rice to repay loans for commercially produced pesticides and fertilisers. These cooperative enterprises were drawing on practices of mutual cooperation with a very different aim; to make a profit which is then appropriated by cooperative members. The moral and ethical aspects of mutual cooperation practices which achieved individual and community goals such as life cycle events and agricultural harvests are largely absent when the aim is a surplus cash profit. Buyers and sellers moving into the market place have the opportunity to be faceless agents divorced from any localised notion of reciprocity or normative behaviour.

Moreover, *KUD* was also the mechanism through which many top-down government initiatives were introduced such as high-yielding rice varieties and chemicals. *KUD* was also the vehicle through which the national government implemented programs of rural electrification, family planning, and transmigration (Nilsson Hoadley & Hoadley 1996: 191). In this respect *KUD* was
an instrument of government policy rather than the organised collective action of a community. The goal of accumulating and redistributing surplus within the community was undermined by administrative incompetence, corruption, or both. Power was distant and faceless, mediated through local elites and government bureaucrats apt to exert influence for their own ends. At the village level there is no role for an external institution such as the state in the reciprocity of mutual cooperation relations. The intimate knowledge and social world shared in village mutual cooperation is not valued in bureaucratic government processes. Disassociated from the community base and local cosmology, mutual cooperation is transformed into sterile action. Socialised interdependence does not easily convert into an economic enterprise but it is possible. In the case of KUD Loboleke, the cooperative not only worked but thrived. Certainly a major factor in this success is the clan’s need to harness a natural resource for the benefit of all which was being appropriated by a few. The serendipitous confluence of this clan’s need and the imposition of a KUD cooperative has resulted in a functional KUD serving the needs of its members for more than twenty years. But the national government no longer provides financial support for small-scale cooperatives. Policy and governance of this and many other initiatives has now been transferred to the district level in line with the decentralisation of the state.

**Decentralisation**

The fall of the Suharto governance in 1998 ushered in conditions for many government functions to be devolved to the local level. District (kabupaten) governments now control the largest share of the budget and responsibility for the provision of most government services. Sub-districts (kecamatan) have renewed relevance and increased budgetary allocations with which to work. All local government structures have been reorganised to accommodate their expanded role and increases in service delivery. Agencies claim they have maintained or increased provision of services. However in five locations internal reviews found overlap due to lack of clarity at the departmental level (Colongan 2003: 96). A common joke is that decentralisation has just shifted corruption and nepotism from the national to the district level.
Decentralisation has also opened up opportunities for district governments to allocate the majority of local revenue for use within their jurisdiction. The first of four priorities the Ngada government has identified is to develop the district economy with a broad implementation plan emphasising active participation of community organisations. Spearheading this approach is a new program *Gerbang Emas* designed in 2004 by the then district head (*Bupati*) Alberto Botha. In many ways this program is continuing Hatta’s vision of cooperatives and is channelling funds towards small groups and cooperatives as part of the district’s 2002-2016 policy and development plan.

**Local Government Business Development Fund**

In Ngada district there is currently a strong incentive to work cooperatively and document a history of savings/loans in order to access funds through the *Gerbang Emas* (Golden gateway [to prosperity]) program. *Gerbang Emas* (is a contraction of *Gerakan Pengembangan Ekonomi Lokal Masyarakat Perdesaan* - Movement to develop local community village economies). Twenty five million rupiah from the general budgetary fund (*DAU*) has been allocated to each village in the district for development projects. According to a government bureaucrat at BPMD, *Badan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa*, the office for the empowerment of village people which is responsible for approving and distributing *Gerbang Emas*, ninety five groups received funds in 2004, one hundred and six in 2005, and one hundred and three groups were earmarked to receive funds in 2006. To receive funding groups or small businesses must use the money to seed or expand a profitable enterprise or an infrastructure project that will increase incomes. Groups must have at least two years of well kept accounts and complete a proposal form with the assistance of an NGO partner. The proposal form resembles a business plan, with questions about the history of the group/business, personal details on each member, current financial position, the proposed business and repayment plan. In many ways the form is an enterprise-specific assets assessment, documenting pre-existing skills, potential markets, available materials and infrastructure for the proposed enterprise.
After the initial loan from the district government repayments are made to the newly created UPKD (Unit Pengelola Keuangan Desa – village financial management unit). The UPKD will in time make these funds available to other cooperatives or businesses in the village. The intended result is that the initial cash grant goes to the village and stays in the village as revolving capital to facilitate or develop small business. All proposals will still be approved by BPMD in the district government but UPKD are responsible for the financial management of the fund. Three cooperatives recently financed by Gerbang Emas in the village of Sebawoli in the south of Ngada district report that after eight months they have all been paying back the loan and also saving cash each month. A carpenter’s cooperative has five members and began as a business in 2003. With funds from Gerbang Emas they purchased a machine to plane wood, improving productivity and greatly reducing labour time. Significantly, members of the carpenters group and the other two fishing cooperatives also identify themselves as farmers. Work on these non-agricultural cooperative enterprises is secondary and ceases when they face demands from farming activities.

Rotating credit that stays in the village is theoretically sound but practically does not account for cooperatives or businesses that default on their loans. Even with a sound business plan unexpected events, bad weather or market prices can quickly turn a viable enterprise into a failure. Risk is carried by individuals in the cooperative but in rural Ngada there are few other avenues in which to seek extra cash should profits from an enterprise not be realised. In the event a loan is not repaid it is likely that the loan will stay in arrears as debt collection is not enforceable. As in the past, the loan will be written off and not be available for others to draw on. This can lead to a cynicism about government programs which I encountered in Bomolo. In August 2004 a letter arrived announcing the Gerbang Emas program’s allocation of twenty five million rupiah ($A 4,166) to the kelurahan or suburb administrative unit to which Bomolo belonged. As the head of the government administered neighbourhood organisation (RT-Rukun Tetangga) Paulus notified my Flores father Willi that a meeting was to be held to discuss the new initiative. I joined Willi at the meeting along with Paulus and the other RT representatives from the lurah. Information from the district government was sparse and no one was sure where the money was coming from exactly, just that it
is twenty five million rupiah. The meeting was only informed that in recipient
groups it was important to include new members or people who have not yet
received any government assistance, and when listing group members it should be
noted if they are new or old.

The meeting quickly descended into a chorus of negativity with the men agreeing
that the money allocated would be wasted as people are lazy, and suffer gambling
sickness\(^{40}\) and use the money too quickly, ‘...it always fails’. They discussed their
experience in the late 1990’s with a similar style program, \(IDT\) (\textit{Inpres Desa
tertinggal}-Presidential instruction for less developed villages). The \(IDT\) program
held the same promise as \textit{gerbang emas}, initial capital provided by the
government was to be used as a revolving credit fund within each village or \textit{lurah}.
Willi recalled that three groups shared the initial tranche of money but had never
repaid it. The detail of why the groups did not repay the money was not important
to these men. As they reflected on the failure of \(IDT\) there was no sense of being
implicated in the process. Although as leaders at the lowest level of government
these men were the up interface between their families and government agencies,
these men saw no role for themselves in either the \(IDT\) program of the past or the
new \textit{Gerbang Emas} program. These were externally imposed programs driven by
government policy, bureaucracy and legal processes. For Willi, the mechanisms
to implement such a program are foreign and unknown, based on government
power and authority which afford him little standing in comparison to his stature
as a senior man and \textit{adat} expert. Like most Indonesians, Willi is vulnerable to the
power of the state, an object of policy rather than a partner in progress, with ‘...an
insecurity founded in the knowledge that they have little control over their own
destiny’ (Schwarz 2004: 245-6). A history of bloody military action and arbitrary,
unaccountable governance has taken its toll on civil society.

District government bureaucrats I spoke to saw a significant difference between
the \(IDT\) of the Suharto era and \textit{Gerbang Emas}. \textit{Gerbang Emas} was to be closely
administered and monitored by local government agents, known and accountable
individuals. There were to be no strings attached to political partisanship as was

\(^{40}\) Although all gamblers themselves, this is not hypocritical as there is a clear distinction between
social and problem gamblers.
the case with the omnipotent Golkar party headed by Suharto. This shift was not conveyed to Willi who was reticent to become entangled in what appeared to him as yet another government program doomed to be coopted and corrupted by others educated in the ways of politics and government. There is little incentive for him to risk his status and exert his authority in a realm of governance which he sees as external and unconnected. As Beard explains ‘...successful decentralisation rests on the assumption that citizens...will undertake many planning and service-delivery functions previously the responsibility of various levels of government’ (Beard 2005: 21). If Willi’s actions are indicative of a disjuncture between community and government authority in Indonesia, and I propose that they are, then sound government policy and programs will encounter passive disinterest in implementation. At this stage development continues to be understood as a top-down endeavour and there is an absence of the spirit of mutual cooperation, of working together with government.

Conclusion
Discursively gotong royong, koperasi, and musyawarah are key terms in debates about the nature of social interaction and society in Indonesia (Bowen 1986: 545). However in practice a major yet unacknowledged shift occurs when mobilising the ethics and principals of mutual cooperation for development initiatives. The fluid nature of mutual cooperation in the community sphere becomes structured and formalised in the cash economies of village banks and NGO’s. The scope to negotiate and the consequences of participation and non-participation in mutual cooperation activity narrows, becoming more rigid when codified in the name of development.

Local institutions of mutual cooperation, are seen in the development framework as both the backbone of ‘Indonesian-ness’, but also as being rural and backward, as opposed to urban, progressive and modern. The national government ranks villages on a three tiered system with the lowest level of development (swadaya) associated with mutual cooperation and a traditional adat influenced way of life with little innovation or communication characteristic of advanced communities (Soemardjan & Breazeale 1993: 11). In many guises mutual cooperation is not
seen as relevant or even as an impediment to development. However in recent times there has been something of revival of mutual cooperation in the development industry. The economic crisis of the later 1990’s coupled with government decentralisation is refocussing attention on local practices and attempting to undo the results of previous policy. NGO’s in collaboration with government and/or foreign donors are on the frontline of this push. Below I quote a report on the development of the community economy by the Bajawa NGO Sannusa.

The culture of gotong royong historically practiced by the people has faded with government projects which began to direct the values of the people to become more individual...until the social value of helping each other faded. Thus by means of assistance and awareness which continues to be revived there is a return to the enthusiasm of gotong royong in the form of various activities, for example in the area of farming where people who know each other work in a group...also financial and material cooperation eg arisan for home construction.

(my translation from Sannusa 2003: 20 )

From my research it does not appear that mutual cooperation, particularly in agriculture, was in any danger of completely disappearing as an institution but the above excerpt points to a shift in thinking on the part of the government and NGO’s, from a negative, dismissive approach to interdependence, to renewed support for these practices.

So can a social institution such as mutual cooperation be mobilised and adapted to cooperative or group-based economic development initiatives? Mutual cooperation can be marshalled to initially begin small-scale cooperative activities but mutual cooperation cannot sustain an interest and commitment to a cooperative which will occur if promised economic benefits are not realised, and if surplus is not effectively distributed.

Despite the existence of an old and familiar tradition of cooperative work, the bonds of trust and solidarity that have evolved within a specific cultural context may be challenged and even broken when confronted by the unfamiliar set of institutional procedures of the modern co-op, such as professional management, accounting and legal liabilities. In fact, the farming population generally conceives of
mutual cooperation as an institution for social solidarity rather than for economic purposes.

(Soemardjan & Breazeale 1993: 120)

Research conducted in 1989 led Soemardjan and Breazeale to conclude that while small-scale savings and loans groups operate effectively, village cooperatives such as KUD falter because they are:

- imposed by the government on the village and, as a consequence, people perceive the co-op as a government institution, for which the people feel no responsibility
- membership fees and monthly dues are regarded as a compulsory burden, for which the co-op members receive very little or nothing in return
- Ineffective management often results in failure to serve the needs of the members
- The co-op membership is too large (sometimes 3,000 or 4,000 people) to be handled by inexperienced and untrained managers and other personnel

(Soemardjan & Breazeale 1993: 134)

However this assessment belies the ongoing success and viability of numerous KUD such as Loboleke described in this chapter. Their analysis is part of a more general malaise and negativity towards cooperatives. In their research on the successful Mondragón cooperative in the Basque region of Spain, Gibson-Graham note that it has been successful ‘...not only in the light of political and economic circumstances, but in the face of the obstacles posed by economic and political thought about the viability and sustainability of cooperatives’ (Gibson-Graham 2005: 105-6). What is suggested by my research is that the fortunes of government cooperatives have been mixed, rather than a wholesale failure. In instances where KUD was harnessed to achieve a goal desired by its members, as was the case with Loboleke who wanted to recover control of a resource, an enduring cooperative exists. However where KUD is used solely as a vehicle to achieve government goals cooperatives cease to function.
Chapter 7: Economic Development in Bajawa

‘...poverty is not the problem, our idea of prosperity is.’

(Nandy 2004: 96)

Ideas that shape development practices are in sharp contrast to the economic logic of the community economy of the Ngadha people discussed throughout this thesis. Economic development in Bajawa is spearheaded by the Indonesian State and Catholic Church. Both institutions practice a needs based approach also favoured by mainstream donor-funded development implemented with local partner NGOs and government departments. These development practices are founded on western economic thinking and models promoting individual accumulation of surplus. Yet, in order to be culturally appropriate and adapt to local models of organisation, development is often approached as a group exercise. This produces an epistemological disjuncture which can undermine the good intentions of development practitioners, government bureaucrats and the clergy. In this chapter I continue to examine interdependence and attempts to mobilise and adapt these practices to cooperative or group-based economic development initiatives. Through a number of case studies I examine where the ethics, principals, and practices of mutual cooperation are extended to development initiatives with the assistance of one local NGO, Sannusa.

The Ngadha people of Bajawa are characterised by the Indonesian State, the Catholic Church, and donor organisations as lacking and inadequate, in need of development. This chapter takes a closer look at some of the economic projects these institutions have implemented to address this perceived need in Ngada district in the primary sense of generating cash income. Still it is important to acknowledge that all three organisations have also sponsored projects with the aim of improving people’s lives in a way not directly linked to cash. The district government works across most areas of service delivery such as education, health and infrastructure as well as agriculture, horticulture, forestry, fisheries, industry and trade. The church, aside from its primary role of guiding people’s spiritual
lives, runs health clinics, provides assistance in school construction and
maintenance, along with social services including caring for victims of violence
and disabled people. Projects sponsored by foreign donors in Ngada district
include education, water supply, government capacity building, and cashew nut
processing. They all contribute to improving livelihoods in Ngada but these
institutions (state, church, and NGOs) situate such development initiatives as
secondary to the primary path to sustainable livelihoods, which they locate in the
domain of cash-based capitalist enterprise. The intrusion of hegemonic ideas of
development into the local imagination, and the individualisation of the economy
is illustrated by the comments of a visiting civil servant…

‘People are capable. If their children want to go to school there is no
money but if there’s a party, then there’s money. When I go out the
back of people’s houses I see pigs and other livestock [in other words
capital]. But they say “What’s the use of going to school, there’s
already a President. If my children go to school what will we get?’
(my translation)

It is my contention that part of the reason for this ambivalence is that the Ngadha
are in Sahlins’s terms an affluent society, although I doubt most Ngadha people
would identify themselves as such. For many, wants are few and means are
adequate so people live in material plenty albeit with a low standard of living
(Sahlins 1972). With the exception of environmental shocks, Ngadha people have
the means to subsist in-common with others, and satisfying individualistic
aspirations is curbed by normative social and cultural practices. This is
graphically illustrated by a conversation I had during my first few months of
fieldwork with my Flores Father Willi. Shortly after sunset there was a power
failure. Only Willi and I were in the house. We met in the dark, both on our way
to the kitchen where we stoked up the embers of the cooking fire. Electricity was
turned on in Bajawa in 1976 and people in the kampung now rely on electrical
energy to power lights, television, VCD players41, and stereos. At our house there
was enough current to plug in an iron, power tools, and my laptop computer,
though not at the same time. Domestic electricity supply is not expensive, costing
around Rp 20,000 ($A 3) per month.

41 VCD – video compact disc, similar to a DVD.
The lights were taking longer than usual to come back on. Willi roasted some corn kernels in the wok while we chatted. Our conversation wound its way around to the Indonesian economy. Laughing, and with enormous pride, Willi responded to my questions about the financial crisis that hit Indonesia in the late 1990's.

‘Krismon’\textsuperscript{42}, what krismon?’

‘When people on Java were hungry, I was feeding my left-over rice to the chickens. Prices rose but I could still buy cigarettes. I still had meat to eat.’

Despite the krismon, a culturally defined standard of living was maintained. Articulating Ngadha autonomy in relation to the Indonesian State, the above quote also asserts an ethnic identity. While many Javanese are perceived to be educated, prosperous and ‘developed’, in times of difficulty they were unable to feed themselves. Enmeshed in a community economy of agrarian interdependence, Ngadha people may be ‘under-developed’ in formal terms but they preserve a high degree of autonomy, and are substantially immune to the dramatic fluctuations of financial markets.

Economic under-development is blamed on a deficiency of local human resources and skills, and is an accepted truth in the discourse of local government bureaucrats, NGO workers and indeed is espoused by Ngadha people themselves. Despite this categorisation, there are few community generated actions or strategies to pursue transformations into more ‘successful’ economic subjects. But there are many community generated actions which achieve desired outcomes for the participants, improving standards of living and fulfilling their spiritual selves without entering the world of commerce or wage labour. Rich in the ways of interdependence the community economy in Ngada district is often the antithesis of development and the capitalist economy with the basic tenets of growth and scarcity respectively. ‘Establishing economic value requires the disvaluing of all other forms of social existence...the whole construction of economics stands on the premise of scarcity, postulated as a universal condition of social life’(Esteva

\textsuperscript{42} Krismon is an idiomatic term used to refer to the financial crisis that hit Indonesia in the late 1990s. The value of the rupiah plummeted and prices rose in what the World Bank described as the’... worst economic collapse suffered by any large country since World War II (Schwarz 2004: 408).’
So it is with mutual cooperation which is often lauded as a positive cultural trait and a marker of Indonesian identity, and yet is simultaneously cast as a traditional practice, no longer relevant and a hindrance to development. This contradiction highlights the discursive power of experts and institutions to narrowly delineate what is, or is not, good for ‘the economy’.

Following Gregory and Altman, I have defined the economy broadly as ‘...the social relations people establish to control the production, consumption and circulation of food, clothing and shelter’ (Gregory & Altman 1989). In this chapter it is necessary to further expand this definition of the economy and view it as a more comprehensive institution in order to adequately comprehend the influence of economists and economic modes of thinking on global development policy and practice. Here it is instructive to reignite the anthropological imagination and to see ‘economy’ as a cultural construct which at a particular historical nexus has come to play a powerful role in the trajectory of development. Economy on the global scale is more than just how we feed, clothe and shelter ourselves; it is also ‘...an institution composed of systems of production, power, and signification inscribed on individuals and their societies’ (Escobar 1995: 59-60).


Development
The origins of the term ‘development’ as we know it can be traced to the end of the Second World War, specifically to a speech by Truman, the incoming American President, who declared that underdeveloped areas needed to benefit from the knowledge and progress of America (Esteva 1995: 6). However
development has come to mean many things to many people. It has become a taken-for-granted goal for the populations of less wealthy countries; a responsibility of people and governments from wealthy countries to extend to their poorer counterparts in need of development; cast as post-colonialism or the next type of colonialism in the linear march of hegemonic western powers; and also as an industry of professionals drawn predominately from western countries but increasingly from the nations of those to be developed. There is no doubt that development has the potential to improve people’s standard of living and attracts many good intentions but still it is a form of ‘trojan horse’ (Frank 1997: 263) open to different interpretations and deployed to meet various ends. The genealogy of the dominant philosophy behind development can be summed up as the desire of the west to make over the rest in their image.

'The industrial mode of production, which was no more than one, among many, forms of social life, became the definition of the terminal stage of a unilineal way of social evolution... Scientific laws took the place of God in...defining the program. Marx rescued a feasible initiative, based on the knowledge of those laws. Truman took over this perception, but transferred the role of the prime mover...to the experts and to capital...'

(Esteva 1995: 9)

After sixty years of development the previously unquestioned march of progress as it is conceptualised by wealthier nations and implemented in poorer nations is coming under scrutiny. In the economic terms of wealthier nations, financial investment in third-world development has not produced the hoped for results. If development was working, why aren’t people now developed? Academic texts and university courses on development abound and many now locate the contemporary world in an era of post-development (Escobar 1995, Gibson-Graham 2006a, Rahnema 1997).

**Economic Development**

Why in this march to progress has there been a focus on *economic* development as opposed to other types of development? According to Escobar (Escobar 1995), the historical trajectory of economic development had its genesis within the borders of nations where the poor were defined by the cash and possessions they lacked in comparison to prosperous citizens, leading to a link between standards
of living and annual per capita income. This was then extended to an analysis of annual per capita incomes of the populations of other nations, not within a nation. Hence, the creation of poverty on a global scale was an exercise in comparative statistics. In 1948 the World Bank categorised nations with an annual per capita income of less than $US100 as poor and *ipso facto* the way to eradicate poverty was through economic growth (Escobar 1995: 21-2). Development economists thus came to be the definitive development experts, with a comprehensive understanding of what was needed to fix the problems of underdevelopment, and could preside over all other development practitioners (Escobar 1995: 85).

Non-western economies (read traditional, backward and under-developed) were pitted in a dichotomy with modernity (read western style cash economies). The theory of the dual economy was proposed by the economist Lewis, published in 1954, and influenced development policy for several decades (Escobar 1995: 77-8). In an evolutionary view of humanity (drawing on tropes similar to those in the works of Darwin, Wallace and Durkheim), to progress out of poverty the less developed countries must ‘catch-up’ to wealthier nations by emulating their evolution to industrialisation. This progression has been overseen by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and donor countries at the global level, and by development agencies and their staff on the ground. However industrialisation does not always deliver the bounty of development it promises. For example two ethnographies in Indonesia have examined industrialisation and found this adversely affected those it purportedly was supposed to assist. Wolf’s analysis found that newly constructed factories on Java actually relied on agricultural incomes to supplement the low wages of the mainly female workforce rather than adding to the income of farmers (1992). At a nickel mine in Sulawesi, Robinson found that the lives of local farmers became unstable as they were transformed from peasant cultivators to a proletariat workforce; losing control of land and resources while working only the most menial and low-paid jobs at the mine (Robinson 1986). The industries and technologies of modernity do not always deliver economic benefit or improved livelihoods for the domestic unskilled labour force, with exploitation and alienation from the land a common theme. In this sense Hatta was visionary in proposing cooperatives as an alternative path to economic development. In cooperatives he saw the potential
for the egalitarian distribution of surplus for the population of the fledgling Indonesian nation.

**Ngada District Government Development**

In Chapter 6 I examined some of the policies of the Indonesian Government and its attempts to develop the vast archipelagic nation over the second half of last century. At the forefront of this push were cooperatives or what has been called the third way, an economic configuration considered an alternative between the then prevailing dominant economic regimes of capitalism and communism (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 106).

Since the fall of Suharto in 1998 and the decentralisation of governance in Indonesia, district governments are now largely responsible for their own economic development. Based in the capital Bajawa, the Ngada district government has devised policy and is implementing plans to raise the standard of living for its population of 227,899\(^4\)\(^3\). The influence of national government policy is evident in their expanding program of funding small cooperatives through programs such as *gerbang emas* discussed in the previous Chapter. The inculcation of ideas from mainstream development also emerges in the other panacea the government is looking to in order to address under-development, namely industrialisation. Since the 1950s industrialisation has been touted as the way to address the structural disadvantages poorer nations face as primary producers in the arena of international trade (Escobar 1995: 74). The logic of development endorsed by foreign-donor nations is apparent in the Ngada district government’s promotion of sectors identified for growth. In a glossy brochure produced in March 2003 the district government documented local industries they believed had the potential to expand. Those listed are tourism, forestry, agriculture, handicrafts, animal husbandry, horticulture, and fishing. The brochure was produced to showcase local resources and industry to prospective investors. One of the tasks the government has set for itself is to attract investment, injecting financial capital into the district economy in order to kick-start the as yet unrealised industrial potential they perceive is in their midst.

\(^4\)\(^3\) See Chapter 1, footnote 7 for comments on the accuracy of this statistic
Statistics from the office of the district head categorises fifty five percent of the population within the district as poor\textsuperscript{44}. Rhetorically the district government’s approach to improving standards of living is by ‘...building on community assets, and maximisation of human and natural resources’ (my summary translation from a government leaflet collected at the 2004 Bajawa expo). However the quality of available human resources is identified as the main difficulty to development. In his presentation to the International Conference of Population and Development +10 the head of the district planning office (BAPPEDA) noted a lack of qualified people as a primary issue to be addressed. This lack headed up a litany of problems which can be read as both an appeal for assistance as well as an explanation for the district’s inability to develop in a way defined by the national government, donors, foreign governments, and ultimately themselves. Other problems listed as limiting local development included geography, climate, ethnic diversity and culture, the social system, market conditions, a lack of development funding and an inward looking attitude (Kesu 2004).

Two anthropologists from Flores who have carried out research in Ngada district have commented on the detrimental effect of government development policy on local culture. Amongst the Keo people in the south east of Ngada district, Tule notes that government development approaches cast traditional rituals as wasteful, which may lead a demise of the ideology and practices of Keo society (2001: 297). Daeng, a Ngadha scholar explains the parallels between boka goa (competitive feasting) and government sanctioned judicial processes (Daeng 1988). Authority previously vested in ancestors and expressed by local leaders was first disrupted by the Dutch, then the Japanese, and now has been assumed by the Indonesian State. In a functional analysis Daeng argues that the outcome of boka goa — settling of land disputes and reduction in livestock numbers — also occurs now but is simply bureaucratised through the legal processes of the Indonesian government. Claimants continue to call on kin and clan to pool resources. Those who can gather the most resources in order to influence judicial proceedings are more likely to win. The last boka goa was held in the 1940s and was halted with

\textsuperscript{44} These figures, dated November 2001 give a population total of 225, 895 (consistent with a slightly higher count in the official 2003 statistics) of which 125, 168 are listed as poor.
the assistance of the Catholic Church which also saw this feasting as wasteful (Daeng 1988: 262), not to mention heathen.

**Catholic Church Development**
The reach of the Catholic Church into the day-to-day lives of Ngadha people is not to be underestimated. Unlike mainstream development which segregates the economy from the rest of social life, following the individualism of western modernity, the church sees the economy as an integral part of people’s physical, social and spiritual selves, concordant with Ngadha *adat*. Through *kombas* groups the church can feed information and ideas to the community and rally the faithful to action from within their own homes. *Kombas* meetings are held on a weekly basis except in the festive months of May and October when groups meet every night. Group sizes vary but meetings are always held in a member’s home on a rotational basis. It is with a manner of pride that people prepare their homes and serve coffee and cakes to their *kombas* group. In this intimate setting the views of the church can be disseminated by the head of the *kombas* group who is linked into a hierarchical structure not dissimilar to that of the Indonesian Government. The head may also be able to send direct information back to the church though I was never privy to an instance of this.

Meeting in each others homes *kombas* groups can discuss the issues of the day and for almost every aspect of life there is another sub-group with a head who is to be consulted on such matters. The authority of the church is more potent that than that of the government given this unbroken link between faith, spirituality, and other aspects of life including economic development. A government bureaucrat commented that people were much more willing to follow the advice and direction of agents of the church. The clergy, as representatives of the church and God have no ulterior motives as they, in the same fashion as Ngadha *adat* adherents, fear retribution for wrong deeds and are answerable to God. Hence their actions here on earth are for the betterment of their fellow human beings whether that be encouraging them to attend church services on a Sunday, providing labour for church works, or to save money. That said, advice and direction is not always adhered, as evidenced by the popularity of gambling.
Although the church constantly proselytises on the evils of gambling it continues to be practiced on a regular basis by most Ngadha people.

The church now makes a significant contribution to the professionalisation of development on Flores. In the town of Ende, capital of the district directly to the east of Ngada, the church has opened a college of community development (STPM – Sekolah Tinggi Pembangunan Masyarakat). Since 2001 STPM Santa Ursula has been educating students in the fields of social behaviour (sosiastri) and community development. For the most part though, the type of development the church implements in Ngada does not encompass grants and small enterprise. Although it may be argued that the church itself is the biggest industry in Bajawa, it has not actively promoted business or provided cash grants to its flock. Rather the church has been active in much more concrete development providing health care, education and building schools apart from its core activity of developing the spiritual aspect of people’s lives.

Is an LSM an NGO?
In Ngada, as throughout Indonesia, a history of government authoritarianism has curbed free speech and many forms of activism. A critical and active civil society requires a democratic environment which is now only in its infancy. Until recently community lobby groups or unified civil movements have been either controlled or strongly influenced by the government. NGOs have had to negotiate a precarious position, operating as independent organisations while not openly contradicting state policy and practice.

_Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat (LSM)_ is generally translated into English as Non-Government Organisation (NGO). _LSM_ as well as _Yayasan_ (foundations) are common organisational types in the region. Given the prohibitive costs and bureaucracy of legal registration with the government, both these types of organisations are a realistic way for small organisations to operate. Those that do operate as not-for profit organisations receive sporadic funding from donors and

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45 I met students from this college when I was in Ende, and course details were accessed on the web: http://www.dikti.org/dirPTS/ntt.pdf
many also have small associated businesses. These businesses may be purely for profit, and/or ensure an income when no donor funds are available. The ease with which an \textit{LSM} is simultaneously an NGO and a business is illustrated by the case of a one man NGO in Bajawa. Pascalis Losa was employed for three years on an AusAID water and sanitation project based in Bajawa. With this experience he has set up a small organisation to pipe water to villages in the district. Pascalis is an ambitious and charismatic man who describes his work as simultaneously for profit and not-for-profit. He travels to communities without piped water, either cold calling or by invitation, and discusses their water issues. If leaders are amenable he then moves on to meeting with important individuals and community groups to present information on water pipes, hygiene and sanitation. This is done without charge, though as a guest Pascalis receives food and accepts gifts or money for petrol. After the appointment of a local water committee he works with them to apply to the district government (infrastructure department \textit{KIMPRASWIL}) for funding to purchase and connect the pipes. If they are successful in obtaining funding, the pipes are purchased and installed by Pascalis.

The main point I wish to make here is that in Indonesia \textit{LSM} and \textit{Yayasan} are not bound by regulatory bodies to be transparent and accountable in the same fashion as Australian NGOs. They are not necessarily bound by moral and ethical codes or underpinned by social justice notions of aid and development. In general terms, an Indonesia \textit{LSM} can not be equated with an Australian NGO. In Ngada, and across Flores, \textit{LSM} constitute a mechanism for distributing funds from the Indonesian government and foreign donors. Staff teach the language of development and how to be appropriate agents and recipients of development. \textit{LSM} staff are welcomed into communities to disseminate the ideology of development with an impressive ‘tool kit’ of modern equipment. They travel to more remote corners of the district sporting the latest technology; sound systems, radio microphones, digital camera, LCD projectors, and laptop computers.

\textbf{Sannusa}

In Bajawa I worked alongside a local \textit{LSM} Sannusa. Sannusa locates itself as an intermediary between the government and the community. They are outspoken
advocates on many issues, and local government bureaucrats consult them as a voice of the people. In the cultural milieu of eastern Indonesia, Sannusa take a community leadership role, guiding and advocating for community groups with whom they have an association. There is a strong hierarchy within the organisation with the head, coordinator, field staff and secretary all taking different leadership roles. These roles inform the interactions of the various Sannusa staff with community groups, with the head quite didactic in his approach while the staff and secretary are consulted as knowledgeable and trusted experts. Below is a diagram (Figure 5) drawn by the head of Sannusa in a presentation made to a community group to explain the wider context in which the local economy operates.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 5: An explanation of economic organisations by Sannusa**

(my translation)

In the above diagram a strong, unbroken link was made between global capitalism and the Indonesian State. A much weaker link was symbolised by a broken line between the community and global capitalism and the state. Notice also the two way arrows drawn between global capitalism and the state showing a degree of mutual interaction operating above and beyond the realm of the community which is afforded no agency in relation to these powerful forces. It is here that Sannusa
situate themselves as being of the community but as knowledgeable authorities they are able to operate at the supra-community level.

As self-styled development experts, Sannusa can exert influence in local configurations of power and authority. When I returned to Ngada in 2006 for a brief visit it was no surprise to find that one of Sannusa’s field staffers had run for office in local elections and was now also serving as the head of the village. Frans is now combining government and non-government roles, a potentially precarious position as claims of corruption are rife. But in the local context this meshing of power makes sense, in fact it may even be desirable. In a world of personal connections and patron-client bonds, Frans has contact with many local power brokers and is linked into Sannusa networks that have proven beneficial for the village.

Sannusa provides a range of services, information, political connections, and advocacy and economic options not otherwise available to many Ngada communities. In providing these services Sannusa is also positioned as a gatekeeper. Their approach shapes community understandings of development and informs the imagination of potential pathways to community development. While working with, and providing benefits for the community, gatekeepers operate within established allegiances, networks, modes of operating and pre-conceived ideas about people’s abilities (Cameron & Gibson 2001: 40).

Sannusa have a number of plans to facilitate economic activity in Ngada with a specific focus on accessing and developing markets. At the district level they are keen to act as go-betweens for local trade between savings and loans groups with which they have established relationships. So, for example, via Sannusa a group in the north of the district in Riung could trade woven cloth ikat for coffee with a group from Bajawa. There is also a vision to trade across Flores and sell to markets on other islands through Jamasatira, a trading company set up by a network of Flores
NGOs called FIRD\textsuperscript{46} which is currently managed by the head of Sannusa. While these trading relationships are yet to be realised, Sannusa is actively working with small scale savings and loans groups to activate a trade network.

**Senu**

Since 1998 Sannusa have managed an informal bank called *Senu*\textsuperscript{47} based on the Grameen bank model. *Senu* began with a five million rupiah grant from a community based economic development project funded by Oxfam. Based on the Grameen model, *Senu* provides individual and group access to greater amounts of cash than is available through intra-group loans. The small amount of interest charged is used for administration, contributing to the core funding of Sannusa which helps to make this small NGO viable.

Groups are able to lend twice the amount of capital they have saved in *Senu*, so a group with Rp 500, 000 ($A 83.30) saved with *Senu* can borrow a maximum of Rp 1,000,000 ($A 166.60). There is a strong moral dimension to these loans. As with intra-group loans, a reason for borrowing must be provided. Loans will only be furnished for expenditure in approved categories including school fees, house building and repairs. Money is borrowed for an agreed term commensurate with the borrower's ability to repay the loan. As an example, a loan of one million rupiah would usually be paid back over a period of five months. Loans are made at the rate of two percent interest per month. The interest is paid to Sannusa for administration and any associated fees. Sannusa staff act as debt recovery agents for *Senu*, visiting groups to discuss problems with any loan repayments. Groups put up capital as guarantees against loans such as land titles or livestock, but Sannusa has never seized these assets when loans are in arrears. Groups can and do borrow on behalf of individuals. The individual must repay the loan but it is ultimately the group that is responsible to *Senu*. For example, a group in Aimere took a loan from *Senu* to finance repairs to one their member's homes. The loan

\textsuperscript{46} Flores Integrated Rural Development, Flores Institute for Resource Development or most recently Flores Institute for Regional Development. The meaning of this acronym has changed over time and for its audience but is always in English, the language of donors.  
\textsuperscript{47} *Senu* is an acronym for *Semangat Nurani* – Pure Spirit.
was made to the individual in 2004 and as of July 2006 only Rp 500,000 of Rp 3,000,000 repaid with no penalty imposed by Senu.

Another ethical aspect of Senu is evident in its role as a saving/loans collective rather than a service provider. I asked Sannusa how they would handle a hypothetical situation where Senu did not have the funds to cover a loan request. Staff replied that they would explain the lack of capital to the applying group and that they would have to wait until some loans were repaid to free up funds.

Savings and loans transactions with Senu involve twenty three groups from Ngada district as well as individual staff members. In June 2006 Senu had approximately sixty three million rupiah on its books ($A 10,500); fifteen million in the bank ($A 2,500), and forty eight million on loan ($A 8,000). Transactions are conducted either in Sannusa’s office in Bajawa or on the occasion of field officers visits during group meetings. Trust is high and while borrowers must put up capital there is no legal contract signed, only a form detailing the agreed amount and term of the loan.

Interestingly one group associated with Sannusa is using their savings and loans group to foster mutual cooperation. Papa Laka Two group has seventeen members all of whom are translok (local migrants) from nearby locations who took up the offer of land on which to live and farm as part of the government’s push to cultivate land in sparsely populated areas. Members are all Catholic and initially formed a group as part of a government seed distribution program in 2000. Through this program they met Sannusa and joined the Senu savings and loans program. As with most of the Sannusa groups, Papa Laka also saves independently as group. Meeting with this group to map assets and discuss potential initiatives they stressed a desire to stay small and expand their activities slowly. With a number of educated and outspoken individuals the members clearly articulated their fear of the group breaking down like so many other groups and cooperatives. They were more interested in building trust and solidarity within the group than turning a profit.

Sannusa is also associated with groups that formed independently prior to their involvement. One such group is UB Sambu Rasa (UB usaha bersama – working
together) formed eleven years ago, in 1984. The group is made up of thirty member families brought together through residential proximity in a kampung on the edge of Bajawa. One of the members who works for a local NGO described the group dynamic as based on mutual cooperation *dabu ramo*. When I met this group in May 2004 they had Rp 42,000,000 ($A 7,000) in capital. The maximum available loan was Rp 2,500,000 ($A 417) and a minimum loan of Rp 250,000 ($A 42). Interest is charged at two and a half percent per month and there are provisions to borrow money from an emergency fund. There is also a small social fund which contributed to the costs of transport and food on the day I met the group. We travelled by truck to pray at a Catholic grotto dedicated to Mary, and bathe at the hot springs at So’a, a popular recreation spot about half an hour from Bajawa. For the members of UB Sambu Rasa, managing group finances, and to an extent their own cash, has been socialised in a way that embeds these transactions within their cultural and religious world. In this instance they have effectively introduced money as another aspect of practices of interdependence. Book keeping is transparent and understood by all members, and actions are collectively sanctioned via group meetings or *musyawarah*.

**Musyawarah: Adat Governance**

Local configurations of power and leadership are hierarchical and do not readily accommodate democratic decision-making, the preferred development pathway for community-based actions. In Ngada there is an expectation that leaders will know the best path to take and that in discussion (*musyawarah*) they will make the ultimate decisions. *Musyawarah* are held for a number of reasons including to make community decisions about rituals accompanying life-cycle events, and public works. I attended a number of *musyawarah* meetings held for these purposes. I observed that it was more of a public airing of opinions rather than a democratic decision making process. *Musyawarah* is performative rather than representative. Numerous discussions and politicking prior to the meeting pre-circulates ideas and potential points of conflict. It is in these prior discussions that individual views are aired and ideas about an issue consolidated. In this respect the machinations of *musyawarah* are reminiscent of Goffman’s discussion of front-stage and back-stage presentations of the self (1971). Members do not bring
new ideas to the group at a musyawarah meeting, it is rather the final and public stage of the confirmation of a decision, or in the case of significant conflict between power brokers it may be decided to delay the decision for a future meeting to allow further back-stage negotiations.

Community group meetings held by the NGO Sannusa followed a similar format. Group members were outspoken when reflecting on past experiences but more cautious in putting forward ideas for future group activities. Suggestions for new initiatives were all for productive enterprises, many extending current successful practices within the local area such as animal husbandry. In this context it is expected that leaders will be heavy handed and strong willed. Group meetings (musyawarah) are not an instance of one person, one vote, rather it is an occasion for those with the authority and oratory skills to speak out. Ideas to be discussed at meetings are circulated in advance. Those without these skills thus have an opportunity to lobby beforehand to raise their point of view. Musyawarah is a practice identifiable within the discourse of development as a community meeting or consultation.

Billed as a ‘musyawarah besar’ – a large musyawarah, the Ford Foundation sponsored a meeting of farmers from across Flores and neighbouring islands to educate farmers about fair trade and bring them together to form a civil movement for the trade and marketing of agricultural products. Sannusa and other local NGO staffers operated as ‘...social technicians who could invent and manage the discourses, practices and symbols of modernity...in the context of the development apparatus’ (Escobar 1995: 86 citing Rabinow 1989). Over the course of three days, development practitioners educated participants in the latest rights-based development discourse. Food sovereignty (kedaulatan) was the main topic which was defined as the right to food that is safe and nutritious, land, water, seeds and other productions needs. Invited participants were all farmers but not just any farmers. They were all farmers that were cosmopolitan enough to engage in the discussion and easily take-up the presented information. It struck me that not one participant was chewing betel nut, usually ubiquitous on Flores. These people were already ‘developing’ and development style modernity disparages many traditional practices, include betel nut chewing.
Creating Development Subjects

Sannusa teach the language of development, including the ideas of types of change that are plausible and sanctioned in this paradigm. They are but one agency through which the truth of development is created and circulated. Development knowledge is predominately the domain of the professional which ‘...brings the third world into the politics of expert knowledge and western science in general’ (Escobar 1995: 45). On Flores addressing development in such a style is further legitimised through higher education offered by the Catholic Church. A one way flow of information is channelled from the offices of development agencies in wealthy nations, through governments, universities and international NGOs to target communities.

As Escobar (1995: 49) notes in citing Pigg’s research, Nepalese development workers must construct villagers as an homogenous and ignorant unit since local diversity and knowledge is not translatable into the language of development. Those to be developed are not afforded the volition to choose the technology they desire through development channels. On two particular occasions when working prior to this research I, as a representative of development, was requested by rural communities to supply Toyotas and televisions. I remember explaining that this was not what I was able to offer as a researcher and practitioner of development. But why not? Why are these technologies not as valid as hand tractors or toilet pans? Because donors decide they are not, backed by a moral and ethical stance from their own cultural milieu which casts certain technologies as productive and useful for worthy subjects. Here is where the alternative economies project can genuinely enable local development for local ends. Using this approach opens a space for development subjects to choose that which they aspire to. However, good development subjects are educated in what is ‘good’ development so they are already inculcated with an understanding of what is imaginable in the realm of development. They learn that televisions or Toyotas are not an appropriate development goal.

As part of their involvement with the alternative economies research project Sannusa nominated six groups that they deemed willing and able to participate. In
selecting the groups the Sannusa coordinator defined criteria in order to choose groups who were successfully engaged in development activities. This criteria included:

- a variety of business experience
- a history of group development
- actively pursuing group activities
- well organized membership and administration

In addition Sannusa wanted to draw groups from all three ethnic groups within the district; Ngadha, Riung, and Nage-Keo, to promote equality and prevent any claim to ethnic bias. Here I want to present data on just three of the groups to illustrate both what constitutes good development subjects in Ngada but more importantly to highlight some of the ways these groups are extending the ethics, principles, and practices of mutual cooperation to what are categorised as development activities. The groups are not registered with the government but operate in a similar way to cooperatives as defined in Chapter 6, in that they are user owned and controlled, hence exploitation and scrutiny by an external body is absent.

**Mitra Karya group**

Sambinasi is a small rural village located in the Riung sub-district on the north coast of Ngada district and has a population of 711. There are no power or phone lines. Water is piped from a source two kilometres away, but at the end of the dry season water becomes a problem. The have a primary school (SD), and an Islamic middle school (MTS). The nearest senior high school (SMA) is in Riung, approximately half an hour drive away on an asphalt road. In Sambinasi ‘Mitra Karya’ began in 1996/7 and has had on going association with Sannusa. They began with a group of fourteen farmers which has now expanded to thirty two members, twenty women, and twelve men. All group members are from clan Bar. They speak Bar language, a dialect of Riung language.

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48 Mitra Karya and other groups are well aware of the importance of having female representatives in order to satisfy donor and NGO gender quotas. Another group I would visit regularly had only female members but meetings and decision-making was dominated by their husbands.
Group activities to date include; farming, inshore fishing using small boats and nets, and saving money and resources to build houses (arisang pembangunan). Members took great pride in their achievements and particularly their house savings scheme through which eleven houses have been built for members. Each month members are obliged to save Rp 20,000 ($A 3.30). As a group they have saved Rp 14,000,000 in capital (approx. $A 2,300) in 2005. Mitra Karya members operate as a tight knit unit. In addition to the above there are activities of mutual cooperation for funerals and other events such as proposing marriage (Bar- tukang tanang), organising bridewealth (Bar- wae laki), and corn harvesting (Bar- pasok weras). Sharing group membership is just another strand of interdependence in this community.

This group is part of a small community which has had to provide infrastructure and resources for itself. In 1975 the whole village was moved to its current site from its original location in the hinterland. This was one of many forced migrations that occurred in Indonesia ostensibly to provide better government services to remote communities. As agriculturalists they have had to adapt to a new environment and foreign technologies associated with fishing for food and saleable produce. After waiting many years for promised government development and assistance Sambinasi residents have taken matters into their own hands. Within the community schools are self-funded and self-managed. They initiated and continue to experiment with new methods of fishing and inshore harvesting. A new mosque was built with mutual cooperation labour. Building materials were purchased with money saved by the community over a two year period, topped up by financial assistance from the district government.

**Dharma Mentari group**

Taen Terong is a rural, remote, landlocked village also located in Riung sub-district in the north of Ngada. This village is also the result of the government relocation program and comprises six small hamlets (dusun) with a total population of 1,752. There are no power or phone lines, and access is via a rough 4WD track. Taen Terong has good irrigation and rice is the main crop but until early 2006 when the government installed pipes through the village, access to
water was the primary focus of discussion at group meetings. The group ‘Dharma Mentari’ formed independently in 1999/2000 and now has twenty eight members, seventeen women and eleven men. The group is a mixture of clans with both Muslim and Catholic members. A system of social hierarchy is still influential and leaders are all men from the top three ranks. Group activities to date include; ikat weaving, animal husbandry (cattle sold locally or to Tenkulak – Chinese traders or kaki tangan – traders who travel around purchasing produce to sell on to market traders), a small business (the group purchased a rice milling machine with a diesel generator), gali dana – members labour for each other at a reduced rate (usually Rp 2,500 per hour but within the group they labour for Rp2,000 per hour), and planting the cash crops of candlenuts, cashews, and hardwood trees (jati putih – teak). In 2005 group savings totalled Rp 5, 204, 650 (approx. $A 870).

While Dharma Mentari has successfully worked together on a number of initiatives they have also had to struggle with a clash of market and community economy logics. The group purchased a rice milling machine to service the village as the nearest milling machine was ten kilometres away in Wangka which can only be accessed by a very rough track. Milling in Rawuk reduced the transport costs necessary for hauling the rice to and from Wangka. The machine however, was only used by group members. Others in the village, I was told, were envious so continued to mill their rice in Wangka. Similarly, the group was able to supply electricity to a small number of homes using the generator purchased to run the milling machine. Again, only group members took advantage of the electricity supply with non-group members preferring to continue using kerosene lamps. Exploring what was at the heart of this jealousy it emerged that non-group members were not happy to pay cash to the group for rice milling as members were their kin, clan, and neighbours; constituents of the village community. To pay the group cash money, from which they would extract a profit (no matter how marginal) was unacceptable. They were happy for traders such as the travelling Chinese brokers (tenkulak) or a milling machine owner in Wangka to gain a surplus margin for their services. Relationships with these people were based on market transactions that were not bound filially or spatially as part of the community economy where one should not be making money at the expense of another.
**Muzi Masa group**

The final group I will introduce is called Muzi Masa from Rakateda village, situated in the central highlands of Ngada district, about twenty minutes by motorbike from Bajawa, and five minutes from the turn off on the main Bajawa-Ende road. Unlike the other two villages mentioned, there is electricity and since 2004 they have had access to the mobile phone network. The main cash crops are soybeans, coffee, corn, and beans. There are rice fields which do not produce enough for local consumption so rice is also bought at market. Muzi Masa has fifty five active members from four connected villages – Rakateda 1, Rakateda 2, Rakalaba and Tarawaja. All members are Catholic farmers and from a number of clans. The group formed as a savings/loan group in 1994 in response to high interest rates from the bank and even higher rates from private lenders. In 2005 the group had savings of Rp 53,000,000 (approx. $A 8,830). Savings are used to pay school fees, funeral expenses and housing materials. The group has worked together on a number of initiatives including dry rice field farming and an animal husbandry scheme. An initial stock of 72 cows (6 small groups each received 10 cows and 1 bull) provided by a government development scheme has produced 85 off-spring. This has been the most successful result of this particular program in the district and group members are proud of this achievement. This group also participated in an alternative health program run by Sannusa and group members now sell natural medicines which they make from locally available ingredients. A smaller sub-groups of women also work together to borrow money from Muzi Masa and travel to local (Bajawa, Mataloko) and regional (Boawae, Ende) markets to buy vegetables which they then sell in Rakateda for a small profit.

Muzi Masa group provides an interesting example of how micro-credit may be viewed as surplus. Group members related to me why they refused to become involved in the government **PPK (Program Pembangunan Kecamatan - sub-district development program)**. **PPK** funds came from the World Bank and were distributed throughout Indonesia in 2003 by government sub-district offices. Groups were able to access credit at an interest rate of two and a half percent. Within Muzi Masa, members can borrow with an interest rate of one percent.
Group members were afraid that if they were late with repayments to the PKK the police would act as debt collectors. No such sanctions exist within Muzi Masa. In addition there was no flexibility in the reporting requirements and the PKK program used a more complex accounting system than currently existed within the group. Group members asked me the rhetorical question, why would we borrow at a higher rate with interest going to the government rather than at a cheaper interest rate from Muzi Masa with interest accumulating as capital for the group?

This is sound financial logic but also has other socio-political dimensions. Muzi Masa group members are acutely aware of the economic and social capital public servants accumulate brokering such deals. There are an infinite number of ways under-resourced or corrupt public servants can siphon cash off through creative bookkeeping or added taxes and charges. The prestige and kick-backs they can call on by using their power and position when distributing resources is unquantifiable. Group members declined to yet again be credit recipients having had negative experiences previously when they were forced to use cash on credit for inappropriate farming initiatives. They may also see that the profits of this credit scheme are going to (once more) be syphoned off by local elites or patrons, or add to their social capital as local leaders who can marshal the masses to be appropriate subjects of development within Indonesian State model of development.

**Alternative Economies Action Research**

Creating a space for multiple emergent development subjectivities has been one of the aims of the Alternative Economies Action Research Project. Introduced in Chapter 1, this innovative project is an integral part of my PhD study. This research is situated within a development critique that deconstructs and denaturalises development, analysing the processes and politics that construct development as we know it. In a survey of the literature this approach has been contrasted to an opposing body of literature which acknowledges the flaws of development but casts it as basically positive and inevitable (Fisher 1997: 443).
Here it is pertinent to explain the ideas guiding our approach to the economy, exemplifying how it differentiates itself from mainstream economic development discussed earlier in this Chapter. Drawing on the work of Gibson-Graham (1996, 2005, 2006a) we have employed an expanded concept of the economy, challenging a vision of the economy as only exiting within capitalist paradigms. Viewed through the lens of the diverse economy theory numerous transactions, ways of performing labour and modes of organisation become visible and are acknowledged as part of what sustains livelihoods.

This expanded view of the economy opens a discursive space where the economy and economic development may be imagined in ways not recognized or seen as valid by mainstream development approaches. Coupled with an emphasis on a 'glass half full' view enacted through assets based community development (ABCD) techniques, the economy is represented as a sphere of possibility. This is exemplified by an initiative that began by building on underutilised human and physical resources described in Cameron and Gibson (2001) and Gibson-Graham (2006a). Following the closure of an electricity plant, the La Trobe Valley in the State of Victoria, Australia was classed as a depressed area in need of development. A community partnering project that brought together interested citizens identified the Christmas season as a time when spirits in the town were low. Drawing on the skills of unemployed electricity workers with resources donated by local businesses and government, a ‘Santa’s workshop’ commenced operating out of a disused pre-school to make Christmas decorations two days a week. Since 2000 this group has been producing decorations to adorn their houses and lawns at Christmas time, fostering personal and community pride and self-worth in a ‘depressed’ community.

Using ABCD techniques unhinges economic thought from a singular capitalist path, and this promotes new conversations about ways to improve or enhance people’s lives.

'Most development practices are powered by market forces and models...These franchising operations extend to others what we know and have created. In this form development involves a one-way flow of techniques, goods, and services...But should we not focus on
nurturing innovation?...the problem transcends technical and engineering solutions or even making savings for investment. How do we strengthen a local base to foster innovation?'

(Gudeman 2001: 158)

In order to strengthen the local base the Alternative economies Project attempts to expose and organise power through a conversation focussed on community assets and abilities. Power in this instance is manifest very differently to mainstream development where discourse has exerted influence over target communities through processes of normalisation, the control of knowledge and the bureaucratisation of social action (Escobar 1995: 53). Our approach has endeavored to expose and deploy the power of individuals for self-defined ends, listening to multiple social and cultural logics that inform economic decision-making which may inform creative action. Here it is worth noting that this approach is not anti-capitalist. The recognition of other-than-capitalist aspects of the economy does not exclude capitalist development. Rather in practice it enables a shift away from purely capitalist development logic, providing the opportunity to recognize and strengthen existing skills and resources present in the community.

Re-presenting the local economy with a focus on assets rather than on needs can also empower people to work with what they have, exercising the power within their grasp. Yet Walker has indicated that there are limitations to our approach. Although we are striving to empower people and communities, the very presence of foreign researchers defines them as lacking the ability to re-present and empower themselves. The motor to drive innovation is coming from outside the community (Walker 2005). Acknowledging the power inherent in project implementation goes some way to answering this salient critique. Power is immanent, has multiple forms and is present in all social interactions (Allen 2003). Accepting that as foreign researchers and NGO staff we are engaging in an intervention, we have been mindful to facilitate ‘power to’ rather than ‘power over’. We have been engaged in a political act of discursively shifting the focus of economic imaginings.
In practice, the research team used the diverse economy framework to map a much broader picture of what constitutes 'the economy' in four sites, two in the Philippines and two in Indonesia. In Ngada I found the majority of what sustains livelihoods falls into the alternative or non-capitalist component of the diverse economy framework, or what Gudeman identifies as the community realm; the real, on the ground associations and imagined solidarities, the up close, the local and the specific, constituted through social relationships and contextually defined values (Gudeman 2001: 1). Gudeman differentiates this community realm from the market realm; a sphere of anonymous short term exchanges, the "far distant", the impersonal and global, abstracted from social context, and separated by interacting agents.

Conceptualising the economy as diverse and including that which is often characterised as informal recognises that which is absent in the analysis of many development economists. Opposing the capitalist-centric designs of development agencies, the Catholic Church, and the Indonesian State, Ngadha people continue to direct their time and resources towards reproducing the commons. Recall that in Chapter 3 the commons is defined as being the shared material and immaterial resources of a community such as corporately held land, clan symbols (Ngadhu and Bhaga), shared food and labour, clan membership, rank, identity, honour, language, belief and worship of ancestors, and the performance of ceremonies.

Conclusion

'Advanced' countries are held up as the model to be emulated but the 'advanced' countries

'...will always move faster than the rest, for they are geared to a continuous degradation of what they have put forth; the most advanced technology. They are world champions in advanced obsolescence.

(Sachs 1995: 3)

The institutional structures of wealthy countries and their approach to development will be with us into the foreseeable future albeit in constantly changing guises with revamped terminology. Radically different approaches to development will take time to gather momentum but this transition is already
underway and the alternative economies project is just one example of the changes underway.

Development, its history, trajectory and currency is now being scrutinised as the taken for granted assumptions of this industry are questioned, refuted, reconfigured and ultimately changed. The disparate society that constitutes and populates 'development' will be as slow to embrace change as any other community. However hazardous it is to speak of development as a homogenous behemoth, it is hard to ignore the patterns that emerge from the implementation of globalised policy. Development has offered its particular brand of modernity through technical inputs with rational decision making, managed by development professionals as '...a way of conceiving social life' (Escobar 1995: 52).

There is no question that development practices can be altruistic and worthwhile, but it is invariably offered with strings attached; moral, ethical, fiscal and diplomatic. From the inter-personal to the inter-governmental, people must construct themselves as being worthy beneficiaries in the eyes of the donor. There is also scope to exert power and control over others that, intentional or not, can have a negative impact. Escobar (Escobar 1995: 98)suggests a two pronged approach to address these concerns with economic development in its current form(1995: 98). First, is to work with the plurality of economic models or the coevality of economic forms as suggested by Gregory and discussed in Chapter 5. Secondly there needs to be theoretical understandings of the forces that inscribe economic forms, as well as studies of exchange and exploitation, and local innovation.

While Ong cautions us not to simply see other ways of being as protests against a western way of being (1996: 84), the appropriation of development resources by patrons and elites can be viewed as resistance to the egalitarian views of the west. Intrusions into communities, such that development interventions are, require acceptance, assimilation or rejection. Development does try to usher in change and hence '... operates as an arena of cultural contestation and identity construction'(Escobar 1995: 15). Scott has discussed this extensively (1976, 1985) but here I have chosen to highlight how Ngadha practices of economic
accumulation and distribution provide an insight to a vibrant cultural logic coexisting with economic development based on western capitalist principles and the resultant alterations of the individual subject and how they relate to others.
In the discourses of the Indonesian State, Catholic Church, NGOs, and civil society, marginal communities such as the Ngadha are understood to be deficient in human resources and an impediment to economic development and the progress of the nation. Development projects designed along capitalist principles to generate individual cash surplus are peripheral to the economic base of the Ngadha people of Bomolo whose economy is organised around principles of kinship and interdependence. In Bajawa most daily needs are met through local agrarian production which is distributed according to a cultural logic specific to Ngadha people. While a vibrant community economy based on interdependence does not erase individual desires for goods and services from outside the community’s productive base, it does temper people’s ability to use or accumulate products culturally defined as surplus while still remaining active and viable members of the Ngadha community.

The diverse economy framework, and the language and theory of community economy have offered a new way to think and speak of economy. In many instances I have knowingly employed the terminology of western economics because of a dearth of other more relevant terms in my lexicon. I also juxtapose this language and ontology with that of the Ngadha people as articulated through the language of the community economy. Exposing the taken for granted assumptions unconsciously embedded in language and practice by comparing, interpreting, and translating socio-cultural milieu to be mutually intelligible is one of the most important contributions of anthropology.

Conceptualising the economy as diverse and including that which is often characterised as informal recognises the coexistence of multiple, viable livelihood
strategies. In contrast to the capitalocentric designs of development agencies and the Indonesian State, Ngadha people continue to direct their time and resources towards reproducing the commons, the commons being the shared material and immaterial resources of a community. In Bomolo I did not find indications of a poor, needy community; rather I found a vibrant complex of practices of mutual cooperation. These practices reproduced the commons and facilitated group surplus distribution, a collective expression of Ngadha interdependence which, enacted on a daily basis, is significant in constituting what it means to be Ngadha.

As part of the ‘Negotiating Alternative Economies’ action research project I chose to focus on practices of mutual cooperation as it became evident that these practices dominated the Bomolo community economy. ‘Cooperative forms of organisation are interesting precisely because they are interesting for those who live by them’ (Nash & Hopkins 1976: 4). Ethnographic data about the lives of my Flores family, Bomolo residents, and others people from Ngada district illustrate the diversity of interdependent economic strategies in this location. Diverse economy theory provided an innovative and expansive framework with which to map and describe this range of practices within the Bajawa community economy. Through this representation and analysis, a rich and vibrant mesh of economic practices were illuminated. It became clear that practices of interdependence in the alternative and non-capitalist realms provided for the majority of people’s daily needs and wants in this location.

I was first prompted to examine mutual cooperation as a topic for scholarly investigation by the proliferation of these activities on a pre-fieldwork visit to Bomolo in 2003. My interest in mutual cooperation was sustained as it emerged not only as a practice but as part of Ngadha culture which pervades everyday life in Bomolo, and is evident in so many guises. In particular I wanted to gain a sense of what one group of people, who have been the target of economic development interventions, valued and concentrated on in their daily lives. Thus, this research produced an ethnographic description of Ngadha cosmology, how these people maintain a tight-knit community and make a living, as well as local socio-economic organisation and the ethics of the Bomolo community economy.
My analysis was guided by four ethical coordinates: necessity, surplus, consumption, and commons. A key finding was that in Bomolo the spiritual commons of Ancestor worship and Catholicism are as highly valued as the material commons of land and resources. The abstract and the concrete commons come together in the form of the Ngadhu sacrificial post, and Bhaga offering house, positioned in the centre of the corporately owned Bomolo kampung land. The Ngadhu and Bhaga are material symbols of clan unity and secular interdependence.

It is important to note that while I highlight the productive and regenerative power of interdependence, I also want to acknowledge that romantic notions could easily idealise mutual cooperation as free of conflict and discord, hierarchy and exploitation. Power is exercised in relations of interdependence and is exemplified in Bomolo with the simmering discord between Willi, empowered by adat, and Yusef, drawing on the authority of the Catholic Church and Indonesian State. Close examination belies any assumption of a homogenous, harmonious community striving together for the common good. Conflict may range from minor squabbles and disagreements through to large scale disunity such as the incident I discuss in Chapter 3, where a disagreement over the repair of a Ngadhu post was the catalyst for physical violence over a raft of unresolved issues.

While I acknowledge that ruptures do occur, this study has emphasised the cosmological underpinnings of interdependence which link individuals to each other. This plural co-essence of being is enacted in practices of mutual cooperation. Both in the literature and practice, mutual cooperation, gotong royong, is a taken-for-granted phenomenon in Indonesia. It is an abstract noun representing the spirit with which one approaches daily praxis; it is a verb in that it describes the way people engage in mutual cooperation to achieve myriad tasks; and it is an adjective that describes the way people pull together to achieve a task.

At the national level, gotong royong has shaped the political landscape and very nature of the governance of Indonesia. The first President Sukarno described gotong royong as ‘...the essence of Pancasila, the five-point state philosophy elaborated in 1945 into the country’s constitution’ (Soemardjan & Breazeale 1993: 227).
Both during the reign of Sukarno and Suharto, the President’s cabinet was called the *gotong royong* cabinet where ministers were charged with the task of making decisions in the spirit of *gotong royong* for the greater good of all Indonesians. In the name of development, *gotong royong* has been deployed to mobilise the Indonesian populace to perform unremunerated labour on infrastructure and other projects deemed to be in the national interest, ergo the interest of the individuals. However the good name of *gotong royong* was sullied by local elites gaining the most benefit from these improvements.

Moving from the pan-Indonesian government rhetoric and cooption of *gotong royong* to the ethnographic details of mutual cooperation and interdependence in Ngada uncovers the specificity of these practices to particular people and places. The Bomolo community economy presents a wide variety of mutual cooperation activities which provides for the physical, spiritual, and emotional sustenance of its members. *Utu bhou* and *utu masa* gather people together to discuss and plan activities of mutual cooperation, and *papa do ‘o* for large scale events such as weddings, Reba, and Neku. *Papa laka* and *dabu ramo* involves spontaneous and voluntary work followed by a substantial meal and most frequently occurs to prepare for a funeral. *Rau zo* describes reciprocal labour arrangements specific to agriculture. A host of other occasions where Bomolo residents come together is elaborated in Chapter 4. All these activities contribute to the (re)creation of the community commons entrenched in a shared belief in the Ancestors and ancestral power, along with rank, clan status, and identity.

Surplus, one of the four ethical coordinates, has been a primary consideration throughout my analysis. A focus on surplus helped me to move beyond everyday practices of Ngadha people to look at what they do with excess outputs derived from their labour that are surplus to immediate requirements. Agricultural surplus may be stored in the short term, distributed on an inter-personal basis or used as provisions for rituals and ceremonies. Cash surplus may be generated by paid employment, or the sale of agricultural produce or land. Because there is great risk in flaunting this financial wealth through consumption, other activities such as gambling offer a socially acceptable medium to use and redistribute cash surplus. Gambling dissolves tensions created by cash surplus between the
individual and the group, and between individual accumulation and group distribution.

It is socially acceptable for money to be risked in the highly social activity of gambling, but social location, rank, clan affiliation, indeed the very identity of a Ngadha person is not something to be gambled for the sake of financial gain. I consistently observed and was told that gambling was fun and relaxing. It is a social activity that throws out no challenge to cultural norms or gendered behaviour. It may also create or reinforces solidarity amongst kin and trusted contacts in the face of State and Church prohibition. It is also an opportunity for agents of the State to ‘play on the other side’ and demonstrate their affiliation with family and kin as opposed to their occupational status as government bureaucrats.

Another way to facilitate surplus distribution is through cooperatively owned enterprise. Since the creation of the Indonesian nation in 1950, political leaders have called on the community spirit of gotong royong to organise the workforce into worker-owned cooperative enterprises as a third way alternative to the opposing poles of capitalism and communism. Although generally cast as a failure, I found many examples of successful worker-owned cooperative enterprise, such as KUD Loboleke in Bajawa.

In addition to my focus on practices of mutual cooperation and surplus distribution, I also investigated modes of development in the district and what these meant to Ngadha people. International and national development agendas are currently preoccupied with the cash-based aspects of poorer economies, however located in the discipline of anthropology I was able to examine the social relations of economy. What I found was that while Ngadha people maintain a rhetoric of development as desirable, adopting more individualised economic strategies would isolate and possibly ostracise them, a risk that most are not willing to take. The culture and adat of Ngadha people foregrounds their implication in the existence of others. This interdependence is evident in numerous practical livelihood strategies and is frequently celebrated in public ritual and ceremony. This stands in stark contrast to neoliberal economic
paradigms, influential in economic development, that presuppose a suppression of our connectedness to others in order to maintain a façade of impersonal economic transactions.

By distinguishing between the interdependence of Ngadha praxis grounded in the logic of *adat*, and the capitalist-driven designs of development projects, this thesis exposes the disjuncture between frequent kinship surplus distribution and permanent individual surplus accumulation. The diverse economy framework illustrates that these systems are not discreet and no one person lives wholly in one realm or the other. Rather, a complex interplay of coexisting economic forms is attested to in expressions of cosmology and the actions of Ngadha people in the context of Bomolo.

At the individual and organisational level Ngadha people do desire progress. Progress in the district is primarily defined in terms of economic development which is coupled to the logic of capitalism, and follows a relentless quest for capitalocentric growth and expansion as the path to prosperity. Government, church, and NGO practitioners implement programs with the best of intentions however as experts they are agents of a certain type of knowledge which ...

...wields power by directing people's attention; it carves out and highlights a certain reality, casting into oblivion other ways of relating to the world around us’ (Sachs 1995: 5). Yet the unarticulated model of capitalist social and economic organisation which guides the planning of many development programs assumes societal conditions are conducive to free, untethered, individual surplus accumulation. This understanding returns then to the core thesis of this dissertation that development initiatives based on capitalist principles promote long term individual surplus accumulation in marked contrast to the interdependent economic strategies in Bajawa centred on frequent group surplus distribution.

My research shows that for Ngadha people the greatest influence on their community economy is their belief in God, Ancestors, and the associated institution of *adat*. Potential development is not predicated on increased individual incomes or market forces but the will of the Ancestors, along with the
more distant but supreme Dewa/Catholic God. In Ngadha cosmology Dewa, the omnipotent creator, is now associated with the god of the Catholic Church and is relatively external to the more penetrating influence of the Ancestors. Causality of both good and bad events is frequently attributed to ancestral volition. Living descendents can only hope to influence the will of the Ancestors by living a moral life and performing ceremonies correctly. Honouring ancestors as a path to a happy, healthy, and successful life contrasts sharply with the development paradigms of the Indonesian government informed by neoliberal economics.

The stated goal of development is to address under-development, but as one critic points out it has failed in this endeavour. Instead of success it has worked to institutionalise development, and politically and technically manage under-development (Escobar 1995: 47). Development practitioners are frequently called on to perform the task of thinking through and predicting the possible risks, effects, and consequences of interventions. While there is undoubted value in thinking through the consequences of actions, filling in a log frame can only help planners to anticipate a small number of follow on effects within the life of a project and is limited by their knowledge and imagination. The ABCD method our project team piloted opens up possibilities for a community and its government rather than predicting probabilities. Focusing on potentialities, it is the community group, local government, and other stakeholders that draw on a much larger pool of knowledge and experience to think through, and take responsibility for, the consequences of actions, both positive and negative.

In Ngada I found foreign development projects tended to feed into a world of hierarchical interdependence where business and government is dominated by the parton-client model. In this economic environment it makes sense to Ngadha people that a foreign organisation wanting to enter a particular location would provide money and resources to the land holders and occupiers. Exactly what these foreign individual and organisations seek is not clear and hence locals treat them with polite caution. No altruistic middle-class exists in Flores so it was news to my Flores family and friends that the money for AusAID projects in the district

49A log frame is a logical framework – a popular instrument used to plan and track development projects
(water and education) were funded by taxes collected from the Australian public. People understood that money came from Australia but from whom, how, and why was not clear.

Throughout this thesis I have interrupted the taken for granted notion that capitalism is the default baseline for understanding the economy; a yardstick against which all other economic configurations must be measured. In places such as Bajawa a different logic exists which is guided by adat and religion. The ethics of economic practices are of primary importance when analysing the Ngadha community economy in contrast to prevailing views of the economy within government and development organisations. Implicit in the development paradigms of these organisations is an emphasis on increased production and cash incomes, leading to increased individual surplus accumulation. Collective ritual consumption of surplus is discouraged or banned. On Flores the Indonesian State's prohibitions receive the powerful backing of the Catholic Church, which endeavours to channel energy from indigenous rituals towards those of Catholicism and at the same time privileges a capitalist model of economic development.

The Ngadha community economy based heavily on agricultural subsistence and interdependence provides a large degree of security and autonomy from government control and market forces. Although the Ngada district government seeks to attract industry, the experience of other communities that have had close encounters with development in the shape of large corporations is a cautionary tale. Dispossession of land and a shift from agricultural livelihoods to wage labour can bring new instability and relationships of dependency to communities. When opportunities for paid labour all but ceased during the economic crisis that hit Indonesia in the late 1990s, there was a return to mutual cooperation practices of interdependence. In the town of Krajan, East Java, a resurgence of reciprocal labour and mutual assistance sustained many people during this period but excluded those that had become ‘money people’ (orang duit) who had neglected to maintain social relationships (Nootboon 2003: 254).
Approaching economic development with a notion that the most valid economic form is capitalist may obfuscate other potential avenues via which to attain better standards of living. However questions still remain. When I commenced researching for this project I queried possible unintended outcomes if alternative or no-capitalist economic initiatives were successful. How would local elites, particularly powerful patrons, react to being side-lined or not receiving their dues? Would government attempt to tax or create new sources of community generated surplus? Or would government support nascent alternative enterprises with lower taxes or tariffs? I am not alone in these musings. Kelly has also asked ‘...how extensive could a community economy become before existing structures of power take an unhealthy interest in the gains being made?’(Kelly 2005: 42).

Raising these issues invites us to question the reification of capitalism and directs our attention to the relationships and interdependence of the local community economy as a way to understand the aspirations of civil society and government in order to raise standards of living.
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