

Respect for Boundaries – whose boundaries?

Report on the field research for the “Language Gender and Sustainability” Project from
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Overview / Summary

The field research was undertaken in a team of three people, including one interpreter and a drama expert from an Indonesian government agency (*Taman Budaya*). Within the short span of 18 days between 23 December and 10 January most of the villages mentioned as possible research foci for the socio-linguistic component of LAGSUS were covered: Watumaeta, Sedoa, Betue, Kaduwaa, Bolapapu, and Toro (in the order visited).

In all villages discussions the following three items were accomplished:

- 1) Discussions with the *kepala desa* (mayor) and representatives of village institutions (*Lembaga Adat* = Council of Customary Law, *BPD*=*Badan Perwakilan Desa*=Elected Village Council, *LKD*=*Lembaga Konservasi Desa*); these discussions took place both independently of the showing of the video of the dramas (in Sedoa, Watumaeta, Betue, Kaduwaa), but also with these dramas as an input into the discussion (in Watumaeta, Sedoa, Betue, Kaduwaa, Bolapapu, Toro where the only person available was the *Ketua Adat*=Head of *Lembaga Adat*); in Bolapapu there was an additional discussion with the members of the *FWP*=*Forum Wilayah Penyangga*=*Buffer Zone Forum* about the possible future of this institution at the *Kecamatan* level initiated by CSIADCP before the ending of this project in the first half of 2005.
- 2) Drawing maps of the villages containing at least (in the case of Watumaeta) the houses of the members of the village institutions, but where possible also the names of owners of shops, of government employees, and of ordinary residents (for Betue and Sedoa, partly also for Kaduwaa); the completed list has been made available to STORMA Palu also.
- 3) Training and performance of small dramas about the transgression of village conservation rules and how the village institutions deal with such transgressions. These dramas were recorded on video and played back not only to the students involved, but also to selected adults in the villages – and taken as an input for further discussions around the question: “To what extent did the children’s play describe the realities of the village?”

In addition, discussions with representatives of NGOs (Jambatan, Awam Green, and The Nature Conservancy) and the *Balai Taman Nasional Lore Lindu* (Pak Amir Hamzah and Pak Ir. Helmi) took place in Palu.

From these discussions, some overall conclusions emerge which link local efforts, external interventions by NGOs and the Park Authority, and also the the research efforts of STORMA itself to global efforts for sustainable development, with a sharpened focus on the global debate about the fate of “commons.”

As in the global discussion about sustainability, there seems to be a sharp local awareness about the conflict between nature conservation and the welfare of the people. The motto chosen for all conservation efforts is “Hutan lestari, masyarakat sejahtera” (The forest conserved, the people are living well). Yet more than once during the discussions, people agreed that the forest should be conserved – but the people should also be conserved.

While nobody disputed either the overall necessity or usefulness of conservation in general, and of the village agreements in particular, people did in general feel that the present boundaries of the Lore Lindu National Park were arbitrarily imposed and should be re-negotiated – granting them limited rights of usufruct, but including the planting of useful species. Under these conditions they would be willing to really respect the regulations and enforce them themselves. Simply keeping one’s eyes open while travelling along the roads surrounding the National Park one cannot fail to notice the number of cleared hillsides *inside* the park’s boundaries and therefore the necessity for more successful enforcement of existing rules.

Thus, the discussion about the usefulness or otherwise of the village agreements, and about how they could be made more effective, is a discussion of interest to all parties concerned. It is the area where LAGUS can make a considerable contribution to other research efforts in the area, particularly those of STORMA: the focus on observing and recording actual negotiation processes is an addition to these efforts which are more concentrated on quantitatively measuring individual opinions concerning values and cultivation choices, sometimes as related to other objective household characteristics such as land tenure and income. The relevance of the focus on actual negotiations was brought home by the chance encounter with a successful negotiation for conflict resolution between the villages of Kaduwaa, Dodolo, and Wuasa: Pak Ento, the *Ketua LKD* (Head of the village conservation unit) of Kaduwaa was himself quite forceful in bringing this case to our attention. It had boosted the self-esteem of all the locals concerned that they had managed to defuse this rather difficult conflict between recent settlers from Katu and the two neighbouring villages of Wuasa and Kaduwaa, while including conservation regulations in the final settlement. It is therefore a case in point for the general conflict between livelihood security and conservation concerns – a case which has been documented on cassette already by the local *LKD*.

The project team

Being somewhat under time pressure I accepted the first interpreter contacted through the existing STORMA list, despite not being fully satisfied with his language abilities. But Bani Susanto was at least as good as the students I had interviewed during my first visit to Palu in September 2003 – and his working experience did prove to be of considerable benefit. He did not have to be told to take notes and took care in coaching my Indonesian back to a level

where I could myself become actively involved in the interviews. It was also noticeable that he quickly understood what the interviews were about and developed an interest in the subject matter of conservation agreements and the problems surrounding them, particularly as related to social relationships between local residents. He therefore independently asked questions leading to useful information.

The same was true for Pak Uus who proved to be a real asset to the team, both because of his ability to work independently with the school children, and because of his language skills which he used to take a natural leading role in moderating the discussions with groups of adults.

In the last two villages, Bolapapu and Toro, Pak Martin was added to the team because he had been suggested as an interpreter through Pak Andreas Lagimpu. He was a local from the area who had worked as a tourist guide before and therefore spoke the local language (*bahasa Kulawi*), Indonesian, and – self-taught – English. His knowledge of the local language proved helpful particularly in Toro, where, in contrast to the other villages, the local language (*Kulawi Moma*) is still the main mode of communication amongst the children. He also turned out to be rather good at drawing which led to nicely composed maps for Bolapapu and Toro. Having worked as a tourist guide he was also quite well-known in the area and his pleasing personality eased contacts to other people in the two villages of Bolapapu and Toro.

The research process

Due to the brevity of time and the administrative requirements of first introducing the research team to the KADES (*kepala desa* = mayor), the research process started at the houses of the mayors in all villages. More than once this delayed the beginning of other work, as the mayors were absent at the time of our arrival in three of the six villages, beginning with the first target village, Sedoa (which led to the research beginning in Watumaeta instead). Therefore, initial discussions in most cases took place with the KADES. In Betue we immediately had a discussion with the SEKDES (*secretaris desa* = village secretary) because he was glad to assist and also connected us to the earlier visit of Frank Wickl. In some cases (Bolapapu and Toro) initial arrangements with teachers preceded the discussion with the KADES because of his absence – but did not take place before introducing ourselves at the house of the KADES.

In all villages – and despite asking for time during holidays - Pak Uus Supriyadi managed to get students to prepare and perform a short drama about sanctions following the transgression of village rules concerning forest conservation. These dramas were always played by schoolchildren and were based on the ideas of the students themselves – and therefore provide a glimpse of the extent to which knowledge about conservation issues has spread in the villages. It has to be kept in mind, however, that many teachers seem to be actively supporting conservation issues. Therefore, it can be expected that children are more aware about this problematic than their parents.

All these dramas have been recorded on video and been played back not only to students but to select groups of adults who were then invited to discuss the issues touched on in the drama. Some of the discussions following the drama presentation were recorded on either mini-disk or video (or both – see the section “List of Materials”).

A second line of inquiry concerned the network of social relationships, particularly power relationships in the villages. In all villages rough maps of the location with at least the housed

of the influential people were drawn, in some cases all households could be included (Betue, Sedoa, and Kaduwaa). The maps and the excel-files of the inhabitants of the houses and their functions will form the basis for interviews and discussions during the following period of field research in Indonesia. They have also been made available to STORMA.

One of the main realizations was that an inquiry into social relationships and into questions of power distribution, leadership and trust in the villages, requires more time than the two to maximum four days in each of the villages visited this time. It is essential to get beyond the circle of relationships of the *kepala desa* and be able to get some independent views. Some independent information was obtained by chance even under the present conditions – the content of which underlines the necessity to have access to different networks than the one linked to the *kepala desa*: In Sedoa, after the village map had been completed by Pak Hery Woy, the question about possible factions in the village led to the information, that there are actually four different powerful family networks in the village. With the rather recent election of Pak B. Megati, the focus of power shifted from the *Tamambali* network to the *Megati* network. We also did get a glimpse of this network because a belated Christmas celebration for the *Megati* family was held at the house of the *kepala desa* during our stay, which comprised of a church service, a dinner for all attendants of the church service, and later of a dancing event with a *Dero* music group which lasted into the morning.

This dancing event was an explicit tactical move by the village head to keep the inhabitants happy – and provided an involuntary indication of the relationship between the ordinary villagers and himself: late in the night he was already a bit drunk from the *cap tikus* (*Arrak*) he had consumed. Wanting to lean on one of the chairs lined along the wall – which had in the meantime been taken by someone else to sit on – he fell. Most people seemed to find this rather funny – but kept their laughter to themselves until they were sure he did not look. And he repeatedly looked to see if nobody laughed.

To me, this is quite a contrast to what the former headman had described as one of the preconditions for good leadership: people should never be afraid of you.

Such a coincidental and anecdotal observation can, however, not be taken as scientific evidence of the relationship between the present *kepala desa* and the *masyarakat* in Desa Sedoa. For such evidence recorded statements of villagers would be required – and to obtain these, sufficient time is needed for those opposing the present leadership to assess the researcher's intentions sufficiently to volunteer such information. This may not need a very long time, but at least enough to allow the researcher to step out of the circle of relationships of the current leadership. In this respect it was fortunate that because of the Christmas celebration of the rather extended and wealthy *Megati* family the research team was housed at a relative's place – who turned out to develop quite a good relationship with Pak Bani and Pak Uus because they discovered a shared sense of humour. In Sedoa at least, we were not identified with the *kepala desa*, but rather with *Pak Suroy*, the owner of the kiosk where people used to go for a drink of *cap tikus*.

This stepping out of the circle of the village leadership hardly been possible in Watumaeta, where the *kepala desa* not only housed us but also invited myself and Pak Bani to sit close to him for the Christmas Church Service – which clearly linked us to him in the eyes of the community. Nevertheless, there were people willing to offer their independent views after some time of conversation – such as the son-in-law of the *kepala sekolah*, or the *Ketua Badan Perwakilan Desa*. With respect to the principle of triangulation and in view of the need to trace relationships in some more detail than possible through cursory general remarks, it is

however necessary to spend at least one or two weeks in the same village to gain some trust of representatives of different networks. This will be implemented during the

Overall, it can be said that the choice of period – over Christmas and New Year – was both unfortunate and fortunate. While we were not always as free to move as we would have liked to, and people were in general more engaged in Christian festivity activities than at least I had expected, our extended stays in the houses of village heads – particularly in Betue - also provided for some opportunities for relaxed conversations about leadership and progress in general.

Preliminary results

Overall, the field research confirmed the existence of differing if not opposing views in the villages. While some stress the conservation issue more, others emphasize the need to find a living and the existing poverty. Some of the STORMA researchers, on the contrary, find that the greatest danger for biodiversity conservation does not come from the poorest households, but from rather well-off people who want to consolidate their position and therefore open up more forest areas for planting cocoa.¹

While it is clear that there are substantial differences of resource endowment or wealth, and also differential access to forest resources linked to these differences in socio-economic status, this is the one issue which does not figure in either the local or the regional discussions. In all these discourses, there is only one category for “people”: *masyarakat*. This comprises everybody below the level of the *aparatur desa* (=all official village institutions) – irrespective of wealth or status.

I found it remarkable that both among past and present *kepala desa* (mayors) there are instances of economically “poor” persons. And these were the ones who volunteered some bits of a local conception of “good leadership” which comes close to the virtues which are in modern times called for with respect to participatory leadership: listen to and understand people’s aspirations, do not “force” people and do not make them afraid.

Yet precisely one of these poorer leaders found the wealth of the *kepala desa* of Sedoa – which has been earned through trading before he took office – was a good starting point for not abusing the office.

It is also remarkable that for all these efforts at establishing local / village level control bodies with the help of NGOs, only a single Indonesian law can be cited as legal support: *Undang 32 (tahun 2004): Dasar Institusi Desa / Kecamatan Propinsi Tentang pemerintah daerah (Pasal 211 Ayat 1 & 2)* – according to Ir. Helmi, deputy head of the Park Authorities and one of the strongest proponents of *strong village institutions* and the necessity to appeal to *values* in order to protect the forest – because he is well aware of the economic conditions and their adverse effect on conservation. The law grants freedom to the villages to establish institutions which assist in the regulation of local affairs.

The law does not, however, grant the freedom to change the functions of land already declared a National Park. This, however, is as the “deal” between the Park Authority and the

¹ I owe this information to discussions with Günter Burkhard, in print see Burkhard (2002a and 2002 b) whose research focusses on social security versus sustainability

villages is understood at the village level: we will protect the forest against encroachment – but in return we are given local usufruct rights – including the planting of cocoa or coffee.

The institutionalization of these agreements is left to the NGOs already mentioned (CARE, The Nature Conservancy, Yayasan Tanah Merdeka) because they are both willing to go to the villages with their own staff - and they make use of independent sources of funding. The *Balai Taman Nasional Lore Lindu* itself has neither sufficient staff nor sufficient funds to support such a process of local institution building – which, at the same time, it welcomes very much as it creates local enforcement agencies.

These agencies appeal to the “traditional law” (*adat*), thus supporting Ir. Helmi’s view that the appeal to values is important. In most of the discussions held during this field research, it was claimed that there is a “traditional” concept of conservation which has to do with the view that the forest itself – as a whole, and also particular parts of it - possesses a guardian spirit / guardian spirits which need to be asked for permission before felling for the traditional system of shifting cultivation or other extractive uses can begin. At the same time the one *written* set of rules of customary law which I was able to see in Bolapapu² does not mention land use at all: it is wholly focussed on relationships between people, particularly about marriage rules and brideprices – which are much higher for brides and bridegroom belonging to the nobility. Yet, this claim is also the basis for the work of the *Forum Wilayah Penyangga* (Buffer Zone Forum) at least in Bolapapu itself.

As mentioned before, through a fortunate coincidence, I learnt about the existence of cassettes documenting the settlement of a conflict between the villages of Kaduwaa and Wuasa with the new settlers of the village of Dodolo – who had been relocated from Katu, which itself is the one village which was allowed to remain completely within the park boundaries. I hope we will be able to get access to these cassettes and incorporate the transcriptions into the body of materials for analysis within LAGSUS.

What follows are a few cursory observations and hypotheses which will be further elaborated on later, when the material collected will have been transcribed and be available for fuller analysis than the present cursory notes (see “Research Diary”) allow for.

- 1) In virtually all villages – with the exception of Toro – the participants in the discussions expressed a dissatisfaction with the way the boundaries of the park had been fixed in the beginning, a feeling of being “squeezed” by these boundaries, but at the same time they all claimed that the KKM were useful. This is an independent confirmation of one of the main results of STORMA (see Fremerey 2004)
- 2) The following – partly contradictory – opinions came up again and again in the discussions: 1) “We feel restricted by the park boundaries” 2) “The park boundaries were determined without proper consultation – and sometimes hastily and without due regards to the local conditions” 3) “We think the park is useful to us and needs to be protected because of its usefulness” 4) “We think the KKM is a good instrument”
- 3) A clearer picture was gained about the institutional set-up, with the KKM at the village level having been facilitated by either YTM, CARE, or TNC, while the institution at the *Kecamatan* level (FWP=*Forum Wilayah Penyangga*=*Buffer Zone Forum*) was founded by CSIADCP (=Central Sulawesi Integrated Agricultural Development and Conservation Project) for the integration of village level efforts after

² for the table of contents of that document see also the section “research Diary”

the completion of CSIADCP; at the provincial level there exists now the the (FPB-TNLL=Forum Pengelolaan Bersama Taman Nasional Lore Lindu)³

- 4) A better understanding was also gained about the history of TNLL (*Taman Nasional Lore Lindu = Lore Lindu National Park*) which was declared a National Park according to Indonesian law in 1993, with some areas (such as near Bolapapu) already having been conservation areas as early as 1973. It was instructive to hear Pak Helmi explain the changes brought about by consecutive and different forest laws and laws for National Parks, changes which directly influenced the structure of the Park Authority (see also “Research Diary”)
- 5) In one of the discussions (Bolapapu) it was stated very clearly that the NGOs pursued their own agenda, with little consideration of what would be useful for the villages. This, however, contrasted strongly with the self-image of TNC, *Awam Green*, and *Jambatan* who all claimed to be working in a participatory style with village residents.
- 6) There is a general – expressed - feeling that because of the rising population, people *need* to make use of forest resources
- 7) In virtually all villages, people claimed that transgression of the rules of KKM was at least mainly done by outsiders. Curiously, this opinion was most strongly expressed in Sedoa, where the most visible transgression is a cleared slope with a maize field just behind the house of the *Kepala Desa* – and for his benefit. As a young member of our host family remarked to my assistant Bani Susanto one morning: “In this village, the *kepala desa* himself does not set a good example.”
- 8) Both in Watumaeta (in a discussion with the *kepala desa*) and in Betue, the need for economic alternatives was emphasized. In Watumaeta, these were linked to a lack of infrastructure for economic development, in particular the absence of electricity, which would be essential for any kind of market production – probably with the exception of traditional bark cloth, for which the market is negligible: the only institution marketing bark cloth as far away as the Philippines is *Jambatan* which works only in three villages at the Southern end of the park.
- 9) With respect to the power relationships within the villages, there were clear differences between the approaches the *kepala desa* took in different villages. There were some convergences between the explanation of good leadership by the former *kepala desa* of Sedoa, and the present one in Betue
- 10) In most discussions, it was stressed that forest conservation benefitted local people through the prevention of erosion and the provision of clean drinking water. However, it is not clear to what extent this was an answer aimed at satisfying the known expectations of foreign researchers. Cases cited were floods experienced after extensive logging in areas bordering rivers (*daerah aliran sungai = DAS*)
- 11) Here, the views of the younger *kepala desa* from Betue coincided with those of the old man and former *kepala desa* from Sedoa: good leadership is about intimate knowledge of people’s aspirations and about giving a good example yourself more than about forcefulness.
- 12) The absence of talk about *differential* access to resources: it is always only *pemerintah desa* in coalition with *lembaga adat* as against *masyarakat*. No differences are noted *within* the category *masyarakat*. But according to the results of Günter Burkard, it is the wealthier farmers who tend to increase their cocoa plantations – while in all the discussions it was *poverty* of household which was cited as the main reason for transgressing park boundaries in search of fook (*cari makan*, or *untuk kebutuhan rumah / keluarga*)

³ for the full text of the brochure setting out membership, responsibility and mechanisms of co-operation, see below in the section “Research Diary”

Materials collected

Village maps

- Watumaeta
- Sedoa
- Betue
- Kaduwaa
- Bolapapu
- Toro

Lists of names of inhabitants of houses on the maps (village functionaries for all villages, all household heads for Betue and Sedoa, all *locals* for Kaduwaa)

Recorded material:

- Discussion in Watumaeta (Video and Mini-Disk)
- Discussion in Betue (Video and Mini-Disk)
- Discussion in Kaduwaa (Mini-Disk)
- Discussion in Bolapapu (Mini-Disk)
- Discussion with deputy head and head of Balai Taman Nasional (Mini-Disk)
- Schoolchildren's "conservation dramas" (video, from Watumaeta, Sedoa, Betue, Kaduwaa, Toro, Bolapapu), with those from Toro and Watumaeta being in the local language, the ones in Sedoa and Bolapapu partly in the local language, and those from Betue and Kaduwaa solely in Bahasa Indonesia

According to preliminary arrangements with Günter Burkhard, these materials will be transcribed in Palu, using staff already used to this type of work.

Conclusions for future research

The use of drawing a map of houses in the project villages proved a good entry point to the main aim of clarifying social relationships, i.e. power relationships and their link to resource flows and access to natural resources. As discussed in the section on the research process, the time was too short to discuss the maps in any detail in the villages concerned, where the discussions with the *kepala desa* and representatives of the *lembaga adat*, and the *LKD* (*lembaga konservasi desa*) centered around the process leading to the *KKM* (*Kesepakatan Konservasi Masyarakat = People's Conservation Agreement*) and the present state of keeping its regulations. Even in this short time it was possible to hear both the view that the sanctions work and the village agreements are beneficial to the village *and* the view that people are dissatisfied with the regulations for good reasons, and that they do not really work. In order to understand both views in more detail and to assess what kind of forces they constitute for future developments, it would be necessary to gain access to in-depth descriptions of individual cases of either keeping to the regulations or transgressing them.

Therefore, it is intended to focus on just two villages during the next field research period in Indonesia, as there are a maximum of two additional periods according to the overall research plan.

Also, while the drama work is interesting in itself and seems to be fun to the locals, it detracts from the main focus of the research. The dramas did provide an easy entry to discussions with the simple question "To what extent does the children's drama reflect what is actually going

on in the village.” They were, however, too similar and too general to provoke a discussion about a *real and conflictual case* in any of the villages. To provide such a more in-depth stimulus, there needs to be a more thorough preparation, particularly in creating an interesting story from the children’s own experience and imagination. While the *idea* was seized upon even in this short time, the *result* was less than satisfactory.

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